The phenomenon of globalisation is self-evident and prevalent at the beginning of this 21st century. It extends its hold to every sphere of personal and collective life: political, economic, social, cultural and religious. Central to its definition and historical extension is the accumulation of capital.

Clearly economic interest, gain, and profit define and determine relationships of individuals and collectivity in globalization. It is in this relationship that worldwide transformations are perceived as a single force of subordinating production, sociopolitical institutions and cultural and spiritual traditions of African peoples to the one and only interest of the market and the accumulation of capital that increases daily.

Following this subordination, the worldwide spread of globalisation is comparable to a condensed, concentrated or a summary of forces that, in the continent, thanks to economic reforms, the appropriation or rather subjugation of the political sphere and the manipulation of the cultural and spiritual are life threatening: they threaten the life of individuals and collectivity, the life of nature and the immanence of the supernatural.

The matter is well known: according to authentic African tradition the sacred is always bonded with the profane; the one only the phenomenological base of the other. As institution of the sacred, religion, including African Traditional Religions (ATR) should not be a practice isolated within the margins of personal life and the journey of political institutions, economic mechanisms and cultural and religious renaissances. This anthropological and cultural inherence inscribes religions within the divided human world and makes it a commitment to the liberation of humans and
nature from the control of the forces of globalization. From this perspective reconciliation is only another name for liberation.

To define reconciliation and indicate the path it should take we divide this study into three parts. The first part tries to determine the anchor of ATR and the resources embedded in it for developing a programme of reconciliation in the continent. This centre is the human person. The destiny of humans is on trial thanks to globalization that splits up its unity and its simplicity into antagonistic components both in humans and in the surrounding world. As a result divided humans are made fragile, unable to be victorious in the combat over their destiny; humans are unable to establish unity within and around the self, to enable the forces of the light, the good and life to triumph over the forces of darkness, evil and death. Humans display therefore a break-up of radical harmony, a chronic absence of unity, and consequently an appeal for its recomposition.

The second part flows from the first. It is an attempt to show that human time is opportunity to resolve human distress. In temporality, ATR is a path chosen by humans to eradicate distress that challenges profoundly their being. Also religion in Africa is initiation to harmony; an apprenticeship in the unification of all the components of the person, notably the potentialities that the hope for its realization requires the exorcism of forces of darkness, of evil and the powers of death.

In this context, as we shall show in the third part, reconciliation is an agenda inherent to ATR (always understood in plural). To become an institution of life and ministry of unity of the human person, ATR is called upon to be an engagement for the unity of the human person and for the unity of the world, a reconciliation of contradictory tensions in the human person and in the world, a liberation from the grasp of the death-dealing forces of globalization. Following the train of ATR, reconciliation is a specific process that enables religious practices and the endogenous initiatives of globalization to become interdependent.
The Human Person, a simple Composite Reality:

Father Engelbert Mveng, of happy memory, carefully reminded us that “the point of departure of Black African thought (especially with regard to reflection on ATR) is not being as such. It is rather the experience of life, the life of living human Person. Here we come face to face not with ontology but with anthropology”.¹ It is the human person, in the final analysis, which is at the same time subject and object of thought in Black Africa. Consequently, to be subject, the human person appears as a being endowed with intelligence, a being that is rational. Therefore, depending on the inclination of his/her intelligence, He/She is neither an abstract concept nor an element in the tissue of cosmic determinisms.

According to Kasai (African) tradition², the person is «kabundi», or better still, is similar to «kabundi», a fox, constitutively defined by her sagacity, dexterity and intelligence. Reason, in the human person, is not an absolute curiosity. It is rather at the heart of the din and racket of the contemporary world: relative and open to interiority, indeed to human destiny, consciousness, desires, will, soul, vocation, which, in some way, it happens to be the memory; open to those acts that concretely fulfil it. Therefore, reason’s curiosity concerns not only interiority but also exteriority; it concerns the temporal dimensions of the human person.

Hence, time becomes one of the places to understand the human condition. Time can be defined as totality of acts, or rather a series of acts, events, initiatives, enterprises. In brief time is Malu³: they punctuate the march of the human person and design the itinerary of his/her constitution as a human person. These acts are not simply chronological instants. They are, up to the least

² Kasai region is in central Democratic Republic of the Congo.
³ The term ‘malu’ comes from Ciluba, language of the Kasai; it signifies acts, facts, initiatives, events, enterprises, problems, traditions, etc.
chronological point, moments, stages and operations of personal and communal flourishing of the human being. In other words, time is not an instant turned into fetish, whose idolatrous extension is a story of enslavement; forcefully holding in captivity the vital force of individuals and the projects of collectivities within the demands of its power; bringing about the renewal of a regime or mental and institutional complex that telescopes or blocks everyone uniformly within its chronocentric egoism, its idolatrous avarice and the interiorization of the human person and unification of peoples.

All in all, "...time enters... into the definition of the human being, needless to say, 'as the index of his/her weakness, (ageing), his/her condition as creature, but also and principally as essential coordinate of his/her existence in the world'. The time of humans inaugurates a process through which the human being constructs his/her becoming by creating and organizing relationship to the self, the world and to all reality. It is (the human wish at work to achieve fullness and in travail for the creation of the private space and objective of its publicity). It is lived as evacuation of non-being, establishment of order, the anticipation of a self and a fullness ceaselessly postponed." There is more. Time is not, as one sees it, an absolute grandeur, self-defining by and for itself. Its moments, its instants, its episodes require for their advent, their efficacy, the participation of the body. Temporality always evokes corporeality. To be in time is indissociably and simultaneously to have a body and vice versa.

5 See, M. MALU Nyimi, Inversion culturelle et déplacement de la pratique chrétienne africaine. Préface à une théologie périphérique, (KTC 24), Kampen, Kok, 1994, p.115
6 Ibid., p.111
7 Ibid., p.24
There is no growth or motion towards realizing human destiny in time and towards unification of peoples without corporeal engagement.

Thus, body in time, is an organ of articulating these instants, these historical episodes and the unification of individual subjects. In the articulation and unification, the body is no longer an insulating organ. It is rather like a bridge through which human subjects become interdependent, linked one to another and put on the space of their existence. It is like the thread that sews all humans together, the tissue in which they are enveloped.

Observation reveals indeed that the body is made of pores. Pores are like multiple orifices through which the body becomes permeable, facilitating the effectiveness of its action, the actuation of human destiny, open to the rhythms and forces of the world, making itself world, space and cosmos. Body is thus the biological form of space. Therefore to have body is without doubt to be in time, and also to be in the world. Body enables time to be united with the cosmos. “...In African anthropology, the corporeal element is the point of the articulation of the human person to other dimensions of its essential structure: the absolute, the community and the cosmos. For the African, the body is a constitutive element of (his/her) definition...an indissoluble knot of relationships—human, social, cosmic and divine. The body ... appears not only as the point of the objective emergence of the interiority of the human person and the specific consciousness of his/her personality, of his cultural autonomy and his/her responsibility as historical being. It is perhaps the normative paradigm of the universe—economic, social, ecological and psychological. Corporeality appears to be the criterion for the truth of determinations of the historical development of human life that have ecological, economic, social, cultural, ethnic, racial, sexual dimensions."

