

DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA: A CONTEXTUAL REFLECTION ON 'POPULORUM PROGRESSIO'

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PROLOGUE:

On the 13th day of June, 1980, Professor Walter Rodney lay dead on the Street of Georgetown, Jamaica – a victim of assassination by bomb blast – because of his fight against the oppression of the people by the government and his constant opposition to any form of subjugation of the poor. In his book *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Rodney is of the opinion that “development in human society is a many sided process. At the level of the individual, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being.”¹

Based on the level of development, the countries of the world have been classified into three: the first world; the second world; and the third world.² Africa (Sub-Sahara Africa) falls within the third world countries. This classification is a clear sign of developmental gap, which exists between nations. This gap also exists between individuals.

In *Populorum Progressio*, Pope Paul VI sets out to enunciate principles that could help close this gap that widens as days go by. His interest is more on closing the developmental gap between nations. In this write-up, we are determined to analyze the African society in relation to development, review the content of *Populorum Progressio* with the intention of discovering how the teachings in this timeless encyclical could be relevant in the African society. Our approach will be expository and analytic.

THE AFRICAN SOCIETY

J. E. Casely-Hayford, an African nationalist from Gold Coast (present day Ghana), is of the view that: “Before even the British came into relations with our people, we were a developed people, having our own institutions, having our own ideas of government.”³ According to the analysis of Walter Rodney, this pre-colonial developed Africa had a developed system of government, culture, subsistent agriculture and even export materials like the qualitative leather, termed ‘*Moroccan leather*’ that was greatly envied by Europeans because of its economic value.⁴

Around the 15th century, the Dutch people who visited the city of Benin (in present day Nigeria) praised Africa’s development in these words:

*The town seems to be very great. When you enter into it, you go into a great broad street, not paved, which seems to be seven or eight times broader than the Warmoes Street in Amsterdam. The king’s palace is a collection of buildings which occupy as much space as the town of Harlem, and which is enclosed with walls.... The people are in no way inferior to the Dutch as regards cleanliness; they wash and scrub their houses so well that they are polished and shining like a looking-glass.*⁵

Pre-colonial Africa also had a set of developed religious values. Their religion

was tied with morality and even politics. "In few instances, religion provided concepts in the struggle for social justice."⁶ Nevertheless, two historical events led to the decline of this indigenous development in Africa, namely: contact with the white people, and what Omutah calls "African internal peculiarities."⁷

CONTACT WITH THE WESTERN WORLD

Africa suffered grievous blows due to its contact with the western world. This contact introduced slave trade, colonialism and various forms of exploitation, dominance and oppression. Reflecting on the issue of slave trade, Omutah says:

*The trans-Atlantic slave trade is a sad fact of African history that must be remembered. Although recalling this dark side of our history is like the biblical Rachel weeping for her children that were no more, this memoria nevertheless remains an important approach in the healing of Africa's past and for building of Africa's future.*⁸

Africa was subjugated by Europe, America and the Arabian traders. Her able bodied men and women were taken into slavery. These impoverished Africa greatly to the advantageous progress of her oppressors.

Colonialism impoverished Africa more than anything else. Colonization went hand in hand with Christianization.⁹ Both, in Achebe's, expression put a knife in what was holding Africa together and things fell apart. So the centre can no longer hold. These twin impositions robbed Africa of her political system, economic improvements, technological break-through and religious faith. Omutah puts it more succinctly:

*The system divided up the African continent geographically, dominated it politically, exploited it economically, and damaged it culturally, all for the benefit of the colonialists and their lands.*¹⁰

Omutah concludes that these realities (slave trade, colonialism and western religion) constitute part of the obstacles to Africa's growth and development, and even to evangelization.

Nevertheless, hope for development radiated once more in Africa in the 60s when many African countries gained independence from their colonial masters. This hope was short lived because of internal strife, necessitated by bad leadership and undue avarice and egoism of the indigenous African leaders.

AFRICAN INTERNAL PECULIARITIES

J. Obi Oguejiofor, in decrying the African predicament, establishes that since the exit of the colonial masters, the emergent African political leaders further worsened the political situation by using ethnic jealousy and conflicts for their selfish ends.¹¹ Nigeria is one of the great nations in Africa. Its developmental problems are as great as whatever makes her great. Using F. N. Akukwe as reference point, Ikenga Oraegbunam states:

What constitutes the problem in Nigeria include political instability, economic destabilization, bribery, corruption and fraud of varying species and degrees, high crime rate, neglect of

*rural development, inadequate healthcare, poor quality education, poor infrastructural facilities, domestic fragmentation, social disorganization, exaggerated ethnicity, and poverty in the midst of plenty.*¹²

All these problems are replicated in most African nations south of the Sahara. They are orchestrated by poor management, which is a sign of bad leadership, necessitated by political instability. Therefore, we shall focus on bad government (political instability) for around it other problems revolve.

