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Does Faith in Secularism Undermine Mission and Development in Africa?

Jim Harries

'Secularisms differ from one another, particularly those that arose … out of … other religious traditions'.[1]

I Introduction

This re-evaluation of the practice of aid to the majority world poor points to differences in basic understandings of values and morals as the cause of frequent corruption and 'misappropriation' of funds. Contrary to a widespread apparent assumption by secularists, this article points out that much of the majority world does not hold it as a given that all people are born of essentially equal value. To the contrary, some people are considered inherently much more valuable than others. Those people whose value is demonstrated to them through the prosperity they acquire through receiving attention from gods or spirits do not necessarily agree that they are obliged to redistribute what they get or what they possess to those who are less well off.

Contrary to some secularists' understandings, even the perception of a clear distinction between what is material or physical and that which is spiritual is largely peculiar to certain western Christian parts of the world. Without such a distinction, discernment of 'purely physical' processes and economic development that depends on science cannot be indigenously instigated. Secularism is itself considered, by some, to be a version of Christianity.

Equitable sharing of the benefits of socio-economic development requires

1 Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, 'A Suspension of (Dis)Belief: the secular religious binary and the study of international relations', 166-184 in Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer and Jonathan Van Antwerpen (eds.), *Rethinking Secularism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 181.

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people to be enabled and empowered. Empowering them is different from making them dependent on foreign charity. Because rationality is a product of a certain type of faith, amongst other reasons, Christian evangelism in hand with discipleship is a more effective initiations of long-term sustainable socio-economic development than are many alternative secular efforts.

II Orientation to the Poor and Disadvantaged is neither Universal nor 'Natural'

Globally there are many types of and definitions for 'secularism'.[2] Unless otherwise qualified, reference to secularism in this article should be understood as being the kind of secularism supposed by Taylor that sees 'belief in the transcendent as a kind of "optional extra"', and that incorporates the belief that social explanations 'are all this worldly'.[3]

Moral naturalism must be one of the bastions of secular thought. Those who like to deny the role of faith in God in human existence must believe that morals for good living arise from other-than God. The same people are born into communities that already have morals. They imbibe those morals from those who nurture them and those around them. Unless or until they come across morals that are different, they assume that what they have being 'natural', must be universal.

One presumption of western morals regards the basic equality of human beings. Ultimately westerners want to believe that all people are equal. They therefore set out to save, where possible, the lives of as many people as they can, regardless of their race or geographical location. This thinking underlies a lot of the aid that goes from western countries to different parts of the world. I want to ask this question: Is such an orientation towards human equality and saving all lives if at all possible as 'natural' and universal as some westerners might hold it to be?

Mangalwadi wants to deny the naturalism of western morals. His hefty tome tells the West: look, you are who you are because of the influence of the Bible on generations of your ancestors.[4] Mangalwadi illustrates this point with a story that tells of a situation in India, Mangalwadi's original homeland. In this (true) story a family had apparently decided that because they could not afford to keep their daughter, they would allow her to die. Mangalwadi, having been raised in the West, was ignorant of this situation. He knew that lives of people must be saved at all costs. On finding the family's emaciated sick baby girl, having resources at hand, he rushed her to hospital, thinking he was acting on behalf of the

2 Rajeeve Bhargava, 'Rehabilitating Secularism', 92-113 in: Craig Calhoun, and Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, (eds.) *Rethinking Secularism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 105.

3 Charles Taylor, 'Western Secularity', 31-53 in Craig Calhoun, and Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen (eds.), Rethinking Secularism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 50; Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, VanAntwerpen, 'Introduction', 3-30 in Calhoun et al, Rethinking Secularism, 10.

4 Vishal Mangalwadi, *The Book that made your World: how the bible created the soul of western civilisation* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2011), xxi.

family. He had to overcome considerable resistance to his charitable act. The community did not support him, as they had already decided that their daughter needed to die. Mangalwadi took the girl to hospital and then returned her to her parents again fit and well. He was shocked a few months later to find her yet again in an emaciated state.[5]

I could tell similar stories about baby boys in Africa. Sometimes—and apparently increasingly so in modern times—girls get pregnant as a result of casual relationships. Should the baby be a girl, that may not be a major issue. This is for at least two reasons: First, many people appreciate rearing a girl for her helpfulness in the home, and second, once mature, a girl will not demand land from her own family but will get it from her husband's family.