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8 M. MALU Nyimi, Ibid., p.157-158
This course is particularly significant. It shows, we dare to hope, that understanding, that in itself is relative, is an attentive observation of time and body, and finally of the person in them. Also body and time are nothing but operations of human action. They are also the dwelling of the presence of human destiny that has life as its constitutive horizon.

In the light of African anthropology, life is at the centre of human condition and, in short, of existence, of destiny, of body-space and time. In addition, life is not "en soi" (solitary self) placed at the core of the human condition. It is the defined, defining and definitive essence of human existence. It is the personal and final goal of the human being. It is the ever incomplete end of its evolution. "This evolution", E. Mveng wrote, "is unlike the Greek degradation and fall... It does not separate from Nous to fall, passing through Logos and Psyche, into the chaos of Hyle. On the contrary, it is a forward march, ascension, passion, death and resurrection". It is "an assiduous search, an ordeal, always on course, always undertaken anew and never completed." Here, evolution is fecundation, birth, growth and rebirth of life whose final though provisional end is the emergence of the living Human, as human person. Life fundamentally defines the human person that has arrived at his/her personal stature. It is its fundamental aim.

It is in the mirror of this evolution that life is affirmed, as far as its personal state, as gift, and, consequently, as presence of the giver. Black African cosmologies are unanimous and elaborate in describing the prodigious details of the origin of human life. 

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9 E.MVENG, L'Afrique dans l'Eglise. Paroles d’un croyant, p.11
Here, life has its source in primordial "emptiness", "non-being"\(^\text{12}\) whose principle, energy, and wave was the base of the original "big bang", the primitive explosion from which arose the cosmos, the planets, and notably the earth where humans are the creature of privilege.\(^\text{13}\)

Life thus draws its source from "Matter". Since "Matter" holds in itself the principle of its being, the energy of its evolution and the power of its rebirth, it was raised to the rank of deity. Cheikh Anta Diop makes a salient and interesting observation on this point:

Up to this point, the Egyptian «cosmogony» is materialistic in essence, for it is professing a materialistic faith when postulating the existence of an uncreated eternal matter, excluding nothingness and containing its own principle of evolution as intrinsic property. This materialistic component of Egyptian thought will prevail among the Greek and Latin Atomists (Democretus, Epicurius and Lucretius). But, with the appearance of the demiurge, RA, Egyptian cosmogony takes a new direction with the introduction of an idealist component: RA achieves

1985, p.9; O.BIMWENYI Kweshi, *Discours théologique négro-africain. Problème des fondements*, p.551

\(^\text{12}\) In African cosmology «emptiness» and «non-being» always imply uncreated matter though non organised. Listen to CH.A.Diop, "According to these systems, the universe was not created ex nihilo, on a given day; but there has always existed an uncreated matter, without a beginning or an end (the apeiron, without limit and without determinations, of Anaximander, Hesiod, etc; this chaotic matter was, in origin, the equivalent of non-being, because of the sole fact that it was unorganized: thus, non-being is not, here, the equivalent of nothingness, from which would rise, no one knows how, the matter that would be the substance of the universe. This chaotic matter contained at the archetypal state (Plato) all the essences of the body of the future beings that, one day, would be called into existence", CH.A. DIOP, *Civilization or Barbarism. An Authentic Anthropology*, p.310

\(^\text{13}\) See FU-KIAU Bunseki kia Kumbwandende, *African Cosmology of the Bantu-Kongo*; and also E.MVENG, *l'Afrique dans l'Eglise*, p. 10
creation through the word (Islam and Judeo-Christian Religions), the Logos (Heraclitus), the Spirit (the objective idealism of Hegel). As soon as RA conceives things, they emerge into existence

Precisely in African cosmology, "this primordial matter, the Nous or the "primordial waters" was elevated to the level of divinity (called NUN in Egyptian cosmology). Thus, from the start, each principle of explanation of the universe is doubled by a divinity, and as philosophical thought developed in Egypt, and more particularly in Greece (materialistic School), the later replaced the former"

In this perspective, to be product of matter, life, in African cosmology, is not less the work of God. It is God's gift to humans. It is enriched with material principle doubled with supernatural principle. Life is therefore not a notion, even simple or abstract. In African anthropology, it is not a dispensable attribute of the human person and the world. It is constitutive of its essence as created being, as received. It is therefore a gift. God is the parent. That explains why, in the human person, it is a seed, force, energy, power, a divinely infused virtue, in the fibres of the biophysical condition of the human being. "Life is in the human person a concrete reality. It is a force, an energy whose intensity and vitality is required for individuation." It is incorrect to consider it as static or a fixed reality. It is dynamic. In this wise, and to the benefit of its personal becoming, it embodies an imperative for action, for engagement, an ethic of responsibility.

14 CH. A. DIOP, Civilization or Barbarism. An authentic Anthropology, o.c., p.311
15 Ibid.
The responsibility is lived in action. It is in praxis that life appears as "breath", as "force". Therefore it is the virtue, energy, power, promise, and hope in the human person. Besides, the being living in hope is something other than the passive docility in the present world, resignation, fatality to the virtual state of life, to its indetermination. Hope implies always and imperatively the advent of its object. In principle, it is therefore an ontological challenge to all ordeals, the screens to its dawn, especially death. Indeed, following the logic of promise, death is not death, but a transition to a new dawn of being.

Therefore, "life holds death at a distance... Death is only a march past, true enough a hard passage towards 'life that endures'". "And so", as O Bimwenyi-Kweshi underlines, "far from constituting a catastrophe by itself, the tears and the ordeals arise from 'the initiation tunnel', that is the totality of sub-solar residence, before the advent of life that is 'durable'". In the promise, life expresses itself as desire in search of appeasement, thirst in labour of being slaked, an appetite on the way to beatific satisfaction. Existence is under the sign of promise, as "an immense wish, a vehement desire to live fully without ever ceasing to live".

