

PacificMUN

Dare to Speak



VCC-Topic B
Backgrounder Guide



International Secularism - VCC

Topic B

PacificMUN



Letter from the Director

Dear delegates,

My name is Kevin Roe and I am thrilled to serve as the director for the Third Vatican City Council (VCC). I have been an active participant in the world of MUN since grade 8 and am currently a grade 10 student at Pacific Academy. I find MUN intriguing because the multitude of ideas from people of different backgrounds and cultures allows for ideas to clash together and create fruitful debate. Because of MUN's diverse and unique nature, it has given me the ability to learn with intuition and inclusivity. Outside of MUN, I enjoy debate, attempting to jazz improvise on my saxophone, and watching basketball.

Along with myself are your two wonderful Dais members: Alex Han, a grade 12 student at Port Moody Secondary School, and Kelsi Lee, a grade 12 student at Crofton House School. We hope that we can be of your assistance at all times and make your committee experience at PacificMUN 2019 extraordinary.

Throughout the conference, the delegates of VCC will discuss two topics: The Promotion of Scientific Discussion and International Secularism. Both topics shed light on both internal and external moral conflicts the Church faces today. I strongly believe that each delegate will have different ideas to contribute to these controversial issues that the Vatican currently faces. The Dais team would like to emphasize that religion may be a sensitive topic to some, and only through professionalism will there be productive debate. We expect all delegates to enjoy themselves but also to maintain a level of professionalism due to the sensitive nature of the topic.

We look forward to seeing you at PacificMUN 2019!



Best regards,

Kevin Roe
Director of VCC
PacificMUN 2019

Committee Overview

The Third Vatican Council (Vatican III) is a futuristic simulation where Catholic leaders of the world gather at the Vatican to discuss moral issues that the Church currently faces. Ultimately, the decisions made in the Vatican becomes the mandate for all Catholics across the world. The committee's goal is to find a solution to ethical issues and develop a stance on modern issues.

Like its predecessors, Vatican III hopes to accomplish considerable reforms in the Church and clarify moral issues that plague the Church. The first Vatican City Council (Vatican I) has faced the issues of rising nationalism, liberalism, materialism, and a decline in the Pope's power.¹ These problems were solved with three statements mandating that the pope has full power over the Church, that the Pope's preaches are always right, and that God is the reason behind universal creation whereas science simply explains the method.²

Nearly 100 years after the conservative declarations made by Vatican I, there were still unanswered and newly emerging questions that had to be addressed. These questions of reform and acceptance would be addressed in the 22nd ecumenical council (Vatican II). Vatican II reformed specific ideas of the Church and developed a friendly approach to other religions. Firstly, The Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the World of Today has made efforts in acknowledging the rapid rate of change in the world and connecting the idea of revelation to the needs and values of the contemporary Church. Next, The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church called all Catholics to a life of holiness and to share their faith with non-believers. Finally, Vatican II called for the Church to be more accepting of other religions through dialogue.³

Unlike its predecessors, Vatican III is fictional. However, it is involved with the United Nations as did the previous two councils. The council holds vast influence over the global political and social climate as 1.2 billion, or 16% of the world is Catholic.⁴ The previous two councils have exemplified the Church's ability

¹ <https://www.britannica.com/event/First-Vatican-Council>

² Pope Pius IX, Des Filius, Chapter II

³ <https://www.britannica.com/event/Second-Vatican-Council>

⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-21443313>



to shape the ethical values of Catholic people. This ultimately shows that the Church is capable of shifting the political climate of the globe.

Though the Church may seem powerful, it is not able to directly impose policies on a government and therefore is limited to indirect influence through altering the public opinion.

Topic B: International Secularism

Introduction

Secularism is derived from the ideology of humanism, which emphasizes the value of human beings and the importance of finding satisfaction in life. This ideology was forged during the Middle Ages, under heavily religious societies.⁵ The introduction of reason during the Renaissance along with increased distrust in state-supported religions such as Catholicism were responsible for scrutiny towards religion. This new way of thought freed education, society, and the state from Catholic influence and created modern secularism.⁶ Secularism denotes that the Church does not hold any direct influence on the government, and therefore operates as a separate, private entity. Though secularism increases religious tolerance within the nation, it harms the practice of faith, as it reduces the Church's authority and influence.

As various systems and policies became increasingly secular, they have deviated from Catholic ideologies. For example, universities such as Oxford have diverted away from the Church over time despite having been created by it. Although beneficial for the pursuit of unbiased learning, secularisation of education brings two concerns to the Church.