Should the baby be a boy, the picture is different. Anyone who marries (i.e. agrees to set up house with) the mother will be 'burdened' with a boy who may not be very helpful in the home, but who may well demand land from his adoptive-father. Because a man is likely to think twice before marrying a woman with a baby boy, the baby has become a liability to her. He can stand between her and a potentially happy, prosperous, married future.

It is implicitly understood that the woman is likely to neglect her baby boy, and that the boy is likely to die. An outsider who wants to interfere with this process and to endeavour to rescue the boy should bear such context in mind. Merely helping a mother to better care for her child will be insufficient if, in a sense, the mother wants him dead.[6]

Another scenario can be used to illustrate another similar moral dilemma. Americans were managing a Bible school in East Africa. They wanted very much to hand over the school to indigenous management. As they considered how to do this, an incident occurred in which armed thieves were discovered by a school watchman. They were hiding in bushes waiting to steal from the school. Unfortunately, when the watchman approached them with his bow and arrow, he was shot. His injuries were life-threatening, but there was some hope his life could be saved, given medical treatment. Good medical treatment was expensive.

According to the person telling me this story, others in the Bible school community were not ready to take any responsibility for this man's injuries. The American with his deeply held morals regarding the sanctity of life, could not stand aside and leave a man, who had been injured 'in his watch', to die. Hundreds or thousands of dollars were raised in America to save the man's life. Is it any wonder that Americans struggle to hand over a Bible school to local management and ownership? When Americans can so quickly and easily raise thousands of dollars to save a life in a situation only indirectly of their own doing, who would want to refuse such generous American leadership?[7]

5 Mangalwadi, *The Book*, 60-65.

6 The above described scenario can, in the author's experience, arise amongst some communities in western Kenya.

7 I appreciate that westerners are likely to consider that obviously the man's life had, at all costs, to be saved. That is my point. Local

We might be helped here by Graeme Smith's study of secularism.[8] Secularism is these days considered to be a dominant phenomenon in much of the world. I will ignore for the moment the tendency for secularism to transform and be transformed as it travels inter-culturally.[9] Secularism is widely valued amongst other reasons for offering an apparent neutrality to 'religions'. (I put 'religions' in quotes because, in a way that goes beyond this essay to articulate in detail, scholars of religion are questioning the validity of the category of 'religion at the very same moment when the discursive reality of religion is more widespread than ever'.[10] Thus it is hoped it can disarm inter-religious disputes.)

Secular people in western nations, the locus of the origin of secularism, tend to have a concern for the weak and the underling. Because they are secular, because they do not recognise the legitimacy of divine revelation or *religion*, secularists have to suppose that such a concern for the weak is *natural* to human kind.[11] Yet, concern 'for the weakest is by no means obvious in all societies and cultures throughout human history' Smith tells us.[12] Whatever moral-naturalism may or may not be, it may not give us an ethic that favours the weaker, and poorer, and the less able.

III Origins Of Secularism

If secularism is not a 'natural' state of affairs, we may need to ask: what are its origins? There seems to be a widespread implicit understanding amongst adherents to secularism in the West that it is rooted in reason and rationality. Hence reason and rationality are advocated as the way forward for non-westerners. Hence underdevelopment, ignorance and 'poor morals' where they are found outside of the West are blamed on people's failure to grasp reason.

The actuality of the origins of 'secular' moral standards seems to be different. Mangalwadi credits them to the Bible.[13] Mohr in his examination of legal systems draws especially on Berman and agrees with his conclusion that 'rational' western legal sys-

African people's priorities may be different.