O Bimwenyi-Kweshi has, on this point, particularly dense and limpid pages; highly significant texts that one cannot resist quoting integrally:

Therefore the brief time slot of existence that runs between the initial smile and the final tears is studded with traps, punctuated with ordeals and temptations of all sorts, of

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18 O. BIMWENYI Kweshi, *Discours théologique négro-africain*, p. 594
19 Ibid., p.596.
20 Ibid, p.594
21 Ibid.,
which pessimistic despair is not the least. Nevertheless, astonishing and admirable reality, muntu did not yield to it. He remained allergic to discouragement, to despair despite the ordeals that arose from her sociocultural situation, epidemics, not forgetting innumerable historical reverses...occasioned by sparks that follow the intermingling of peoples of the planet. The coalition of forces of death did not wipe away his smile, his joie de vivre. In the shadows that he traversed since centuries, muntu is the smile of the world.22

At the end of his/her incomplete evolution, life appears as a total holistic reality. “It is not simply material force; it is total energy that integrates the polyvalent forces, moving from physical integrity, to chance and moral integrity”.23 Life is not only virtual in humans. It is also formal when it is found in humans and animals; it is analogical where it reproduces in things, even in inanimate things, especially in plants, green and dry, and in minerals.24 Prof V. Mulago writes:

Life that is our subject is integral life, individual in so far as received by each existent, communal and collective in so far as participated in the same and unique source....It is neither the life of the sentient nor of thinking beings. It is also not the diverse and multicoloured life one finds in journals and modern novels. It is life in all its simplicity and essence. It is life as participated in and received from ‘power’, that addresses power, and is seized by power and as it seizes the power. That kind of life is not destroyed by death, even though the latter offers it the possibility to change its

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22 Ibid. p.593,
24 FR. M. LUFULUABO, Mentalité religieuse africaine et christianisme: convergences et divergences, dans Revue du Clergé Africain, 23 (1967), P.319
condition. This life does not follow a straight line; rather it is in the form of a circumference; in other words from life to death there is no interruption but continuation. It has got nothing to do with life that is exclusively corporeal or exclusively spiritual; rather it is life that is “totally human”. It is the whole life of a being, the integrity of being. This integrity of being includes its appurtenances: patrimony, background, etc. This is because for the African, the human person is never conceived shed of all appurtenances.  

Finally, it is in life that the human being discovers the diversity of his/her dimensions. Personal individuation of life is naturally through actions, through works. These are esteemed as impulses, as steps, as staircases for ascension, for increase, fulfilment and personal completion of life. In action, the human person is proven as “a pilgrim, always on the way, towards a fascinating fullness always postponed”. The human person becomes progress towards the horizon of his/her existence which is life, to become a champion, a hero called upon to overcome the obstacles erected on the way to the conquest of life, to crush the forces of darkness, of evil and of death, so as to realize the victory by the forces of light, of the good and of life.

It is also in action that the human person discovers the incapacity to realise all alone, in solitude, the program of life, his/her destiny. This precariousness appears as an opportunity that forces the human person into his/her “being-to be-being-with”; in other words a knot of relationships, a being of alliance, of marriage, of solidarity, of participation and of community. In action, the
human person, in order to be a personal being, is nonetheless a
communitarian being, a social being. "The individual is tied to and
depends on the community, but is not lost in it”, Prof V. Mulago
loves to stress. "The vital gift is never cut off from its source; all
the canals through which it is transported always exercise their
influence on it. Individual life is neither conceived nor lived except
as attached to the source and the channels through which it came.
This life of the individual is grasped only as participated.”

As O. Bimweny-Kweshi wrote, “in accordance with ... relationship (to the community), muntu is member, mwena, ‘son of...’. He/she lives-with. It is not Cyenda nkaya, a solitary walker
without friends, without links; nor Cysa-nkaya, a misanthrope
‘living alone’, at the margins of society. As team mate and
intermediary (relay-being); life for her is life-with-others,
connected to the life circuit whose ultimate home is God”. It is
within community, i.e. the couple, family, clan, nation, etc., that the
human becomes a person, draws strength and becomes, with others,
truly capable of surmounting all the psychological and sociological
obstacles to the achievement of the promise of life. Nevertheless,
one must lift the ambiguity that risks taking root: the community
does not destroy individuality in the human person. “...the person,
far from being thought as absorbed by his/her group (...) is rather
one instance, a source of meaning, a place for the experience of the
autonomy of speech, a takeoff point for action.”

28 V. MULAGO, Un visage africain du christianisme. L'union vitale bantu face a l'unité ecclésiale, p.119
29 O.BIMWENYI Kweshi, Discours théologique négro-africain., p.608
30 BUAKASA Tulu kia Mpansu, « L'impact de la religion africaine sur l’Afrique
d'aujourd'hui. Latence et Patience, » dans Religions Africaines et Christianisme.
Colloque international de Kinshasa. 9-14 janvier 1978. 2., Kinshasa, Faculté de
Théologie Catholique de Kinshasa, 1979, p. 23
The community is here responsible for “communion”.\textsuperscript{31} Communion is a process entirely ruled by love. Such is marriage; in love there is no restrictive union, reductive of difference and the alterity of the other as much as the increase (growth) of the lover and the beloved. It is rather a covenant whose accomplishment is at the same time the self fulfilment and accession of the other. They are fecund nuptials in which lovers generate, assume themselves in their otherness, in their consciousness, realize the spiritual and carnal unity that makes the one the resemblance of or the “same” of the other. It is that by which the human person recapititulates in his/her person the allies of life, of his life and assumes the different vital forces of the visible and invisible world.

Recapitulation is not coercion as it were exercised from outside, in the total subordination of things and being. It is felt as a call through which the human person arouses through the mediation of word, of speech, existent things and beings. According to African tradition, the human person is a being endowed with eloquence. S/he is master of speech. His/her speech is a “calling” and renovation\textsuperscript{32}. From indistinctiveness he/she enables things to appear as ordered, names them, brings their creation to fulfilment and makes them available. “Through the power of naming, the human person calls things into a new existence in relationship to himself. He awakens in them the latent parcel of the primordial word; and by this awakening, by this type of ‘resurrection’, he animates all things with the vibratory rhythm inherent in the word.\textsuperscript{33} Recapitulation listens to things and beings and elevates them to the pitch of the human, enabling them to become comparable partners of the human being.

The human person is rightly said to be a microcosm in the bosom of the macrocosm; the universe in miniature, the universe synthesized, the rendezvous of all vital forces, ‘a relay-being’, grain of the universe, coryphaeus of the dance of being, an

\textsuperscript{31} E.MVENG, L’Afrique dans l’Eglise. Paroles d’un croyant, p.14
\textsuperscript{32} O.BIMWENYI Kweshi, Discours théologique négro-africain, p.602
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
ornament, jewel of the universe, confluence or juncture of all beings.\textsuperscript{34} She is guarantor of the equilibrium of the external world, indeed of the cosmos; the axis called to preserve multiplicity lest it collapses into chaos, Lord-of-all-things.\textsuperscript{35}

