

## CHAPTER 14

# CATHOLIC YOUTHS, RITUAL KILLINGS AND THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN AUCHI DIOCESE

John D. Akowe

### Introduction

Ritual killings for fortunes among the Youths in Nigeria have become a scary trend in the social order. It is no longer news how some youths are progressively joining the league of internet scammers to solve their personal and societal challenges. Truth be told, there is nothing categorically wrong with being rich and getting so passionate with living comfortably and happily. The major challenge here is the over anxiousness of people, particularly the youths to get rich in any way possible. There are Biblical injunctions, from both the Old Testament and the New Testament on the implications of being unnecessarily desperate to acquire wealth and the importance of financial satisfaction relating to personal goals for a godly life.

For instance, in the prophesy of Jeremiah, chapter 17, verse 11; there was an injunction that fraudulent ways of making wealth will be brutally reproved and that also, within the shortest possible time, the illegitimately attained wealth will be like a mere breathe, come and gone.<sup>1</sup> Even with this warning, the number of ritual killings for fortune going on among the youths in Nigeria is mind – blowing. The inaugural

discourse of the Apostle Paul to his constant companion and coworker in preaching the Gospel message Timothy, can also be considered as speaking afresh to the swelling challenges of the pursuit for wealth through ritual activities in Nigeria.

With the prevalence of ritual killings in our society today, a calamity of colossal and substantial magnitude, with far reaching domino effects, has hit us as a people. Majority of our youths have decided to throw away hard work and have incorporated the get-rich-syndrome into their psyche by getting involved in ritual killings for pecuniary aggrandizement. If this trend is not checked immediately, it could comprehensively influence our future and would be a massive or heavy blow on generations to come.

### **Method of Approach**

This work shall be expositive. It shall explore the lived experiences of the Nigerian Youth in context from the perspective of personal revelations. It shall initially uncover in entirety; the crux of the matter within a precise framework, which would bring to bear the issue at hand while moving to the abysmal impression the issue at hand is putting on the Nigeria youths in general. We shall try to consider the relatable or applicable leading factors to the upsurge of ritual killings among the youths in Nigeria; with certain examples cited within the work.

The paper shall attempt to look at the Catholic Youths in relations to ritual killings. This shall help to proffer a prospect for this work to systematically, gaze at the problem at hand and articulate how the Catholic Diocese of Auchi can discourage her youths from participating in this immoral trend. In this way, the work shall recommend how the Church in the Catholic Diocese of Auchi can respond or provide answers to the challenge of ritual killings facing the Catholic youths in our time.

### **Youths and Ritual Killings in Nigeria: The Issue in Context**

In the past, matters of ritual killings and the pursuit to get rich speedily by whatever means possible were constrained to the older generation,<sup>2</sup>

but not anymore. The present-day upsurge of money rituals, internet fraud and other vicious actions calls for a sober reflection. Ritual killings or money rituals have become so pervasive in the country that a larger population of the youths in Nigeria do not consider education as important again. The slogan among youths now is “las las school na scam...”<sup>3</sup>. Consequently; youths who key into this slogan deter others who wish to go to school from doing so. What is baffling is how these young people fail to realize that life is a gradual process and education is a veritable tool to achieving excellence.<sup>4</sup> They just want to make money at all cost at the soonest possible time. They forget that “Rome was not built in a day”<sup>5</sup>.

Studies have been conducted on the emergence of the yahoo boys’ subculture.<sup>6</sup> ‘Yahoo-yahoo’ which is an unofficial term for ‘cybercrime’ has at all times, been a general term for internet scammers, most of whom work with supercomputers or laptops as the case may be. This is why, it is convincingly easy to consider a young man with a movable computer as a ‘Yahoo Boy’. These ‘Yahoo Boys’ functioned in a number of ways in the past, which were identified by just about every Tom, Dick, and Harry. Their appearances depict very clearly, what they are about. Virtually all the yahoo boys were into love cons, or pretend to be business moguls; with the exclusive purpose of swindling some covetous white people, via fake offers.