8 Graeme Smith, *A Short History of Secularism* (London: I.B. Tauris and Co. Ltd., 2008).

9 Jim Harries, 'Is Secularism a Mystical Religion? Questions of Translation in the context of Millennium Goals and mission in Africa', 2006, <http://www.jim-mission.org.uk/articles/secularism-and-sekusm.pdf> (accessed 13 July 2015); Taylor, 'Western Secularity'; José Casanova, 'The Secular, Secularisations, Secularisms', 54-74 in Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer and Jonathan Van Antwerpen (eds.), *Rethinking Secularism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

10 Casanova, 'The Secular', 62. See also, William T. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: secular ideology and the roots of modern conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

11 Some self-acclaimed secularists will acknowledge that their morality is rooted in religion, typically in Christianity. They will accept that historically Christianity has had a key role to play in the development of human society including secular society. More recently they have drawn a line to say that contemporary and future human society is no more in need of religion.

12 Smith, *A Short*, 132.

13 Mangalwadi, *The Book*, 254.

tems originated in the church.[14] Smith wonders why in secular societies 70% plus of people claim to believe in God.[15] He argues that 'we should think of secularism as the latest expression of the Christian religion … secularism is Christian ethics shorn of its doctrine'.[16] Even liberal ideology is, according to Smith, an 'enculturation' of the church.[17] Although, 'if we remove belief in God then we lose the capacity to make ethical judgments', adds Smith.[18]

Renowned anthropologist Asad has his iron in the same fire. The category, 'religion', seems to have been widely supposed by anthropologists over many decades to be a natural category. Religion tends to be understood as that which secularism is not. Asad proposed an alternative theory, that the notion of religion is an invention of western Christianity—it is not a universal or natural category at all.[19] Thus Asad puts anthropological research up to question: have anthropological endeavours been no more than an extension of the research arm of the western church?[20] The relationship between Christianity and secularism (on which anthropology is built) is, I suggest, indeed profound.

Charles Taylor, author of *A Secular Age,* considers that secularity makes a distinction between this world and the immanent (i.e. God). 'We [secularists] tend to apply it [this distinction] universally even though no distinction this hard and fast has existed in any other human culture in history.'[21] One can add that the same seems to apply contemporarily; outside of the West, such a sharp distinction is very hard to find today. As a result, when the term secular is used outside of the West, the way it is understood shifts.[22]

What to do about this, Taylor asks rhetorically? He does not have an easy answer at hand.[23] If the same term is understood very differently outside of the West from in the West, we might ask ourselves what happens when non-westerners use western languages and try to build their societies on western logic. One solution to this problem would seem to be not to use English outside of the realm of the secular West.

Taylor suggests that the West should cease to see its division between the secular and religious spheres as representing a 'universal

14 Richard Mohr, 'The Christian Origins of Secularism and the Rule of Law', 34-51 in Nadirsyah Hoden and Richard Mohr, (eds.), *Law and Religion in Public Life: the contemporary debate* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011); Harold Joseph Berman, *Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition, Volume 1* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983).

15 Smith, *A Short*, 54.

16 Smith, *A Short*, 2.

17 Smith, *A Short*, 184.

18 Smith, *A Short*, 185.

19 Talal Asad, 'Response to Gil Anidjar', 394-399 in *Interventions: international journal of post-colonial studies,* 11(3), 2009, 398.

20 'What is involved when the secular is invoked' asks Asad. (Talal Asad, 'Thinking about the Secular Body, Pain, and Liberal Politics', *Cultural Anthropology,* 2011, 26(4), 657-675, 673.)

21 Taylor, 'Western Secularity', 32.

22 For example of such a shift, whereby the same term secularism is given a very different meaning to that in the West, see Bhargava. (Bhargava, 'Rehabilitating'.)

23 See my essay that addresses this issue. (Harries, 'Is Secularism'.)

road on which humanity as a whole is embarked'.[24] By considering secularism to have arisen out 'of a long ascending series of attempts to establish a Christian order' Taylor clearly agrees with those who see the origins of secularism in western Christianity.[25]

Many scholars have attempted to trace the influence of Christianity on the development of secularism through comparing reconstructed historical circumstances with the present. My own experience of having been born and raised in the West, then having lived in sub-Saharan Africa since 1988, gives me a contemporary basis for comparison with communities that have only recently been influenced by axial religions. (I borrow the term 'axial religions' from Taylor.[26] These include Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism and Christianity.) Benefits that arise from what we now call secularism seem to be very religious in origin. This same point is made by Juergensmeyer[27] who tells us that the traditional view of religion incorporates exactly those 'values shared by most thoughtful and concerned citizens within [western] society'.[28] In other words, the value that western society has acquired that it now identifies with secularism, originated in Christianity.