In light of the recapitulation, the assimilation, appropriation—in other words of communion and love—the human being appears to us as a simple compound, better still an organic simplicity. Her person is a complexity. She holds, besides her destiny, the invisible world made by God, ancestors, spirits, forces of the earth and the visible world; the human world, the animal world, plant world and even the world of inorganic beings.\textsuperscript{36} “The person is not thus a frozen reality. She is living, ceaselessly becoming, acquiring ever new determinations, susceptible—beyond a certain critical threshold—of modifying the internal and social configuration of muntu, whose novel dimensions thus manifested give rise to a new name”.\textsuperscript{37} “Situated at the heart of the universe, muntu displays the self as bridge of the world, the revolving plaque of all these relationships, the place of ‘perichoresis’ of beings”.\textsuperscript{38} “(Also, muntu) (has) consciousness of being synchronically team player, a member that all can count on; and, diachronically a relay-being, a terminal bud that recapitulates in the self the vital current coming from God through ancestors, knowing very well that he/she is responsible, on her part, for the transmission of this life and the name of the fathers”.\textsuperscript{39}

Poets have rivalled one another in eloquence over this point. “Flesh of the flesh of the world”, “pores of all breaths of the world making possible the confluence of all beings in the great cosmic rhythm, presiding over a type of cosmic liturgy. According to some Black African traditions, muntu makes possible the confluence of beings not only through speech, as he speaks and listens to them,
gives them names and leads their dance, but also already by his constitution indeed as a being, for he is made as the ‘rendezvous of all the forces’, as the ‘synthesis of all things’. Muntu is one, but his/her unity is complex. She is made of many elements, “some fundamental, others supplementary, some permanent, others provisional or periodic; some capable of going away or leaving (coming off), others capable of coming (entering); some relative to the function of willing (I, me), others related to the function of determination”.

These forces, in the human person, are thus totally unified. The unification is neither juxtaposition, nor superposition of the components of the human person; it is consubstantial, conjunction, harmonious circularity as love desires. It is in the struggle for communion, for unity, for harmony, and for equilibrium in the human person and around him/her that one must insert oneself to better understand and define African religion and the perspective of reconciliation it embodies.

**African religion, initiation into unity:**

Life entails in ATR, in view of its personal advent, a demand for the unification of the components of the human being. There lies also the mission of the human person. It consists in unifying his/her interior world, assuring within the self the victory of the powers of life over the forces of death, assuring the same on the socio-cosmic level, “for, in general, it is the split human person that divides the world”. Unity appears as an essential precondition for the personal development of life.

However, we already said that the components are, to the benefit of their elevation to the diapason of the person, “personal or

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40 Ibid., p.603
41 BUAKASA Tulu kia Mpansu, « L’impact de la religion africaine sur l’Afrique d’aujourd’hui », p. 23
42 O. BIMWENYI Kweshi, *Discours théologique négro-africain*. p.595
personified" beings whose will to power leads at times and perhaps often to individual egoism and collective avarice. These anti-values have always been present in African civilizations as negative forces of disintegration, splitting the unity of the human person, the unity of the collectivity and the unity of the world. Far from being partners, allies of life, they transform into forces of darkness and death, real threats to individual and collective lives. Minerals, plants, animals, other humans, institutions often appear in the journey of the human being as coalitions of forces of death fighting the forces of life, of human life. Even God remains silent. God’s silence is interpreted as "avarice" that makes God indifferent to the appeals of threatened life, even makes God party to life in distress.43

In this context, human existence is an urgent call to fill in this profound lack of communion, call to unity in order to reach fulfilled life; it is therefore a demand (requirement) of reconciliation of the different psychological, sociological, ecological and metaphysical components of the human person.

The response to the appeal is not only the concern of individuals. It is also the basis of the origin of institutions, of religions in particular. Religions, including ATR, are in effect indissociable from the destiny of individuals and the historical itinerary of peoples. They need to be understood as responses to the multiple challenges of their soul and their historical consciousness. They are spiritualities that peoples forged that are most suitable to their sensibility, their genius and their challenges. They are like mirrors and lights of our personal and collective lives.44 As L.V.

43 Ibid., p.572
44 Listen to Stewart, "Orisha traditions illustrate that religion is ultimately a way of life and offers humans tools for managing life. To manage life well requires mastering the self. Self-mastery is facilitated by the development of iwa pele (gentle and noble character) and acceptance of one’s ita (life purpose). By living in accordance with the collective wisdom of the ancestors and the ethical teachings of the tradition (acquired through divination and experience), Orisha devotees negotiate personal and communal life with the aim of overcoming misfortune, disease, and oppression in the here and now life. Living a satisfying
Thomas wrote, "as symbolic system, religion is first of all an intellectual response to existential anxiety [estrangement]" (whose) "rituals and ...beliefs are rooted in the social order." They are therefore for individuals and collectivity springboards of real responsibilities.

Religion is thus not an isolated phenomenon. In Africa, as elsewhere in the world, it is bound to the history of human communities. This history appears as "work" facilitating the emergence of collectivity into civilisation and individuals into becoming human. It is therefore work, it seems to me, or to be more precise, the mode of production that is the privileged place for understanding the profile of individuals, the morphology and the signification of their institutions, including religious institutions. Labour is without doubt the production of things, of wealth. It is more than ever the production of the human being who makes the self a human person through producing things. Religions would be institutions for the benefit of the labour of the production of humans and their universe. Work is therefore in religion, multidimensional. It is physical, symbolic, spiritual, and even mystifying, notably through its relation to death, perceived at the end of a fulfilled terrestrial life as a passage, an emergence from the present visible world to enter into the invisible world.

More still; production in Africa is performed through numerous and different activities, notably agriculture, fishing, livestock, metallurgy, art, etc. They are integral part of the African mode of production. What however appears specific to this mode

and good fortune with others is encouraged by the promise of ancestor hood and reincarnation in the life to come” D.M STEWART, “Orisha Traditions in the West”, in M. DE LA TORRE (ed.), The Hope of Liberation in World Religions, Baylor University Press, p.244-245


46 Voir, TSHIBANGU, T., Le propos d'une théologie africaine, p.19

47 Ibid., p.32
of production is that while remaining human activity, production
is not a surgery, an operation whereby through violence humans
attempt to pillage the wealth and resources of the earth. On the
contrary, production is perceived and lived as recognition of human
existence, human gratitude towards the land, for the goods thus
produced are the gift of the earth to her sons and daughters that
humans beings are. More precisely, production is, in its African
mode and as related to the land, gratitude towards the Principle, the
Spirit who created the universe and therefore the planet earth. In
this sense, production is linked to religion. It happens always in an
environment, in a religious context.

Under this connection, producing, through human effort, is
indeed prayer, thanksgiving to the earth, and finally prayer to the
"Father" to provide for his sons and daughters the goods that are
indispensable for their existence. One understands hence that the
means of production are, besides manufactured tools, symbols,
speech, rites and worship. That explains why African civilization is
a history “richer in symbols than in tools and technology, more
oriented towards being than having, more sensitive to accumulating
humans than in market capitalization of goods”.48

Labour requires obedience to the land. It is work of
constructing harmony between humans and the earth, with fellow
humans, with nature, with spirits and with God. On the whole,
production remains a work of men and women in this world. It is
furthermore, in the same line, a homage rendered to the earth and to
God, who is the first agent. Labour in the mode of African
production is therefore, without doubt, an initiative of humans and
therefore a work of God, God’s gift.