Bad Government: The Greatest of Africa's Developmental Problems

Nnamdi S. Onuigbo once presented the summary of a summer 1994 TV broadcast in Germany, which showed a documentary on different countries in Africa. The broadcast ended up by saying that Africa has no future.¹³ If Africa has no future then she is incapable of development. For Hegel: "...want of self control distinguishes the character of the Negroes. This condition is capable of no development or culture, and as we see them at this day, such have they always been."¹⁴ No matter how derogatory or condemnatory these positions appear to be, there are some elements of veracity in them. African leaders and privileged citizens create the opportunity for this and they are now the greatest agents of underdevelopment in Africa. Historical facts justify this assertion.

John Odey reports that in Central African Republic, Emperor Bedel Bokassa spent 30 million dollars (one fifth of his country's revenues) to crown himself Emperor in December 1977. His crown alone contained 2000 diamonds and it was valued at 5 million dollars.¹⁵ During that period, the country was "listed conspicuously among the least developed of the world's less developed countries, LDC. It was poor, miserably indebted."¹⁶ Many in the country were starved. There were no good schools. Good roads and social amenities were regarded as extra-ordinary luxury. Bokassa killed more than 200 school children who refused to buy uniforms from a shop belonging to one of his wives.¹⁷ And you think that Hegel is wrong when he says that "lack of self control is a distinguishing character of the Negroes?"

Another mind-boggling example of the developmental insensitivity of African leaders is the Our Lady of Peace Basilica of Yamoussoukro, Cote d'Ivoire. Between 1986 - 1989, as Cote d'Ivoire owed the International Monetary Fund, IMF, about 3 billion naira, and at least a quarter of the children could not afford to go to school, and the bulk of the population was without electricity and pipe-borne water, and its economy was depreciating to the lowest ebb, President Felix Houphouet-Boigny was serious constructing a Basilica that would be a replica of the St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. The basilica turned out to be the largest Christian Church in the world, having cost about 150 million dollars. The country that built it remained one of the least developed of the developing nations of the world. This is religious insanity and developmental insensitivity.¹⁸

By 1992, Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire had personal fortune estimated at anything between 4 billion and 6 billion dollars, in addition to numerous palaces he owned in different countries of the world.¹⁹ As most Zairians were struggling to survive the harsh economic conditions of Mobutu's reign, he was living lavishly and amassing wealth for himself. The country's infrastructure was decaying and no developmental initiative was established by him except the decree he made in 1972 for all the Zairians to replace their western names with African ones. He

used to fly in a barber from New York to trim his hair every fortnight at the cost of 5000 dollars, outside the cost of chattered plane that would fly him to Kinshasa. Yet not all in his country had enough to eat.

Nigeria has also had her own fair share of leadership folly that is tantamount to her gross underdevelopment. The oil wind-fall that accrued from excess oil revenue during the Gulf war that amounted to 1.2 trillion Naira was not accounted for by the Ibrahim Babangida regime. After the death of Sani Abacha in 1998, 1.13 billion dollars and 413 million pounds were found missing from the Central Bank of Nigeria – all taken in cash at his behest. Presently the Economic and Finance Crime Commission, EFCC, is investigating a lot of past governors for alleged money laundering. Some have been convicted. Yet, Nigeria still gropes in the dark recess of underdevelopment while her leaders, aided by foreigners, loot her treasury daily. Bearing these facts in mind Onuigbo concludes:

Instead of African leaders to vouch for the steady progress of the country, they outrun one another in greed and incessant quest for power and property. Hence one can assert without fear of contradiction that the system of government in Africa is Lootocracy rather than Democracy.²⁰

So, Africa is now being underdeveloped by Africans. Omutah summarizes this view by saying that:

Many Africans now find themselves oppressed and exploited at the very hands of their own people who masquerade in black skin but whose spirit and insatiable crave for wealth are even more cruel than the colonialists.²¹

Nevertheless, most of the privileged few in Africa, sit on the lowly in the society. They privatize public fund and property and spend public wealth with reckless abandon with little or no feeling for the suffering and starved masses and the underdeveloped society. The greatest agony of Africa remains that foreign nations and institutes help these mindless Africans in underdeveloping Africa for the good of their own countries. This makes the message of *Populorum Progressio* relevant in the African society of today.