Secularism is of course related to *development*.[29] Drawing a distinction between the spiritual (i.e. religious) and material enables an understanding of the natural world and of science. Although a Christian believer at the time, I initially went to Africa thinking that my 'secular' knowledge of agriculture was what I had of value to offer in the interest of development. In the course of a few years, I became convinced that it was a profound acceptance of the Gospel of Christ that was the best hope towards taking African people (initially I was in Zambia, later Kenya) towards a dualistic understanding that might enable indigenously powered scientifically and technologically based advance. Hence between 1991 and 1993 I switched my ministry from agricultural teaching to Bible teaching.

IV A Moral Imperative To Illogicality?

I have in this essay already looked at the fact that the western ethic that requires outside material provision for the poorest and weakest, is not universal. Then I have drawn on various authors, plus personal experience, to show that the distinction between what is material and what is 'religious' is itself a product of a long history of western Christianity. I now want to apply the above insights to the situation of development intervention and poverty alienation in the majority world—with a focus on Africa.[30]

24 Taylor, 'Western Secularity', 37.

25 Taylor, 'Western Secularity', 48.

26 Taylor, 'Western Secularity', 47-48.

27 Mark Juergensmeyer, 'Rethinking the Secular and Religious Aspects of Violence', 185-203 in Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer and Jonathan Van Antwerpen (eds.), *Rethinking Secularism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.)

28 Juergensmeyer, 'Rethinking', 193.

29 I.e. socio-economic development of majority world communities.

30 As mentioned above, my experience is mostly in Eastern and Southern Africa. I speak of the contexts that I know as I understand them. I am not familiar with all African contexts.

The scenario that I want to consider is where one part of the world has identified a moral imperative of material equality which obliges it to share its material wealth with another part of the world that neither recognises the imperative nor distinguishes the material from the religious. Much of Africa, for example, makes no clear distinction between religious or spiritual, or a person and one's 'physical' context.

This was well said by Senghor: 'in contrast to the classic European, the Negro African does not draw a line between himself and the object'.[31] There is certainly not a strong ethic of interpersonal equality in parts of Africa with which I am familiar. Instead, the existence of differences in levels of wealth and prosperity are largely taken for granted—those who have less may strive to have more, but those who 'have more' may be unconcerned with giving material assistance to those who have less.

From my experience amongst African people, I conclude that if material inequalities are to be shifted, this is not necessarily done by arranging for gifts or loans. Innately, many African people would rather enrich themselves through engaging in prayer, carefully thought out rituals, and animal sacrifice and so on. Such means are used to overcome evil spiritual powers that are holding people in bondage to poverty.

Having said the above, my reader should note that my use of English leads to many inaccuracies in my description of the African situation. For example, to say that evil powers are spiritual as against physical, using English, implies the western distinction between material and religious, which presumption is not present in Africa. The better alternative probably would be to further this discussion using African languages with respect to their own world views. Then unfortunately westerners would not understand at all.

With that caveat, we can proceed to state that it is widely known that much of African society operates on the patron/client system. Maranz articulates ways in which this works in practice.[32] This system requires inequality. In this system, patrons who have resources are served by clients who would like to benefit from those resources. If all were equal, there would be no need for patrons and clients. In the interests of the maintenance of the patron-client system, inequality is not so much a problem, as a necessity.

Because of its understanding of the need for equality, the West sees itself as being morally obliged to give and give and give (materially) to the 'poor'. We have discovered that those amongst the poor who become the conduits of this shared wealth may not share this ethic of equality. Instead, they are likely to self-aggrandise and to enrich their own families. The 'poor' should then approach them as the new patrons.

The reason why poor people in Africa may appear to wealthier African people to be undeserving of 'handouts' is related to our same core issue—that African people do not clearly distin-

31 Leopold Sedar Senghor, *On African Socialism* (New York, London: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), 72.