It is through labour that humans, and religions along with
them, assume the responsibility of unification, of combining the
different components of the human person and thus fortify humans
in the combat for the conquest of life. Therefore, African mysticism
is deployed in awareness of the forces that threaten life and its

48 L.V. THOMAS, La religion africaine dans son essence et ses manifestations,
p.76
personal unity against which humans are obliged to protect themselves. These forces are extrinsic: witchcraft, fate, curses, political oppression, economic exploitation, ideological paternalism. They are also intrinsic: humans themselves through egoism, avarice, transgression of interdicts, non-observance of taboos; brief, transgression of the moral law.

Following work, the spiritual is perceived as being received, given, and begotten. Its being is acknowledgment. It is, consequently, made up of beliefs, allegiances to visible and invisible hierarchies that engendered it. Thus, religions are indissociable from the human condition, from the radical lack that the universe echoes. They are beliefs or the totality of beliefs and cult given to a Power or a Supreme Being that makes humans to be through the diverse mediations from the world of ancestors, spirits, parents or the community.49 They are, according to critics, "belief in two worlds, visible and invisible, belief in the communal and hierarchical character of these two worlds, belief in the interaction between the two worlds, transcendence not impeding immanence, belief in a Supreme Being, creator and father of all that exist".50

One finds in religions in condensed way the characteristic traits of African culture. According to Elungu Pene Elungu, the essentials of our wisdom and traditional religions (of African culture) can be schematized in the following traits:

"the primacy of the omnipresence of life as force and link; The anthropovitalism of the human person, of the society that apprehends the universe, that acts on it, without ever coming out of them nor never able to be separated from them; the co-vitalism or connaturalism of all society based on the clan and the whole culture that is linked to it;

49 Ibid., p.29
the eminently ethical, metaphysical and religious character of these cultures where the religious order, the natural order and the social order correspond in the unity of a cosmogonic and theogonic system.

This ensemble is constantly renewed so that individuals and collectivities face up to new challenges.

Mystical life is a human experience. On this note, its understanding is indissociable from the comprehension of the person, of the mystic. Indeed, in the economy of life, the human person is not pure nature. He/she fulfils the self always as a human person. The person is defined as human through his/her vocation, through his/her destiny. Consciousness shows precisely that destiny is not a given, something already constructed once and for all, constituted for and by the human person. It is a task whose relentless accomplishment makes the human person a being on the way, a journey towards fulfilment, perfection, successful and fullness of life. This has been sufficiently repeated.

Fullness appears like a promise and poses the "primal originary precariousness", the "radical lack", as the constitutive faculty of the situation, of the human condition. Fullness nevertheless reveals that chaos has not the last word in human destiny. It is as one reads from the profound need in humans for order, harmony, security, life and unification of forces of life against forces of death, forces of light against forces of darkness. It makes the human person, a being profoundly anxious, an interrogation taken up ceaselessly, an existential enigma, a summary of contradictions and paradoxes, conflicts and vicissitudes.

51 ELUNGU Pene Elungu, « Religions africaines et philosophie, » in Religions Africaines et Christianisme, p.96
53 T.TSHIBANGU (Mgr), « L’Afrique noire et le christianisme », p.29
It is here that African religions appear particularly precious. They are without doubt, as L.V. Thomas wrote, "one of the multiple routes that, for centuries, 'man' borrowed to try and respond to fundamental interrogations which, all time, preside over his life". They are thus rightly sanctuaries, groves of meaning, of the direction of existence. It is thus that rituals, worship, symbols, myths have, it is said, initiatory and mystagogic value. It introduces adepts to be conscious of their soul, of their personality, of their awareness of God. Initiation is here a true 'voyage', a 'pilgrimage' at the end of which the pilgrim, the adept emerges onto the encounter and communion with his/her divine model, with the God of his/her belief and of his/her history.

It is in encounter and communion that the African believer is called to live and witness to the mystical experience. In encounter and communion, mystical experience appears as a marriage, the wedding of the adept with the God that chose and seduced him/her. This marriage is like a walk towards fecundation that places the adept beside the "groom", makes him/her royal as the latter, confers on him/her the prerogatives of commandment, raise him/her to the diapason of his authority: "there is (in initiation, that is in encounter and communion) the profoundly lived sentiment of participation in the existence of a God without partners (without mediations), interiorly felt as unique, immense, hidden, rich, 'burning', just and good; to have an experience of God (especially in possession) is in a sense "initiation and the prolongation of the life of this God itself".

For the faithful, this union is like a 'mounting' that makes him/her a personal, primary and elementary cathedral, the sacristy, the dwelling place, one could say the grove of his/her God. The

54 L.V. THOMAS et R.LUNEAU, La terre africaine et ses religions. Traditions et changements, Paris, Librairie Larousse,1975, p.10
56 L.V. THOMAS et R.LUNEAU, La terre africaine et ses religions, p.175
57 Ib., p.180.
unity is not only spiritual; it involves the totality of the person of the faithful. It is corporeal and cosmic; the body is biological form of the universe.58 Indeed, "the human person is in the world and is one with the world. In fact, the human relationship with the geographical and biological context is not oppositional by nature. Far from separating from the environment, humans coincide with it, name and animate it. The world is not a strange spectacle or a system of perception; it is rather a complex of explanatory signs or symbols and a creator of verbal forms; better still, it defines itself as the personification of symbol. This complex reality-human-world, the human that occupies in the world a place of privilege, ends in the hominisation of the universe...leads to the antipode of naturism."59

Altogether, "(mystical life) is (in African culture, in ATR) first of all communion with the divine. The communion implies, in the opinion of Prof D. Ngondo Dishone Kalala, that one feels one with the other, it calls even to unity. The presence of one to the other ends in communication not only of thought and sentiments... but also of destiny/fate, designs, wills, primarily of the divine nature. It is an encounter that invites a coming out of the self to move towards the other, beyond all mediation, to the point of living immediate, intense, indeed intimate communion with this other or Other. This communion constitutes an experience of the divine permitting the knowledge or savoir made possible by the initiative that comes from elsewhere. It is also identification with the other in its life and its dramatic death. This identification sends humans back to reproduce in life, the life of the hero."60

58 M. MALU Nyimi, Inversion culturelle et déplacement de la pratique chrétienne africaine. p.30-43
In other words, the mystical life is better presented in the language of valour associated with spirituality. Listen to Mveng: “The amorous encounter between lovers is a cosmic celebration of the soul of shadows of the night (forces of darkness, powers of death, of evil), of the prison of all its ‘ecological’ environment (house, castle, secret staircases), of its social environment (‘no one saw me’), cosmic environment (dark night, starry sky); it is a veritable initiatory birth where from the bosom of darkness and night (death), the soul is slowly born for the dawn, to the light brighter than the noonday sun. It is in this dazzle that the Beloved encounters the awaiting Lover that she already knew in her heart. It is the fusion of the Loved-One and the Lover, each transformed in the other. Then the mystery of the Blessedness of the pure in heart shines forth; when the Beloved holds the Lover tightly to her heart that is kept for Him Alone. Plunged into the slumber of Love, “asleep on his heart, I knew him, fanning him with cedar fans! ‘...Nature plunged into the nuptial mystery, seems to be falling asleep slowly, murmuring a lullaby of lazy breeze and perfumed Petals’”61.