AN EXPOSITION OF POPULORUM PROGRESSIO (P.P)

Populorum Progressio was published in 1967. It was addressed to the bishops, priests, religious, and faithful of the whole Catholic world and to all men of goodwill. In this encyclical, Pope Paul VI, in the name of the Church, aims at closing the widening gap that exists between privileged individuals and poor ones; especially between wealthy nations and underdeveloped ones.²² So, *Populorum Progressio* is a call for equity and right, justice and fair play. It is a call for the integral or authentic development of individual persons and mankind. It establishes a Christian vision of development²³ – a vision of development as the mission of the Church, all mankind, developed nations and international communities. This already tells us that all nations are not equal in matters of development.

THE CLASSIFICATION OF NATIONS

Let us recall, as Eloka Patrick Omutah once did, that based on the level of

development of social infrastructures, degree of education of the working class, the amount of capital, capital per head, income capita, savings capita, and amount of untapped resources, the entire global community has been classified into three main divisions, namely: The first world - the USA, Canada, New Zealand, the countries of Western Europe and Australia; the second world - countries of Eastern Europe and the former U.S.S.R; then the third world countries - Africa, Latin America and Asia excluding Japan.²⁴ Some other countries have progressed, yet Africa remains where she was.

Different nomenclatures have been either manufactured or modified as descriptive terminologies for the third world countries. They are either qualified as developing countries, less developed countries, underdeveloped, emerging, low-income or transitional countries. In line with the teaching of Falola, in his article, *Economic and Social Development in contemporary Africa*, Omutah further recognizes that among the third world countries, we still have those regarded as 'least developed' of the developing countries or 'the hard core' poor nations of the world.²⁵ According to Pope Paul VI, these are mainly the nations where people are trying to escape the ravages of hunger, poverty, endemic diseases and ignorance. They are the main nations where people are seeking a large share in the benefits of civilization and a more active improvement of their human qualities.²⁶

In response to the problems of these underdeveloped and struggling people and nations, *Populorum Progressio*, introduces some novelties in the Church's social teaching. Affirming this fact Donal Dorr writes:

*The teaching in this document was original in two respects. Firstly, it offered a fresh approach to the understanding of development. Secondly, in its approach to social justice it shifted the focus from the national to the international scene.*²⁷

ANEW APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

Prior to *Populorum Progressio*, many restrict development to economic growth and just distribution of resource. Commenting on this restricted notion of development Walter Rodney holds: "Development cannot be seen purely as an economic affair, but rather as an overall social process which is dependent upon the outcome of man's effort to deal with his natural environment."²⁸ Donal Dorr situates this restricted idea of development in a historical context when he reports that:

*During the 1950s, the new idea of economic development brought about an enormous change in the thinking of government leaders and their advisers.... Essentially this change was the widespread acceptance of the belief that each individual country, and the world as a whole, can 'grow' out of poverty. Prior to this time justice was primarily a matter of ensuring the proper distribution of existing wealth and resources.*²⁹

Be that as it may, the social documents given by the Church at the time of this restricted view focused on the kind of economic development pursued by different governments. They were aimed at correcting or expanding them for the common good of the people.³⁰ Economic development was then seen as "the solid

core of any authentic human development."³¹ In its quest for authentic human and humane development, *Populorum Progressio* introduced the 'heuristic notion of development.'

Populorum Progressio on The Heuristic Notion of Development

The word 'heuristic' is from the Greek 'heuriskein' which means 'find'. It is synonymous with investigative, experimental and exploratory. A teaching is said to be heuristic if it encourages one to explore, investigate, experiment or discover the solutions to certain problems. This is the stock in trade of *Populorum Progressio*.

Populorum Progressio is an exhortatory document which calls for attitudinal and structural change in the society and in human beings to enhance integral development of peoples and nations. Based on its heuristic peculiarity, *Populorum Progressio*, in speaking about the Pontifical Commission on Justice, Development and Peace, and in line with an earlier Church document, remarks that the Church has the mission of awakening in the people of God full awareness of their mission today. This awakening will aid them in furthering the progress of poorer nations and maintaining international social justice, as well as in helping less developed nations to contribute to their own development.³² So it is telling all men that man, as an individual, and mankind in general, lack integral development. It calls us to use the principles the Church enunciates as stepping stones towards the solution to these problems.