Christian values are neglected and ultimately holds effects such as making contraceptives and abortion commonplace, and the banning of religious education in schools. Sexual education in secularized classrooms often teach highly sensitive topics such as birth control and sexual orientation to Catholic youths, and have often left Catholic communities disturbed and protesting for the previous curriculum.⁷ Furthermore, with the school taking up a significant portion of the day and not teaching Catholic values, religious parents have struggled to find time to teach lessons on morals and principles based on their religion.

⁵ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/secularism>

⁶ Domenic Marbaniang, Secularism in India: A Historical Analysis SI: Domenic Marbaniang, 2011, p.1

⁷<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/on-sex-ed-curriculum-alberta-catholic-educators-are-out-of-step-with-the-real-world/article36756271/>



Moreover, it harms the public opinion towards the Church. With further secularism, the power of the Church diminishes. The loss of influence commonly leads to negative stigma, ultimately creating a neo-secularistic attitude, a way of thought that claims that the Church's general authority is insignificant and therefore not respectable. If neo-secularism becomes widespread, the Church's ethics and the pope will become meaningless to the common man.

As delegates of the Third Vatican Council, focus should be placed on the methods of solving issues of secularization, increasing the Church's authority, and teaching its doctrine and ethics to Catholic youth.

Timeline

1523 - During the Reformation, Martin Luther, the pioneer of Protestantism, argued in his essay *On Temporal Authority* that the Church and state should be separate entities. This was the first recorded promotion of state secularism and would be the starting point for secularist ideologies and movements across the globe.⁸

1648 - Pope Innocent X published a pamphlet that expressed severe disapproval of the Treaty of Westphalia, which removes religion as a justification for war. The Pope perceived the treaty to harm the political power of the Church and its influence in state matters.

1773 - After several years in England, Voltaire, a French author, wrote *Letters Concerning the English Nation*. In these series of essays, Voltaire describes English society as a critique of the French. He encouraged Religious pluralism and enforced the Enlightenment thoughts and ideas (individualism, and reason). His ideas, as well as his book, were very influential for the secular movement.

1786 - In the United States, Article 6 of the US constitution was passed, which prohibited tests of an applicant's religion when he or she is applying for office or any public job.⁹

1804 - Napoleon's Civil Code represented the ideals of the French Revolution by allowing freedom of religion, and denied privileges given based on birth. This was the first modern legal code, and it contributed to secularism by offering more freedom and power to the people.

1888 - The Oath's Act of 1888 was an act ratified by the United Kingdom Parliament which allowed atheist Member of Parliament Charles Bradlaugh to take his seat and allowed for individuals to solemnly affirm than sworn to God. This was significant secularist legislation that was later consolidated in 1978.

⁸ <http://www.wolfmueller.co/martin-luthers-temporal-authority-extent-obeyed/>

⁹ https://www.usconstitution.net/xconst_A6.html



1905 - After a heated debate in parliament and the general French population slowly moving towards secularism, France passed the law on the Separation of the Churches and state, which established state secularism and ended funding for state religious groups.

1920 - Turkey faced several political, social and cultural reforms, known as Atatürk's Reforms, in order to secularize the country.

1929 - After decades of resistance from the Papal States during the unification of Italy in the mid-19th century, the Pope and the Kingdom of Italy, led by Benito Mussolini, signed the Lateran Accords. The Lateran Accords planned out Vatican's City's borders, the Vatican City giving up the Papal States, such as Rome, to Italy, and Italy giving financial compensation for those states.¹⁰

2012 - The first Reason Rally was held in the United States of America, and it served as a public gathering of secularist ideals, and religious skepticism.¹¹

Historical Analysis

The secularist movement began in an attempt to reach religious freedom in Catholic-run states. However, the movement ended up diminishing the sovereignty and political power of the Church, making room for atheist movements across the globe. The attitudes facilitated by the evolution of secularism and the series of political documents separating governments from the Church all have contributed to the rise of secularism.