Mystical experience is not just the immanent initiative of a transcendent God but also and in particular within the initiative of God Himself, the action of the human person, self-transforming and self-humanising.” One notes in these conditions that (mystical experience) is in the end ... a kind of humanism which, taking off from the human person to return there, captures in its track all that is not himself and which surpasses him. This humanism is the basis of individual and social ethics whose normal flourishing finds fulfilment in the mystical life. Moral life and mystical life, these two aspects of African spirituality give it its true dimensions. They are, so to say, the supreme end of the soul of Black folks, the objective towards which the individual tends with all powers,

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because he or she does not feel that her perfection realized and consummated unless s/he reaches self mastery and surpasses herself through the deity, indeed mastering the deity herself.”

This God that comes to appease the disquiet of the mystic, cushion the passion and fill up his/her “radical lack” has the face circumscribed by the adept. It is the God of his/her experience and destiny, the God of his/her ancestors. S/he feels it and perceives it as the summit of the hierarchy of the universe, the ‘Force’, the first and ultimate power that gives life; God the Creator and Sustainer, the Holy One. One cannot but insist on this point: “God is perceived as the ‘Great Ancestor’, first founder and genitor, the giver of life, the power that inheres in all that is. God is the primordial initiator of ways and customs of peoples, of their tradition. In the mystical life of Africans, “God is known and honoured as the ‘Great Ancestor’, Ukulunkulu (Zulu), Omukama (Ganda), Nyame (Akan), Olodumare (Yoruba), Leve (Mende), etc. God is, in African mysticism, that Spirit, the Force that henceforth delivers from slavery to the unconscious powers and the prisons of the African milieu. God is the Beloved whose ecstasy is indissociable from mystical exaltation, from elevation to the divine diapason, of his humanity.

Therefore, religion, to be faithful to its essence and definition, must respond to and correspond with the call of life threatened by the forces that divide life in the world and in the human heart, and thus render humans incapable of accomplishing the mission of his/her formal and analogical individuation.

This division of the human person and within the human person is, in Africa, neither a panacea nor a fact of nature. Its sources and resources are found in the contemporary world. And among the determining factors of the present world order that

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64 Ibid., p. 35.
65 Ibid., p.40.
nourish discord and rivalry in humans and in the world, it is convenient to cite what one calls today, ‘globalisation’. The insertion into the global order generates within the human person and around him/her, in Africa, spiritual, ideological, economic and social forces that are contradictory; the effect is a constant threat to human life, in short of life in the continent. Mystical life becomes from thence, an effort, if not to eradicate these contradictory forces, at least an attempt to reconcile them; an attempt at their endogenous transformation into forces, powers of the light, for the personal and collective wellbeing of the human person.

The Programme of Reconciliation in African Traditional Religions

In order that the religions may be institutions of life, they have to work for the advent of the unity of man, the unity of Africa, the reconciliation of all the contradictory and rival forces in man and his universe. That is the meaning of African traditional religion. “Black African religion is first and foremost a quest for harmony between humans and nature, between a human person and the group, between humans and spirits, between the living and the dead”.

This action is not magical. It requires an attentive observation of the human situation in the world and the present world order from the perspective of globalisation. The latter is the most globalising fact of our time. It does not derive its motivating force from the continent. Its origins are situated in the West as well as the awakening of its soul, its economic order, and its political institutions, its scientific and technological tools. It is a “profound, durable and dogged movement. It extends its influence to all the spheres of our existence and all the sides of the globe; it reigns over

66 Ibid.
all countries, shakes the traditions, the cultures and habits and leaves no alternatives to the societies of our time”

According to critics, this movement is first and foremost economic and financial. As stated by Bishop Albert Rouet, “an egocentric globalisation defines the present transformations of the world which has become the talk of the day. Its law and fundamental nature are essentially economic”. Globalisation imperatively imposes the obligation of the accumulation of capital.

This accumulation is accompanied by the compression of the world-space into a “planet-village” which economists call “market”. The market, in the context of global transformations, is a zone of production, consumption and exchange of goods and services, and by consequence, the circulation and meeting of persons, hence the dialogue of cultures. Globalisation is revealed in the suppression of obstacles to communication and in the abolition of borders that separate countries/peoples.

On this note, globalisation is perceived in Africa as a vector of civilisation and progress, a driving force for the distribution of knowledge, technology, information and culture. According to J. Ki-Zerbo, “it is an opportunity that has to be seized”. Africa, he writes, still has all her chances. Her inhabitants want to and can become actors of their development. Adversity and fatality are no longer the first and last words of the future.

However, this is where there lies a paradox. The circulation and use of goods enrol persons, communities and their geographic spheres into the global world order. They are enrolled and integrated into the present neo-liberal system. The neo-liberal order is a specific universe often described in the following terms: the

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69 A.ROUET, Mondialisation et respect de l’homme, dans Spiritus (mars 2000) n.166, p.122
70 M.GADOU Dakouri, les religions africaines face au défi de la mondialisation, dans Spiritus (mars 2000) n.166, p.65
71 J. Ki-ZERBO, Mondialisation, Une perspective du sud, in Foi et Dévelopement’ (July-August 1998), n° 265, p. 1.
absolute priority of the market, the primacy accorded to exportation activities whose consequence is the unconditional support of transnational capital and the devaluation of the local currency, the reduction of the State through the privatisation of productive actives and services, social politics is subordinated to macro-economic demands. Professor J. Kankwenda toes the same line:

The growth of conservative neo-liberalism brings about the disappearance of development as a category or preoccupation in social and economic politics. In fact, due to the dissolution of the Soviet empire, the dominant tendency in the northern hemisphere is the disengagement of government from the management of economic and social affairs, privatisations, deregulation and dismantling of the welfare state. Unfortunately, the fundamentalism of this credo has become the bible of the leading forces of globalisation.

This insertion appears in Africa as an extraversion which transforms hearts, institutions, structures and spirits into forces opposed to its development. Globalisation becomes contemporary to the neo-colonization of African peoples, the expropriation of their lands, the extraversion of their socio-political institutions and the perversion of their culture.