The Complete (Integral) Development of Man

For development to be meaningful, it must be complete or integral. In the words of *Populorum Progressio*:

The development we speak of here cannot be restricted to economic growth alone. To be authentic, it must be well rounded; it must foster the development of each man and of the whole man.... We cannot allow economics to be separated from human realities, nor development from the civilization in which it takes place. What counts for us is man – each individual man, each human group, and humanity as a whole.³³

People have been trying to achieve this integral development but some socio-political and economic conditions like colonialism and bad policies frustrate and limit them.³⁴ This limitation continues to widen the gap between nations and make our society marginalistic, thus creating inequality, social unrest and cultural conflict and hampers complete development.

Authentic development calls for mutual cooperation between rich and poor individuals, developed and developing nations. Thus it is a call for personal responsibility. Pope Paul VI refers to this authentic self development as self-fulfillment.³⁵ So, when every man fulfills his destiny and actualizes his potentials he could be said to have achieved complete development. This is the idea of development Rodney expresses.

Nevertheless, one who achieves his potentials is bound to help in the development of others and the society at large. This is a responsibility attached to personal development. He refrains from inflicting any form of injustice and

inhuman treatment on others; he extends charity magnanimously to the less privileged; guards against unbridled liberalism – that concept which presents profit as the chief spur to economic progress; free competition as the guiding norm of economics; and private ownership of the means of production as an absolute right, having no limits nor concomitant social obligations.³⁵

The Common Development of Mankind

Using part of the address he presented to the representatives of non-Christian religions at Bombay in 1964 as a stepping stone for his teaching on the common development of mankind, Pope Paul VI says:

*Development of the individual necessarily entails a joint effort for the development of the human race as a whole. ... Man must meet man, nation must meet nation, as brothers and sisters, as children of God. In this mutual understanding and friendship, in this sacred communion, we must also begin to work together to build the common future of the human race.*³⁷

Paul VI's thesis on the common development of mankind, nay nations, looks beyond the development of the individual to the integral development of nations. This is one of the outstanding novelties of *Populorum Progressio*. It establishes three major duties which must be carried out for this integral common development of mankind to be effective.

There must be mutual solidarity – the aid that the rich nations must give to developing nations. Solidarity is “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good....”³⁸ In the spirit of solidarity, advanced nations should help developing nations. Secondly for integral development of mankind to be feasible, there must be social justice – the rectification of trade relations between strong and weak nations. This enhances the financial and technological development of the poor nations. The third duty is universal charity – the effort to build a more humane world community, where all can give and receive, and where the progress of some is not bought at the expense of others. Duties are performed by agents. So there are agents responsible for authentic development.

AGENTS RESPONSIBLE FOR DEVELOPMENT

No matter how wonderful the principles of change and development are, if there are no reasonable and convinced agents to put them into practice development remains a fantastic phantom. *Populorum Progressio* says that all people and nations should be responsible agents for development. With reference to this teaching, Donal Dorr writes: “The encyclical has as a central theme the idea that every person and all peoples are entitled to be the shapers of their own destiny.... It is not possible to develop people; development is something people have to do for themselves.”³⁹

Nevertheless, the role of some people as agents of development is more pronounced. Commenting on this idea Dorr upholds:

Those who are considered to have the most important role in bringing about change are nearly all people or institutions that exercise considerable influence in society as it is at present. At the international level the Pope stresses the role of the rich countries

and their leaders (P.P. 44, 48, 49, 84), as well as international agencies such as FAO and the UN (P.P. 46, 78, 83).⁴⁰

In the developed nations, statesmen and women, journalists, educators and all men of goodwill are to collaborate with the government in aiding the development of poorer nations. Even in the poorest nations, some are more advantaged than others. These include experts in various fields and other experts sent from the developed nations. All these are agents for development. Their activities should be motivated by goodwill.

The Church is an extraordinarily outstanding agent of development. In the opening sentence of *Gaudium et Spes*, the Fathers of the Vatican Council II note: "The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the men of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well."⁴¹ Because of this age long mission of the Church, *Populorum Progressio* calls on the clergy and the laity to propose authentic morality, justice and equity, which will in turn scheme integral development of persons and nations.