32 David Maranz, *African Friends and Money Matters: observations from Africa* (Dallas: SIL International, 2001).

guish between the material and the spiritual. This means that when someone is in a state of poverty, they are lacking blessing or fortune. The gods or spirits are evidently against them—or why else would they be poor?

This means that the solution to poverty is in prayer and in improving relations to gods or spirits. If a westerner comes and gives someone a lot of money, then their fortune can change. (In this sense, westerners are akin to gods and are considered to have power over evil spirits, whether they know it or not.) Beneficiaries seek to take maximum advantage of such change in their personal fortune.

Taking maximum advantage of your improved fortune may be seriously at odds with the redistribution of wealth that you are supposed, according to the West, to engage in. In my experience, westerners do not always appreciate how difficult distribution of wealth can be. Approaching a community of people, whoever they are, so as to distribute wealth to them is very likely to be a fraught activity. It may be especially fraught where the spiritual and material are not clearly distinguished. (Does one give materially or spiritually? In practice, because these two are not clearly distinguished; always both.)

It is extremely difficult to distribute evenly and amicably. It is very likely that distribution will create tension which will come back to the person responsible for distribution in the form of accusations of all kinds of foul play. Unlike the western donor sitting high and dry from all this in an elevated office often in faraway Europe, the local African will not easily escape such flack.

The contemporary reaction of western donors to scenarios such as those of corruption and misappropriation of funds, nepotism, etc. is to put in *accountability*. Requirements for accountability often translate into control from the West. By such means the West attempts to force African communities to use donated funds (blessings?)[33] in ways understood by the donors, even if locally they make little or no sense.

In the meantime, not having distinguished the material from the spiritual, the non-West spends money they have on pleasing gods of prosperity and/or appeasing untoward gods and spirits. This becomes evident in many ways in Africa. Typically in western Kenya, it means spending a lot of money on lavish funerals. 'Memorial' events aimed at ensuring that spirits of the dead do not become adverse, are similarly heavily subsidised. Apart from not being the intended use of funds by western donors, it is also clear to westerners that investments into quality coffins or funeral-feasts are not going to provide a powerhouse for economic advance. Hence it seems that the West is determined to engage endlessly in filling an increasingly leaky ever growing African prosperity-bucket!

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33 One constant issue I meet here is that the English language I am using is far from adequate to articulate the issue that I am addressing. I have here put 'blessings' in brackets simply to point to this. In so far as 'funds' are understood in a western secular society as things that do not carry spiritual content there are no funds in Africa. (See Parker Shipton, *Bitter Money: cultural economy and some African meanings of forbidden commodities,* American Ethnological Society Monograph Series, Number 1, [Washington: American Anthropological Association, 1989]).

V Problem Created by Linguistics

Before going on to look in more detail at the derivation of morals, I want to make a brief diversion into linguistics. A reason the above described 'illogical' scenarios are so little recognised is due to use of a global language. The same 'global language', English, is of course, western. Recipients of western funds are not fools. They appreciate that a lot of the demands being made by donors are for purposes of accountability. They have also typically spent years if not decades of their lives in full-time study learning how to communicate as if they are western.

It should be noted that educational systems in Africa tend to presuppose the dualistic distinction between the religious and the secular, even though many African people rarely if ever grasp this and certainly do not live by it. This makes honest straightforward intercultural communication (westerners with Africans) very difficult.

African recipients of western donor funds and projects easily appear to be 'deceiving' in the feedback they give; such feedback aims at perpetuating the incoming flow of funds. Yet it seems often that the donor and their agents are wanting to be deceived. They may well have designated money that has to be spent. They are also likely to be reluctant to acknowledge the massive cultural gap that separates them from Africans; in so far as the West is secular it will not acknowledge that a cultural gap has arisen as a result of Christian influence. Related to this is the reluctance to point to differences between westerners and Africans through fear of being accused of being racist.[34]

VI Morals Are Derivative

Realisation that morals are derivative from cultures and from beliefs ought to be enough motivation to change the above game plan. If one 'believes' in certain values and those values are not grounded in some kind of natural logic then it makes sense (surely) that to pass on the values requires convincing people about the foundational system that produces them. The foundational inputs that are required to bring a shift to non-western peoples cannot be rooted entirely in secular rationality and reason because such rationality and reason themselves originate in religion, specifically in faith in God and Jesus Christ.