The love cons used to be the most common one; where young boys and girls go into dating sites in the internet, to hunt for Euromerican ladies and gents, some of which are widows or widowers, some are very wealthy and single.<sup>7</sup> As the relationship come into bud, the boys or girls then seek for an avenue to rip off the women or men, and then shut down their operational accounts in the site and move on as though nothing ever happened. Once they successfully swindle their clients with their trickery, they then fully activate the big boys or girl’s life style.

The progression from ‘yahoo yahoo’ to ‘yahoo plus’ is most troubling. Sources from the internet suggest, “As the general public became attentive, watchful and aware of internet scams and how they

operated, these young boys or girls in full swing started involving in diabolical means to get spiritual medicines through charms to use on the clientele or clients”.<sup>8</sup> This attack of humans through machines metamorphosed into incorporating spiritual elements to enhance victimization rates on the web. This has resulted into what Oludayo Tade calls cyber spiritualism<sup>9</sup>. We have circumstances where these boys or girls travel very far in search of evil-prone fetish doctors to acquire diabolical powers, for the control, and influence over their victims.

These boys or girls, with the quest to get rich at all cost, developed a new phenomenon in cybercrime by mixing spiritual elements with internet surfing to boast their chances of convincing their victims.<sup>10</sup> Given the fact that they sought for additional powers just to get what they want from their victims; the existing term ‘yahoo-yahoo’ became ‘yahoo plus’ to indicate the addition of spiritual ingredients to ‘yahoo yahoo’. So those who surf the net and dupe plainly are referred to as ‘yahoo yahoo’ while those who surf the net and employ spiritual assistance for increased defrauding are referred to as ‘yahoo plus’. There is a line drawn between these two, even if the society still considers them as ‘yahoo boys’ and their wealth, ill-gotten.<sup>11</sup>

With the emergence of yahoo plus the killing of people for money has become pervasive. The blood of a friend or a very close companion, family member in most cases, must have to be shed to renew their promises to the deity. They make this money, throw it around while their peers sing their praises, and desire to join the league of swindlers. They build gigantic houses and buy expensive cars for themselves, family members and friends. The society accepts them and they live like everyone in the community. It is in fact disastrous that the public, overall, is very much attentive, attractive and engrossed in the showmanship, glitz and glamour of the good life, rather than the source of such flashy life style.<sup>12</sup> The way this wealth is gotten troubles no one; as young girls or boys go after these kinds of boys or girls at the expense of their destinies.

The desire for material things gotten from ritual killings has really gotten into the fabric of the community and our youths are at the

heart of it all. Young boys and girls this day and age want to use the most recent iPhones; mobile phones beyond the financial ability of their parents. Most worrisome is the fact that their parents are, repeatedly; joyful when these boys take their daughters as lady friends or even make every effort to marry them. Take for instance, one of my young friends who graduated at the age of 21, two years ago, from a well celebrated University in Nigeria told me some time ago about his fellow student who should be about 23 years old or thereabout who has built a castle for his mother in the village; while he drives an extravagant car. The question is what could he have done in a space of one year to get money of such an adequate amount to build a house and procure a car of that magnitude other than crime?

There is a very high level of misplaced admiration for the wrong people in the society. The youths have appointed and accepted for themselves the old horses and riders in the game and have made them their role models. Role models are essential to everyone, no doubts. They motivate, inspire and make us feel like we can achieve anything. I gathered an assemblage of young boys in the year 2020 for a productive interaction extending from one societal matter to the other. As the interactive sessions were going on, the issue as to the question of whom their role models are came up. I was very close to being disappointed with one of the boys who boldly affirmed that he wants to be influential and financially loaded like Ramon Abbas, popularly known as Hushpuppi<sup>13</sup> and that he wishes to be under his expert hand so as to learn his skills of swindling and taking advantage of people. You can imagine the type of person he is choosing as his role model, when we have hardworking persons like Femi Otedola<sup>14</sup>, Aliko Dangote<sup>15</sup> etc. A good role model is supposed to help you avoid problems, reach your goals and succeed in life.<sup>16</sup> Choosing a good role model with good qualities is a pivotal aspect in the lives of youths who want to grow.