The rise of influential figures such as Martin Luther and the shift towards reason and individualism made way for secularist ideals. In 1523, Martin Luther published his essay *On Temporal Authority, To What Extent Should It Be Obeyed*. Furthermore, he claimed that the presence of religion within governments have corrupted rulers and that their actions are incorrectly justified by society due to the belief that they are always righteous, being placed on the throne by God. This concept of "The Divine Right of Kings," has allowed emperors to justify their heinous acts with God. This has encouraged Luther to argue in favour of secularism in order to limit monarchs from unjustly legitimizing their atrocities behind the authority of God. Although this movement of secularism was a definite effort to deviate from the abominable acts of kings in the name of God, it has also been a troubling upbringing for the Church. As people began the search for personal liberties, it became increasingly evident that religion was highly restricting of certain freedoms such as speech. This will for a less restricting lifestyle formed in the

¹⁰<http://www.vaticanstate.va/content/dam/vaticanstate/documenti/leggi-e-decreti/Normative-Penali-e-Amministrative/LateranTreaty.pdf>

¹¹https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/atheists-others-to-gather-at-reason-rally/2012/03/23/gIQAvqY2WS_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.8bcf3aa98d44



Renaissance, along with the declarations of Martin Luther created secular attitudes that would impact the modern day.

The wish for religious freedom was the primary reason behind the success of secularism. These beliefs were reinforced by political and educational texts.. There are three types of documents that crafted the secularism of today. The first type of passage were the ones pushing for religious flexibility and the belief that states should be separated from religion. For example, Voltaire was a French author that studied in England and believed that the French should encourage Religious pluralism , determined that the Enlightenment was superior to a Catholic state. This category of texts were responsible for creating a secularist government. The second category of text that advocated for secularist states was the kind that offered free choice in religion. Two documents, the Oaths Act of 1888 and the Napoleonic Civil Code are prime examples. The Oaths Act of 1888 provided the option to solemnly affirm instead of swearing on the Bible during legal settings.¹² Although very commonplace in modern times, when the act was first introduced, it was one that recognized that not everyone was religious and state matters such as bearing witness in court should exemplify that. Also, the Napoleonic Civil Code allowed individuals to have different religions and thoughts, and these attitudes created by these acts made way for more secular policies and the adoption of secularism in the future.¹³ The final documents which pushed secularism were the ones that adopted secularism all together, and abandoned their state religion, such being France's The Law on the Separation of the Churches and State and Turkey's Atatürk's Reforms. Both texts were responsible for starting state secularism efforts, and newer countries such as the United States already doing so in the beginning. Therefore, the creation of secularist ideals in political and educational texts was all due to the rise of religious freedom.

With the early rise of Secular movements, the Catholic Church has taken some measures to prevent secularism. During the First Vatican City Council, the Church sought to define its doctrine concerning faith to respond to challenges from Liberalist organizations. By the end of the ecumenical council, the Church concluded that the Pope's words are considered the law in a Catholic society, which ultimately led to the conclusion from Liberalists that palpability was utterly incompatible with modern civilization. Vatican II also addressed secularism throughout the council but concluded that every individual and state has the freedom of religion, while Pope Benedict XVI wanted Catholics to impose the Church's morals upon the state.¹⁴ Efforts made to combat the secular community or Catholic leaders have rejected secularism have succumbed to secularism's benefits. Throughout history, the Catholic Church tried to spread their ideals and spread the word of God. The Church's wish to evangelize did attract many followers, but was responsible for their condescending attitude towards non-believing individuals, which resulted in crimes to humanity like capturing slaves and murdering individuals. Therefore, Vatican

¹² <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1888/act/46/enacted/en/print.html>

¹³ <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1061517/f4.image>

¹⁴ <http://www.concordatwatch.eu/topic-33651.834>



VIII has to deal with an ever-secular society with the Church's morals being cast aside by the public secularism becoming the norm in states and society.

Current Situation

Secularism addressed during Vatican II was a completely different form of secularism Vatican VIII faces today. The world has drifted entirely away from Catholic morals, and secularism does not protect religious freedom anymore.

The secularism that emerged during the Renaissance is entirely different secularism the world views today. The definition of secularism today is now more closely attributed to atheism and is rising faster than ever. For example, 0% of Icelanders believe that God created the Earth, there are more atheists than Catholics for the first time in history, and atheism in Canada doubled from 12 to 24% since 1990.¹⁵ The exponential rise in secularism corresponds to the increase on the internet. When individuals expose themselves to the internet, they encounter the numerous critiques of his or her religion, which makes people uncertain about their faith and tend to become more secular. In the book *Unchosen: The Hidden Lives of Hasidic Rebels* by well-known sociologist Hell Winston, as many of her informants went online secretly, and what they found was content that made them ponder or even reject their faith. Also, even if one was dabbling in atheism, one could easily reach out to devout atheists who could convince them there is no God.¹⁶ Therefore, the availability of information because of the internet is one of the reasons that secularism is spreading.