To start from what is known to take someone to what might be unknown, as is required of good educational systems, means to start from a worldview that is holistic and that does not distinguish the material from the spiritual, and to take people towards such a distinction. On the contrary, secular educational systems in Africa tend to presuppose what the students should actually be learning.

A problem with this is that secular western people are likely to condemn worldviews that are not strictly secular. They will not advocate for what is 'religious'. Fortunately, Smith discovered that many people in secular countries such as in Europe and North America claim to believe in God. This

34 Jim Harries, 'Anti-Racist Strategies in the West Perpetuate Global Poverty: A Critique from Africa', *Cultural Encounters: a journal for the theology of culture*, In Press.

seems very ironic—a point that Smith makes: supposedly secular countries have believing Christian populations. A much smaller percentage of Europeans claim to be atheistic than those who claim to be Christian or 'religious'.[35]

So then, Europeans themselves in their own lives contradict the secularism that they seem professionally to condone. The populations of European countries such as the UK live with the constant contradiction that they supposedly operate on the basis of secularism, at the same time as the predominant proportion of their population in various ways draw on their Christian faith.

Because it can be understood that secularism *is* a kind of Christianity, what exactly is implied by the above scenario?[36] In order to understand and communicate clearly with the non-West, including Africa, one must put aside the assumption of the difference between the material and the spiritual or religious. If indeed it is a desirable distinction,[37] then a dualistic distinction is something that in communication between the West and Africa is to be achieved and not to be presupposed.

To be understandable, intercultural communication between the West and Africa should be holistic. The text that the West possesses which is of this nature is the Bible. The 'way of life' (I use the term 'way of life' because of current confusion regarding the term 'religion') that the West knows which makes sense to holistic people and can take people towards healthy dualism, is Christianity.[38] Hence, at least in so far as 'development' for the poor is rooted in dualistic (i.e. secular) rationality, the preferred means to development ought to be Christian evangelism and discipleship.

For western societies such as those in Africa, I suggest that evangelism and discipleship should, where possible, be carried out in non-secular ways. That is—on the basis that the spiritual and material are not distinct entities. That is to say that Christian mission should be holistic.

However, it is important to qualify this term 'holistic'. It should be holistic as understood by non-dualists. That is, it should be holistic in a way in which God's blessing brings prosperity, and not a way in which resources from the West are used to provide the 'material' side of 'holistic' ministry. The missionary who is serious about being holistic should, even if he is from the West, engage in ministry on the back of locally available resources, and not on the back of privileged access to western wealth. So the holism of the ministry of Jesus himself as depicted in the Bible did not arise from raising foreign funds to help people or start projects. It was often as a result of the amazing acts, sometimes known as miracles, that he performed as a result of prayer and the power of God.

35 Smith, *A Short*, 14.

36 Smith, *A Short*, 2.

37 Maranz, African, xiii. I have discussed its desirability elsewhere. I believe that a degree of dualism is desirable but probably not the extent of dualism formally held by the secular West.

38 I show ways in which the Bible takes people towards secularism (i.e. dualism) in my book, Jim Harries, *Secularism and Africa: in the light of the Intercultural Christ* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2015), 102-135.

VII Conclusion

The morality that many western secularists suppose to be 'natural' seems to arise from their Christian history. A close analysis of secularism reveals that as well as being diversely defined, it cannot be understood apart from religions that have been formative to it. Hence it can never be truly secular. Western 'secularism' presupposes an ethic of equality that underlies global efforts at provision of aid and development.

Because such an ethic is normally absent amongst many of the global poor themselves, who anyway understand the source of their prosperity as being from spiritual rather than material origins, efforts at re-balancing global inequalities by sharing resources from the West are compared to filling of a leaking bucket. Because people are never entirely 'secular', development intervention needs to be recognised for what it is; an innately 'religious' activity.

This means, for Christians, that promoting development is inseparable from sharing the gospel of Jesus. The latter should be done from a 'holistic' foundation that is not based on a sharp distinction between the material and the spiritual.