Since these youths want to be like their role models, they go extra lengths in search of native doctors who will make charms and other alluring materials for them to spellbind their victims, putting them under duress all in a bid to defraud them. These desperate youths are

usually told to bring human beings that are dear to them, such as their mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters and even their spouses to complete the sacrifice.<sup>17</sup> Some of these youths are usually instructed by their native doctors to mention the names of their targets in a stipulated number of times, and carry out diabolical prayers in the form of incantations before going to them for financial transactions, or putting phone calls to them. At that point, whatever they tell their victims is accepted or considered as from the Holy Writ and treated sacrosanct. Their victims would not even have any doubts or objections as to the authenticity of the fake proposals presented in convincing manner.

Our youths are so at the end of their tether; they are so much in a hurry to make it in life that they fail to recall that one day they will shriek in tears as soon as the penalties of their ungodly and ridiculous activities start to boomerang. They fail to know that there is no magic or spiritual enchantment that does not have multiple end products; and any charm that is recycled for whatsoever means in this life requires a stable and an unwavering sacrifice to keep it functioning as well as operational.<sup>18</sup> The native doctors may even ask them to present their children if they are married, just to maintain the level of financial productivity required. A young boy who was into ritual killings in one of our communities passed out mysteriously, at the middle of the night, in his hotel room; sometime in September 2022. Rumors quickly went round that he already entreated his father to take his place in the imminent death but then again the old man declined his son's appeals to die in his stead. For that reason, the young man died without a proper explanation as to what really happened to him.

We have many avaricious and greedy youths who are so eager to make money by any means. Countless youths all over the place in Nigeria are like vampires baying for blood to slurp; for the reason that they desire to get rich.<sup>19</sup> In years to come, many youths are going to die inexplicably; they are already dying mysteriously. The youths who have harvested certain human parts for rituals and have dire consequence of getting mad, that is if there are any problems with the exercise; are already running mad on the streets. Others, who have used their genital organs in exchange for wealth, are already impotent; living

without children. Some have at present, collected the wealth belonging to their children and their children's children.<sup>20</sup> On the condition that the effects do not take place now that they are alive, when they die, it would have emotional impact on their children. These boys are careless and appear very lackadaisical about the consequences of their actions, in as much as there is enough money for them to throw around; all is well.

### **Catholic Youths and the Nigerian Society**

One of the first things that come to mind at this point is “who are the Catholic youths?” For the Catholic Church, a youth is seen to be a catholic youth when he or she falls within the ages of 16 and 35.<sup>21</sup> This understanding may as well, be considered as an averagely general outlook. The truth is, Catholic youths are just like any other youth in Nigeria and world over. They are part of the system that forms the community. Just like other youths, they are fascinated and engrossed in listening to trendy music, hanging out with friends, and in dealing with the normal troubles as well as try to wrap their heads around the larger questions of life, which arise as they grow up. The challenges of the Nigerian youths are also the challenges of the youths since they are products of the society. It is therefore safe to say, “What affects the Nigerian youths, affects all Catholic youths”.

Catholic youths of today belong to a generation of children from parents with huge number of divorces. They belong to an age bracket feels that their parents have failed them by bringing them into this world to suffer. They are in an age bracket of persons who feel reviled or abhorrent and directionless in a globe caught up in sex, money, and power. They come from a generation where activities of their peers have imprinted a great effect on them. They belong to an age where immorality is considered as nothing serious in the eyes of almost all and sundry. They have inherited the despondency, the pain, and the darkness that came with the sexual insurgency and the egocentric generation. This is the generation our Catholic youths have come from and are living in.

These groups of young people face a lot of questions that people of their age have never before had to face on such a large scale. How do I deal with the pains of having a failed parentage? How do I survive in a country where education is seen as a waste of time? How do I cope in a country where youths graduate from tertiary institutions without getting a government job? How do I continue to exist in a world where materialism is notable? How do I live to tell the tale in a world where wrongdoing, immorality, diabolism is the order of the day? How do I push through the ugly face of poverty? Am I insignificant if I do not make enough money like my peers? How far can my educational pursuit take me?