Current secular society is very hostile towards Catholics, and there are little to no support systems for young Catholics who started out in their faith. The previous Pope, Pope Benedict XVI, claimed that secularism is good because it makes Christianity a choice and makes their faith more genuine. However, secularism in the West has transformed from neutrality to outright hostility. Cardinal Renato Martino, the former President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, stated "It looks like a new Inquisition. It is a lay Inquisition, but it is so nasty. You can freely insult and attack Catholics, and nobody will say anything."¹⁷ Secularism has evolved into a system where one cannot publically express their religion because they are going to get verbally attacked in public or on the internet. For example, a case presented to the European Court of Human Rights (EUCoHR), a claim made by an Italian woman that a public school with Catholic crucifixes violated the Church/state separation laws by the European Convention on Human Rights (EUCHR), which the EUCoHR agreed and awarded her with 5000 euros. This decision became a problem because according to Italian Courts, Catholic crucifixes were part of Italian heritage. Secularist claims are currently assaulting Catholic identity, and not many actions have

¹⁵ https://www.huffingtonpost.com/phil-zuckerman/religion-declining-secula_b_9889398.html

¹⁶<https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/the-secular-life/201601/secularism-and-the-internet>

¹⁷<https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/all-things-catholic/benedicts-ongoing-battle-against-secularism>



been taken by the Church to address this adequately. Therefore, the Vatican III should make sure Catholicism is attacked less by other individuals and Catholic culture in these countries is preserved from secular attacks.

Because of secular attitudes, people have become more complacent about frowned upon concepts in Catholic society. Things such as embryonic stem-cell research, LGBT marriage, and abortion are all concepts that are looked at unfavorably by the Church and its doctrine. However, in a secular society, such notions are accepted. The rise of conflicting ideas to the Church and secularism, in general, raises a severe red flag to conservative Catholic groups for two main reasons. Firstly, due to secularism, Church attendance is decreasing. The Vatican Pontifical Council of Culture recognized secularism is a rising phenomenon that shows no signs of stopping and is declining Church attendance.¹⁸ For example, in Britain, only 2% of British men and women attend Church on a regular basis, which is an all-time low. Also, in the Netherlands, approximately 1000 Churches are closing due to lack of attendees. Churches in these countries are dying, and is a general problem for the Catholic Church, as Churches are crucial to spread the Catholic doctrine to the common man.

Secondly, the Church has very little influence within every individual. In the past, the Church's dogma or any announcement by the Pope are held with the utmost respect and regard; however, the religious interest from individuals to the Catholic faith is now gone. The result of atheism leads to Catholic morals being ignored and which is harmful for the legitimacy of the Catholic doctrine and the institution in general. Therefore, delegates should keep in mind that atheism is on the rise and solutions presented should be impactful internationally and will have an impact on the secular community as well.

Unlike his predecessor, the current Pope, Pope Francis, has been more lenient on gay marriage or abortion and secularism in general. The current Pope believes secularism in itself is a good concept, as long as the state has a competent leader, leaders have respect for natural law, and governments actively pursue the common good and the obstacles towards it are not significant to halt their efforts. However in practice, the Pope believes the government policy refuses to accept the transcendence of an individual. Instead, they try to eliminate the influence of God, and then secularism becomes a problem. With that in mind, another aspect of the debate is whether or not the rising ethical issues are eliminating the influence of God or not, and has the government actively tried to infringe upon God.¹⁹ This is the question that must be answered during the debate. It is a problem that needs to be addressed as more left-wing Catholics are more tolerant towards abortion or same-sex marriage, and Right-wing ones are less tolerant.

¹⁸<https://cruxnow.com/global-Church/2018/07/11/as-secularism-mounts-vatican-tries-to-rescue-abandoned-Churches/>

¹⁹<https://www.catholicculture.org/commentary/articles.cfm?id=705>



Currently, Atheism is at an all-time high, and the amount atheists in the world are increasing because of the rise of the internet. This leads to attacks on Catholicism, hurts Catholics worldwide to practice their religion, and decreases overall Church attendance. Therefore, delegates should debate whether modern secularism eliminates the influence of God in this earth, and should find solutions that will affect not just the Catholic community but the international community as well.