AFRICA AND POPULORUM PROGRESSIO IN DIALOGUE

It has always been the desire of the Church to make her social teachings relevant to the people of God. In April 1994, all the African Catholic Bishops gathered in Rome for the African synod. The aim was to find out how to integrate the Church's social teachings in African society. That is, they were determined to discover the best ways of bringing development to Africa with the aid of the social teachings of the Church.

At that great assembly, as John Odey reports, the Bishops acknowledged that:

*One common situation, without any doubt, is that Africa is full of problems. In almost all our nations, there is abject poverty, tragic mismanagement of available scarce resources, political instability and social disorientation. The results stare us in the face: misery, wars, despair. In a world controlled by rich and powerful nations, Africa has practically become an irrelevant appendix, often forgotten and neglected.*⁴²

The Church is always conscious of the social, political and economic conditions in Africa which are great signs of its underdevelopment. These conditions are also the things that make Africa an irrelevant appendix. Reflecting on the homily delivered by the Pope John Paul II to the African Bishops on the solemn inauguration of the African Synod, Omutah writes:

*Pope John Paul II... expressed a strong desire for the synod to address African problems at its "roots" and to make it "fully African." He urged the synod fathers to study the principles of catholic social doctrine in relation to the needs of Africa.*⁴³

Bearing this papal exhortation in mind, the synod fathers were poised to present to Africans their duty and responsibility towards the development of Africa. This is in line with the teaching of *Populorum Progressio* which sees all peoples as agents of development.

Unfortunately, in Africa, it appears that all have made themselves agents of underdevelopment – the government, international communities, privileged individuals and even the Church. Africans themselves sit at the fore-front of the underdevelopment gallery and harp the cord of underdevelopment given to them by their white lords, who also dance the music of underdevelopment the Africans beat. The African leaders, who cultivate *lootocracy* as their own government and make power tussle their stock in trade, lead in this underdevelopment parade. Because of this chronic underdevelopment, caused by Africans to Africa, it is now an undeniable fact that “Africa has become the basket case of the planet, the ‘Third World of the Third World,’ a vast continent in free fall.”⁴⁴ By 1992, as Odey notes, out of the 40 lowest countries in the United Nations Annual Development index, 32 were African nations. The story is not very different today.

Populorum Progressio recognizes that some people are struggling to escape the ravages of hunger, poverty, endemic disease and ignorance, and to have an improved life. This is the case in Africa. The children have taken to the streets for hawking. The women have taken permanent abodes in brothels for prostitution while the men are scattered in foreign lands in search of greener pasture. Some of them end up as drug barons, all in the bid to escape hunger and poverty. Yet our government and most of the advantaged ones sit and watch this gross emigration caused by hardship in Africa.

In most African nations, the schools are empty. Where they are full, like in Nigeria, they are often stuffed with many uncommitted lecturers who glory in exploiting students. The students themselves derive pleasure in cultism and other extra curricula activities they devise as means of satiating their unquenchable yearnings for pleasure. All these happen and the government seems to be insensitive to the plight of the people. There are no good roads or other basic amenities, yet our leaders loot the National treasure with impunity and stash the looted fund in foreign banks with the aid of foreign agencies. They obtain loans which end up in phantom projects and private pockets.

The call for attitudinal change, made by *Populorum Progressio*, seems to be directed to Africans, especially the African leaders and their white friends who seem to be very comfortably complacent with Africa’s developmental retrogression. Why will they not be comfortable when the foreign agencies that should aid in the development of nations, as *Populorum Progressio* calls for, end up as agents of propaganda instead of agents of development. They are more interested in telling the global community how Africa is infested with HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and other chronic diseases without making much effort to solving these problems.

Africa needs development. In the words of Rodney: “Today, the masses of Africa seek development and total emancipation.”⁴⁵ This is the integral development *Populorum Progressio* speaks about. This is the kind of development that recognizes the dignity of the human person and respects it. It is a development that is synonymous with civilization; a development that does not create room for master/slave mentality; a development where duty is done for the sake of the common good and not for personal aggrandizement.

In Africa this kind of development is still a dream. We all are culpable. We all lack genuine commitment to the cause of development. Our traders, like the white

look for glory in unbridled liberalism. That is, they focus more on economic gain rather than the authentic or integral well being of all. The Niger Delta crisis in Nigeria is a typical example of unbridled liberalism because, there the oil companies drill oil at the detriment of the ecosystem, terrestrial and aquatic. The inhabitants of the area suffer untold hardship due to the different kinds of pollution necessitated by the activities of these oil companies. Yet, little or no attention is paid to them. In Africa there seem to be no more Nnamdi Azikiwe's, Julius Nyerere's Nelson Mandela's. What we seem to have in abundance today are the Mobutu's, the Bokassa's, and the Abacha's. Can we not get a Walter Rodney? We acknowledge that there are those who speak. They speak more and do less; while what we need is more doers than speakers.