### **Catholic Youths and Ritual Killings: Catholic Diocese of Auchi in perspective**

Life is a gradual process and the young people should not have the mindset that they can wake up one morning and attain wealth. Catholic Youths in particular should shun unbridled quest for materialism and embrace hard work, honest labour as well as patience. Life grows gradually. People who made it in life did not rush it. If you rush it, you crash. When you crash, it is always very devastating. You grow gradually. What is needed is consistency in trying to make genuine effort.<sup>22</sup>

I must be thankful for the notable and remarkable work the group of Catholic youth in the Diocese of Auchi, under the auspices of Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria (CYON) is doing within the Diocese and the accolades that they consistently bring to the Diocese of Auchi. I must say it is not easy to be outstanding in an insane world like today's where they find themselves. However, like the popular unceremonious

and old-fashioned saying that: “there is always a bad egg in the group”; we have stories or cases of fetish practices by our Catholic youths in various parts of the Catholic Diocese of Auchi<sup>23</sup> that are causing serious concerns.

No doubt, the incidents of ritual killing have presently assumed an alarming rate among Catholic youths. Many young boys who were very dutiful, devoted and hardworking in Church have stopped going to Church because of influence from peers. A Catholic youth, for instance, a lay lector precisely, who saw his classmate displaying money during a function they both attended; left the place in deep thoughts of how he could make quick money just like his classmate. The particular young boy, who absconded from his parents’ house in search of a better life, went to a distant destination, like the story of the prodigal son in the Bible. However, reports have it that he travelled to Ogun State, Nigeria, where he went in search of wealth. After a year and 3 months, he returned home with two expensive cars; throwing money everywhere in town. This young boy has been well celebrated and is now respected by everyone.

It is devastating to point out that Catholic youths even go as far as boasting to their parents that they would make it in life, come what may; even if it involves taking of human life.<sup>24</sup> It is very complicated to try to understand the way of thinking of these Catholic youths who have become ritual killers. How can somebody take another person’s life in the pursuit for riches, fortification against external forces and control of many properties? More worrying is the fact that sometimes it is not the case of a wanton mind but also that of an immoral group of minds. Majority of these young boys went through catechism classes where they were taught the importance of human life. What has gone wrong?

There is a total collapse in moral values and lack of reverence for God among our Catholic youths of today.<sup>25</sup> Many of our Catholic youths do not want to understand that life grows gradually. They go into this desensitizing and dehumanizing act and at the end of day; they want to show off in Church activities like Harvest and Bazaar. These boys and girls always want to be invited to big functions where they

can display their illegal and ill-gotten wealth. A youth from one of our parishes once said “make money through ‘yahoo yahoo’ and build a Church for God, your sins will be wiped away”. This boy was an altar server. He died in a motor accident after making money that lasted for one year and six months. Upon announcement of his departure from this world, his family members started shouting, wailing and crying that his enemies had killed him. The devil has really attacked the Church and the youths are his targets.<sup>26</sup>

The voracious and insatiable expedition to get what is beyond one’s capabilities has pushed some of our youths away from the Church. They have gone into becoming frequent customers at clubs and disco halls, imagine youths who were very active in the church.<sup>27</sup> Flamboyant lifestyles, such as luxury cars, expensive phones and other disgusting promiscuous acts, have been measures of class among our Catholic youths. In a bid to brag about what he has achieved thus far, one of our Catholic youths who was once the President of the Catholic Youths Organization of Nigeria (CYON) in his parish; asked his friends if they have ever sat at the VIPs’ section of a popular cattery in town with other big boys. Is this supposed to be a thing to brag about?

What about those who make this money and want to pay tithe offering of what they have stolen from innocent people? A Church worker once explained a scenario where a young boy swindled a white lady of her hard-earned money. This boy collected an amount of money roughly in the tone of 63 million Naira Only. After collecting this money, the boy who happens to be the son of the former Laity President of his parish, approached the Priest to remit his tithe offering to the church, via the clergyman. The question as to whether or not the priest collected the money is yet to be ascertained by the researcher. When he was asked; how he got his sudden wealth, the young boy explained that he only got back what the westerners have taken away from our ancestors. In my opinion, this is a perceived retribution or retaliation against colonial exploitation.