Economic forces, multinational companies and their local representatives, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, the bilateral and multilateral money-lenders, organise the pauperisation of individuals and communities through the various

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economic stabilisation reforms, multiple programmes of structural adjustment and diverse "initiatives for poverty reduction". "The Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) serve the interests of the money-lenders because they assure (i) the reimbursement of debts despite the crisis situation of the economy in Africa, (ii) the promotion of exportations, hence the integration (of African economies) in the world market, in the process of globalisation favourable to them, (iii) the maintenance of the function assigned by the system to the present economic structures in Africa".\(^74\)

These forces of economic exploitation cannot establish themselves "durably without the instauration of a convenient political order. Hence economic powers create institutions and political personalities they subdue to their interests. States become the police entrusted with the surveillance of the triumphant 'parade' of the neo-liberal economy".\(^75\) In other words, in this global process, the State is marginalised and reduced to specific functions, namely, the preparation of the terrain for the realisation of profit and the surveillance of its security". It is the agent for the search for formulas of adaptation and auto-adjustment to pressures of globalisation and its "barons".\(^76\) The State becomes a force of repression of the people's search for development and life.

In order to stabilise its reign durably, politics mobilises the forces of culture, paternalism and "patrimonialism". In fact, the interiorization of economic exploitation and political repression is a process of the transformation of Africa into a minor that consciously or unconsciously expects from his/her neo-liberal oppressor, brother of the same race or stranger, the resources for his/her personal and collective living. The oppressor is like a "Father" while the African is a "docile child". It is the reign of

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\(^74\) Ibid., p. 200/294.

\(^75\) M. MALU Nyimi (dir), Mondialisation et évangelisation au Congo Démocratique. Perspectives pour une pastorale du temps présent, Kinshasa, Cerdaf, 2007, p. 56.

\(^76\) J. KANKWENDA, Mbaya, Le développement général de l'Afrique.
resignation, of surrender to the good will of political leaders and holders of the means of production. This is what African theologians called “anthropological poverty”, “a preferential option for the ruin of the dignity of the human person, of his/her subjective and objective rights”\textsuperscript{77}, making her insensitive to the worldwide belonging and adulthood of human beings. Paternalism is doubled in the global context by “Patrimonialism”—the African passion for the appropriation of the common good for the benefit of individual interest\textsuperscript{78}. There is, in the African culture of globalisation, a perversion which makes it incompatible with the project of life of individuals and groups in the continent.

Paternalism and patrimonialism are like allegiances to global materialism, which has become an obstacle to the economy of religion in Africa, especially ATR, to the encounter and the communion of the adepts with the supernatural. “Globalisation is (in paternalism and patrimonialism) the repression of utopia in humans, of the capacity to open the self to God and to be God’s image, that is, to constantly go beyond one’s person, hence allowing one the power to construct it”\textsuperscript{79}. It is a culture of the ruin of human person and the death of God. The interiorization of the economic, political and cultural forces installs division and antagonism in the heart and spirit of the African, such that, as

\textsuperscript{77} M. MALU Nyimi (dir), Mondialisation et évangelisation au Congo Démocratique, p. 81-82/123.
\textsuperscript{79} A. ROUET, Mondialisation et respect de l’homme, in Spiritus (March 2000), n° 166, p. 126.
affirms the *Instrumentum Laboris* (art. 11) of the next Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for Africa:  

...the wounded, human heart is the ultimate hiding place for the cause of everything destabilizing the African continent. Selfishness nurtures greed, corruption and the allure of gain. It is the driving force in the misappropriation of goods and riches destined for entire populations. The thirst for power leads to contempt for all the elementary rules of good governance, takes advantage of people’s lack of knowledge, manipulates political, ethnic, tribal and religious differences and creates cultures where warriors are considered heroes and people need to be paid back for past sacrifices and wrongs committed. Basically, what blackens African society comes from the human heart.

At the long run, “the market has not been able to distribute equitably the dividends of globalisation. On the contrary, it has been an active negative agent.” The effects of these global forces on the continent are disastrous: “accumulation of riches among the barons of globalisation and the rich countries, skeletal or even lack of economic growth in Africa, unemployment, poverty increase, generalisation of crime, migration to greener pastures, drug trafficking, alimentary insecurity, expansion of HIV, environmental degradation, etc. As stated by J. Ki-Zerbo: “Africa is experiencing a new form of slavery which is harder than the ones of the former times. It is no longer a question of men and women crossing the

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80 The 2nd Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for Africa will hold in Rome from 4-25 October 2009, on the theme “The Church in African in the Service of Reconciliation, Justice and Peace. “You are the salt of the earth....You are the light of the world”.

Atlantic Ocean from Gorée to Louisiana, but the entire peoples of Africa are subdued and exploited in their own land”\(^82\).

This is where globalisation engenders in the consciousness of individuals and groups a “sentiment of frustration”. Paradoxically, this frustration is not synonymous with abdication, discouragement, resignation. On the contrary, it contains the imperative to re-qualify the globalisation which subdues it henceforth to the history of the personal and communal destiny, to the order of human transcendence. In this re-qualification there is a sort of response to incessant calls addressed to Africa towards freedom and responsibility in the global situation. “The continent, they say, must courageously assume the responsibility for the search for innovative ways and alternatives for another globalisation which will work for their happiness, with strategies for positioning diversified actors, including the State as the organ in-charge of social welfare and public interest as well as the market. Finally, the continent must position itself as an efficient actor of a controlled insertion into globalisation, not only as an agent for the search for formulas of adaptation and auto-adjustment to pressures from globalisation and its “barons”\(^83\).

This re-qualification is not only a project. In Africa, it is a history in progress. It is accomplished in the clear consciousness of the reality of globalisation. It is the work of the international community to participate in the formation of the citizens on the nature, the challenges, the benefits and the dangers of globalisation. In Africa, this consciousness must be accompanied with a history of richness, with an adequate concept of development of which the initiation requires the creation of endogenous and efficient poles\(^84\).

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\(^82\) J. Ki-KIZERBO, « Mondialisation, Une Perspective du sud », in *Foi and Développement* (July-August 1998), n° 265, col. 3, p. 3.

\(^83\) K. KANKWENDA Mbaya, *Le développement général de l’Afrique*.

\(^84\) The « Nande » an ethnic group in the eastern part of Democratic Republic of Congo represent mutatis mutandis, through its elites, especially the businessmen, a critical integration into the demands of mondialisation. See, P.
Their extension will then become the point of departure of a different economic world transformation, globalisation with a human face.

The new globalisation is not a sinecure. It is the collective work subjects who engender it, filled with the culture of “global citizenship” that does not confine the actors of the new global transformation into the individualistic, ethnic, regional and nationalistic corners, but enrols them in the general history of humanity which serves as anchor for the economy of the vital force of God.