More so, as an agent of development, the Church is saddled with responsibilities. In fulfilling these responsibilities she has issued many social messages aimed at reawakening the consciousness of the government and the masses towards the need to work for progress. But unfortunately these documents, in the view of George Eghusani and some other analysts, have remained "the Church's best kept secrets." They said this because they realized with great disappointment that not too many know of these documents. Where they do, very few, if any at all, follow the dictates of these documents. Even some of the Church leaders who issue these documents do less when it comes to implementation.

Many Africans who have lost hope in the civil society look upon the Church as their hope for salvation and developmental rejuvenation. They believe that God, through the ministration of the Church will save them. Most of these people feel disappointed when their expectations from the Church are not quickly realized. The Church talks more. She is also expected to do more.

Although *Populorum Progressio* condemns revolution as a means of reformation, it does not condemn non-violent confrontation. According to Eghusani:

Any form of peaceful or non-violent confrontation with oppressive powers which can lead to freedom of the oppressed, or at least the alleviation of their suffering, is not only acceptable but desirable. Any form of mass action that is peaceful and is capable of bringing pressure to bear on the unjust ruler is desirable.

The Church in Africa can do this. The Church (Christianity) in black America, led by men like Martin Luther King Jr., did it and it worked for them. It can work in Africa only that we are too afraid to die or face harder conditions, which may arise as aftermath of this confrontation that will eventually bring the desired development.

As agent of development, the Church owns it as her duty to educate the people on their basic rights and help them pursue them. *Populorum Progressio* calls all to help - the Bishops, priests and laity as well. It is her duty to keep on calling people to order when they drift away. She does this but with less force.

Be that as it may, all hope is not lost. Africa south of the Sahara will develop and is already developing. South Africa is already high on the developmental ladder. Ghana is on the right path of development. Nigeria is also coming up gradually. Presently Kenya is confronting an illegal government without minding what it

will cost them. This is the type of confrontation we need in Africa. When the state becomes ungovernable for the despot, he will be forced either to quit office or to have an attitudinal change. The future is brighter than the gory past. Nevertheless, the past also had some good leaders like the saintly Mwalimu Julius Nyerere of Tanzania (1922 – 1999) who was proclaimed “Servant of God” in January, 2006.⁴⁸ Again not all that colonialism did to Africa was bad. At least it brought us western education which is a source of enlightenment. Yet more needs to be done for more progressive development in mother Africa.

EPILOGUE:

Professor Reinhold Niebuhr, that protestant theologian of Applied Christianity, once said that our world will be a better place if people will give religion a chance. By giving religion a chance he is suggesting that people should allow religious ethics to be their guide. These ethics are often based on natural law.

A lot of ethical principles are enunciated in *Populorum Progressio*. These are aimed at transforming the world and bridging the developmental gap that exists between the developed nations and the developing nations. This gap will be bridged if all the agents of development become responsible agents and face the respective responsibilities they owe to development with commitment. African leaders owe much of this developmental responsibility because Africa’s developmental wheels are clogged by leadership quandary championed by tragic mismanagement. The Church also has more to do. A span survey of African nations shows that most African leaders have led Africa backwards instead of forward. Some are still doing so today. Their desire to cling to power even as their people are dying under their obnoxious unprogressive policies fills every thinking mind with sorrowful wonder. They are silently backed by foreign aids in this unprogressive inclination, which keeps on widening the developmental gap between Africa and the rest of the developed nations of the world.

An attitudinal change will bridge this gap by reducing or even annihilating poverty and suffering from the face of Africa. This will bring integral development, which is tantamount to authentic humanism in Africa. When this is done, the social teaching of *Populorum Progressio* must have been integrated enough in Africa as the Fathers of the African Synod proposed for the good of Africans and African nations as a whole.

ENDNOTE

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- 31 Dorr, Donal. Option for the Poor, 180.
- 32 Populorum Progressio, n. 5.
- 33 Populorum Progressio, n. 14.
- 34 Populorum Progressio, n. 6 – 7.
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- 36 Populorum Progressio, n. 26.
- 37 Populorum Progressio, n. 43.
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