Vatican Involvement

Vatican I

The problem addressed during the Vatican I was not secularism but was a pre-evolved form of it: Liberalism, the philosophical idea that preaches liberty and freedom, which are the ideas secularism is founded on. This was a problem for the Church because Liberalism gave the freedom for all individuals to pursue whichever religion they pleased. In Pope Pius IX's document *The Syllabus of Errors* from Vatican I explained, "... It is false that the civil liberty of every form of worship, and the full power, given to all, of overtly and publicly manifesting any opinions whatsoever and thoughts, conduce more easily to corrupt the morals and minds of the people, and to propagate the pest of indifferentism." (*Syllabus of Errors*, 77).²⁰ This explains that not every religion should be given freedom to be worshiped because it leads to confusion of morals and minds of the people. This prompted an aggressive response from Liberalist groups, which prompted the suppression of the Society of Jesus in Portugal in 1759 and France in 1764.²¹ Therefore, delegates should keep in mind, a harsh response from the Church on secularism could lead to secular individuals persecuting Catholics for what the Vatican stated on secularism.

Vatican II

Vatican II is a glaring example of what happens when the Church first accepted secularism. *Dignitatis Humanae* is a document created by Pope Paul VI which explains that individuals have the freedom to worship whichever religion they please and individuals should be immune from coercion from an external party.²² This was the first-time secularism accepted by the Catholic Church, and the acceptance was filled with internal controversy. Traditionalist Catholics and Sedevacantists pointed out that this text, presented during Vatican II, was contradictory to previous statements by other Popes and some went far as to claim *Dignitatis Humanae* as hearsay. This created the divide between the Catholic right, traditionalists, and the Catholic left.

²⁰ <http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/P9SYLL.HTM>

²¹ <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14096a.htm>

²² http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651207_dignitatis-humanae_en.html



Pope Francis

Pope Francis has been a proponent of "Healthy Secularism," where the state is unbiased and promotes religious freedom and every individual is free to practice their religion without persecution. However, as secularism has evolved into atheism, where individuals condemn any religious involvement of the state. As a result, Pope Francis in 2016 explained that the right way to deal with secularism is not to win in intellectual arguments but to convert them to Catholicism using love.²³ This does not mean that the Pope supports secular morals such as gay marriage and abortion, yet he has taken a more accepting stance than previous popes on homosexual individuals seeking Catholicism.

Seeking Resolution

While thinking of solutions, it is essential that they are impactful, create authority for the Church, and will be enforced internationally by all Catholics. Also, delegates should think about why the Church should or should not be against secularism. Delegates are not limited to the solutions below and are encouraged to think of their own solutions to diversify the debate.

The Evangelization in Lower-class Communities and Countries

In order to increase attention towards the Church, it must vary their evangelization methods. A viable target group is the less fortunate. A study conducted by the National Evolutionary Synthesis Centre suggests that places with insufficient resources are more likely to believe in all-powerful, moralistic deities.²⁴ Religion is often a coping method for them during hardships as some religions promise utopia in exchange for a holy life or one filled with good deeds. Through this, the Church may be able to create more followers that oppose secular beliefs. The issue of empty Churches is most prevalent in Europe, with the vast majority of its population in the middle class or above and therefore a lack in religious incentive.

Lobbying the Government by the Church for School Vouchers

A school voucher is a government-funded subsidy that allows for tuition-free attendance in any non-public educational institution. Currently, Catholic schools are considered private education due to their association with religion. This means without paying a high tuition fee, it is difficult to provide appropriate teachers for the students and fund the necessities of the school. As a result, Catholic private schools are either inaccessible due to high tuition costs, or the school's quality of education is significantly lower than public schools. In order to make Catholic schools more accessible, Catholic teaching organizations and the Catholic Church should advocate for distribution of school vouchers for improving religious schools. Although this method promotes Catholic education that can solidify the

²³ <https://cruxnow.com/analysis/2016/08/04/pope-believes-secularism-will-best-love/>

²⁴ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-3038175/Does-poor-make-likely-believe-God-likely-religious-live-harsh-environment.html>



faith of attending individuals, it presents a large issue. The secular public may be outraged seeing their tax dollars in use of funding religious education. These individuals will protest that taxes must be used to improve public education for the majority rather than public education for the few.

Bloc Positions

Delegates should keep in mind positions for each Archbishop and Cardinal vary and below are general descriptions of stances of Catholic leaders from each regions.