Re-qualification, after frustration or “the consciousness of African alienation”\textsuperscript{85}, is like a thorn in the flesh of globalisation, one of its ineluctable antitheses. In Africa, it is not a slogan. It is present in what some call “African responses” to globalisation, such as, according to J. Kankwenda Mbaya, the “the Declaration of Strategy of Monrovia (Liberia 1979) and the “Lagos Plan of Action”(Nigeria, 1980). These initiatives among others have one specificity, namely, they profess an auto-centred African economy and regional integration as strategy for its realisation. “We resolve, on behalf of our governments and our peoples”, said the heads of State and Governments gathered in Monrovia, “to promote the economic and social development and the integration of our economies, towards the growth of self-dependence and in order to

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favour an endogenous development for the edification at the national, sub-regional and regional levels of a dynamic and interdependent African economy, in order to establish every year specific programmes for the actualisation of this sub-regional, regional and continental cooperation”\textsuperscript{86}. These initiatives are like antidotes to the actions of the international community, especially, the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank as well as those of the bilateral and multilateral backers (money lenders) whose reforms and action plans are simply destined to fix African economies at the level of the ship of the global neo-liberal economy, thereby abandoning the entire people in the hands of the forces of pauperisation and death.

This reflection shows that human destiny is, at the heart of the history of contemporary Africa, the theatre of struggle between the forces of death and the forces of life. It follows that life is threatened, hence the imperative of liberation and reconciliation. In reality, human beings are not isolated entities. They are connected to the global order that cannot be dissociated from religious beliefs, particularly ATR. Hence, ATR is challenged by globalisation and their imperative exigencies of reconciliation.

It is obvious that ATR provides economies of the encounter and communion between God and humans. Its mission is inseparable from the communion, the vital participation, the vertical harmony of humans and the invisible world; the horizontal harmony with the visible world against chaos that is always omnipresent and threatening. It is therefore, a minister of justice, peace and reconciliation in the continent\textsuperscript{87}. Being faithful to this reality implies, for ATR, being involved in the initiatives of

\textsuperscript{86} Text quoted by J. KANKWENDA Mbaya, Le développement général de l’Afrique, p. 304-305.
\textsuperscript{87} See KIBANDA Matungila, La Spiritualité africaine face à la mondialisation. La quête de maat chez les Bawoyo du Bas-Congo et les Bambasa de l’Ituri à l’heure d’épreuve de la rationalité du conflit et de l’hégémonie planétaire, in Religions Traditionnelles Africaines et Mondialisation, p. 15-18.
Reconciling the antagonistic forces at work in humans and in the globalized world.

Reconciliation here is a very arduous task. It is not only constituted of verbal forgiveness, embracing between individuals or even in personal penitential rituals and collective purification. It is indeed more of a movement of correspondence of political institutions, economic structures and cultural traditions and religious traditions with the peoples’ aspiration for life, social justice, solidarity and truth. Religions are therefore called to show publicly their active and efficient presence at the podiums of institutions where the paths of reconciliation are discussed and decided.

Because it is in a way clandestinely linked to the persons of the leaders of the faithful, heads of State or simple citizens, ATR is for men and women, expected motor of reconciliation in the continent. It follows that reconciliation calls for the recognition of the leadership of religions, especially ATR at all the levels of the society. Hence a place has to be legally reserved to their members, say leaders, in all African institutions in charge of reconciliation in the continent, not only in the “Truth and Reconciliation” commissions, but also in the sub-regional, regional, continental and international initiatives for the appropriation of globalisation, to reconcile its forces with the aspiration for life in individuals and communities of the continent and the world.88

In order to actualise this programme, ATR is expected to denounce the inadequacy of the policy which consists in separating the profane and the sacred, the secular and the religious, secularism and religion; a policy that leads to the privatisation of the religious or even its fossilisation for the benefit of the publicity of the profane. The law of the African religious tradition excludes every dichotomy between the profane and the sacred, the latter being the

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88 There are many of these initiatives in Africa, for example, African Union (AU), The Economic Community of Central Africa, The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), The Common Market for East and South Africa (COMESA), New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD).
context where the former is lived. Belief is inseparable from involvement in favour of humans and for liberation from the forces which oppress and threaten human beings. There is no religion without involvement for the promotion of the dignity of the human person and for reconciliation. African Traditional Religions are an agenda, a programme for reconciliation in the context of globalisation.

Conclusion

Reconciliation appeared as a constitutive task of African Traditional Religions. It is an internal demand. In reality, ATR is human phenomenon. It finds in humans and in God, the profound roots of its institution. God is celebrated as the primal force, the initial and initiating force whose life is the seed for the creation of other lives, that of man and nature.

In ATR, there is no adhesion to God that does not embody openness to the human person and life. Life appears in this perspective as a constitutive dimension of the human person, an unavoidable distinction of his essence. Its definition is inseparable from the consciousness one has of the destiny of the human being. This is perceived as a process which makes humans, a being, a house of hope.

Life therefore appears as the horizon of this indomitable hope of the human being. In that sense, it is a virtue in man, a promise of his being. One thing particular with virtue is that is rich with the demand of individuation. Following this, life is not the mirror of ‘man,’ it becomes concrete in ‘man’; the same applies to animals and even inorganic plants.

Life is hence a gift as well as a task. The generation of humans awakes them from slumber, brings them out of solitude in order to

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constitute them beings in solidarity. Hence the human person is one in its complexity, or rather complex in its simplicity: a simple composite. The human structure is made of a diversity of components. Apart from destiny, humans person endorses the visible and invisible worlds.

However, the unity in humans is fragile and threatened. The composites in humans are beings elevated to the human level, such that there are in them the will to power, egoism, greed, which makes them antagonistic and antithetic forces in humans and in the world. There emerges, in the present global world order, impure hearts, imperfect, unaccomplished, thirsting for egotistic and insatiable interests, political reforms, economic initiatives, cultural and technological innovations, as well as forces of destruction of life and of the complex unity of the human person making one powerless in the battle field of life against death.

It is in this context that human life is religious experience. Humans are divided between the forces of light, goodness and life on one hand and forces of evil and death on the other. Religion, in order to be faithful to its mission becomes a movement of involvement for human liberation, for reconciliation which consist essentially, through dialogue, in healing, and exorcising the forces of death. It does not only consist in verbal forgiveness among individuals or even individual penitential rituals or rituals of collective purification. It is a correspondence of economic structures and cultural and religious traditions with the peoples’ aspiration for life, social justice, solidarity and truth.

Reconciliation is a mark of leadership of African Traditional Religions. This leadership has to be legally recognized. This recognition is an obligation for African politicians to provide the necessary place to African Traditional Religions in their private and public spaces where questions of life and reconciliation are discussed in the continent, not only in the “Truth and Reconciliation” commissions, but also in the national, sub-regional, regional, continental and even international organisations.

Translated from French to English by Eugene Uzukwu and Bede Ukwuije