North America

North America is a region with increasing secular ideas and atheistic ideologies, as the heart of the radical transformation of gender and sexual morality. The acceptance of LGBT rights were fostered by a secular society that is not tied to Catholic ideals. Catholics in this region have expressed disapproval of LGBT movements, and in 2012 the Church of the United States spent 2 million dollars on unsuccessful campaigns against gay marriage.²⁵ A study done in Canada in 1991 reported that 12% of adults have no religious affiliation, and in 2016, the number has doubled.²⁶ Furthermore, the United States reported 23-28% of its population to be secular.²⁷

South America

Comparative to North America, South America is more Catholic. However, this does not mean that Churches are free from the effects of secularism. Nicolás M. Somma, Matías A. Bargsted, Eduardo Valenzuela conducted a study which found that in 1991-2015, Catholicism has been declining in general with secularist ideas growing in more developed and urbanized nations.²⁸ This is consistent with the secularization and existential security theories, which explain that better living conditions correlate to lower religious attachment. Secularist ideas have just begun to emerge in South American nations, and therefore delegates should emphasize the need to take careful and well analyzed action.

Europe

Catholicism in certain European countries is very weak due to secularism. In other nations, Catholic religion is culturally integrated but faces potential damage from secularism in the future. Countries such as Britain, Norway and France have seen decreasing Church attendance numbers and increasing atheism in many. On the other hand, countries such as Italy, Poland and Ireland have a strong Catholic culture but are seeing an increase in secular ideas among those attending Church. For example, Poland has seen 41% of Catholics support concepts such as abortion.²⁹ Delegates from Europe should

²⁵https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/catholic-Church-2-million-defeat-marriage-equality_n_2140255

²⁶ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/130508/dq130508b-eng.htm>

²⁷<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/11/11/religious-nones-are-not-only-growing-theyre-becoming-more-secular/>

²⁸ <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/laps.12013>

²⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/12/world/europe/12poland.html>



determine whether secularism is an imminent threat, and act accordingly to focus on other nations or reinstate the culture of Catholicism.

Asia

The nations in the east are considered more conservative than their western counterparts. Asian nations are far more religiously diverse. Generally, these nations have legislative measures that match the ethical code of the Catholic Church. However, East Asian, and South Asian nations are predominantly Atheist, Buddhist, or Muslim. These nations do not see secularism as a significant threat and believe that these issues can be resolved with improved evangelization efforts.

Vatican City

Representatives of the Vatican City should emphasize the views of the Pope on secularism. The Pope believes that if individuals adopt "healthy secularism," they will be able to reap the benefits of secularism. This healthy secularism is characterized by religious tolerance and a government that is unbiased. However, current governments tend to favour views that do not align with the Catholic Church. Vatican City should focus on reverting governments to "healthy secularist" views.

Africa

African nations, unlike the West, have not seen success in secularism. As most of the first leaders of post-colonial Africa being elected due to religious reasons, many African nations often fail to become secular with such heavy integration of religion.³⁰ However, this has led to many harms to individuals seeking contraceptive technology, often being forced to use dangerous methods such as self-induced abortion. If determined that abortions are beneficial, laws may be placed to legalize and therefore regulate it. Otherwise, delegates may opt to simply provide contraceptives as an alternative, or accompanying solution. Therefore, delegates representing African nations should reflect the possible harms that come from a government that is not secular.

Discussion Questions

1. Is your country a secular nation?
2. How has your country become more secular over time? If not, why hasn't it become more secular?
3. How is the Catholic Church, in your nation, affected by secularism?
4. Has the secularism increased or decreased the percentage of people who identify as Catholic? Why?

³⁰ <https://consciencemag.org/2014/02/19/the-untold-story-of-africas-secular-tradition/>



5. How has your nation's Catholic Church addressed the rise of secular morals like LGBTQ+ rights and abortion? Have they at all?
6. What actions have the Catholic Church of your country to combat secularism in general?
7. Is secularism a threat to the Vatican Church?
8. Why is power and influence for the Church so important
9. Do secular states harm Catholics to evangelize to non-believers? Why or why not?

Further Reading

<http://www.iclars.org/media/pdf/abstract/Abstractspapers.pdf>

<https://cruxnow.com/global-Church/2018/07/11/as-secularism-mounts-vatican-tries-to-rescue-abandoned-Churches/>

<https://www.secularism.org.uk/what-is-secularism.html>

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