There is a lot of imbalances in the scale of preference on the wish list of some of our Catholic youths. An altar server once mentioned that he was no longer interested in wearing the Mass servers’

outfit and serving on the sanctuary at liturgical celebrations because his friends on the street are making jest of him. A good number of those who made jokes of how this young boy still put on the altar servers' outfit at his age; were also parishioners of the same Church. Once these young boys start growing beards on their chins, and having broad shoulders almost everything changes with their activeness in Church functions. For his friends, this boy is simply wasting his time serving at Mass when his mates are seriously making money via the web and leaving flamboyant life styles.

### **Possible Factors Fueling Ritual Killings among Catholic Youths**

The unhealthy chase for materialism in the Nigerian space, has been argued as one of the factors influencing youths to form baleful and creepy ways of becoming wealthy. Although killing for money ritual purposes is not foreign to Nigeria it has been noticed since the early 90s. Nonetheless, the proportion or frequency at which the awful and dreadful criminality is propagated principally by the youths in recent times has been extraordinary troublesome.<sup>28</sup> A lot of discussions among people who are bothered by the horrendous acts of our youths have tried to trace the root cause of the problem. It is only when the root cause is found, that there can be possible solutions to the already devastating mindset to get rich quick among our Catholic youths.

Many factors have been put forward with regards to what is fueling the upsurge of the inhuman act of using human parts for money rituals. There are many claims surrounding poor parental training of the youths in Nigeria who clap and sometimes push their children into ritual killings for money. Truth be told, parenting in Nigeria has become less effective.<sup>29</sup> These parents put a kind of freedom of control around their children which has contributed, to the increase of uncontrolled children who explore their surroundings without taking into consideration the implications for their families and future. There is a lot of inattention and carelessness on the part of parents in supervising their children. Parents are to check whom their friends are and know whom they are working with at every moment. We have

situations where Catholic parents buy smart phones for their children telling them to hustle like their mates who are into ritual killings.

As this paper indicated above, greed is a possible cause of the upsurge of ritual killings among the youths. Once a Catholic youth, for instance sees that his friend is driving a posh and classy car, especially to Church functions; he or she could be effortlessly prejudiced or inclined negatively. Greed can push that youth into getting something that is beyond his capabilities.<sup>30</sup> He or she starts seeking for help where there is none.

There are other possible causes, like the very pathetic implementation of criminal laws in Nigeria by the law enforcement agencies. There are the uncensored Nollywood movies that promote money rituals aired on our television and social media contents with a lot of emphasis on getting rich such as skits with unscrupulous effect and communal extolment of wealth, even in places of worship.

I can boldly confirm that the enriching assessment system, which deposited the upbringing of children to parents and the group of people who live in a particular space, had fallen down, caved in and totally collapsed; which has smoothened the way for societal life whereby everyone lives on his own, no one cares how the other is living. Our ancestors used to enjoy a culture of living together and caring for the mental, physical and psychological security or wellbeing of one another within the community in such a way that once anyone is going astray, he or she is quickly corrected, and brought back to the fold. If a youth is alleged to be into ritual killings for monetary purposes, that boy is instantaneously, without more ado assessed as well as counseled to disengage from the unholy act.

### **The Role of the Catholic Diocese of Auchi in Addressing Ritual Killings among Catholic Youths**

I actually do not believe anybody will have any intense argument on the question of whether or not the Catholic Church has a prophetic role, or that the Catholic Church has prophetic responsibilities to the future of the Church on all related matters that may lead to danger of one or all. The Catholic Church in Auchi Diocese has a prophetic role to play

in the lives of the youths as it pertains to the upsurge of ritual killings. In adopting the prophetic role of the Catholic Church in Auchi Diocese, the Church would, as you might expect have to use the paraphernalia of “witness” and “conversion”. The Church would have to be in the apposite frame of mind to tackle fussy and picky issues like the upsurge of ritual killings among our Catholic youths with great precision and exigency, using challenging actions to help them and situating itself as a community in dissimilarity to other conventional organizations of the society. That is why; the Catholic Church in Auchi Diocese has a big task to carry out.

Understanding the entire discourse on “*salus animarum est suprema lex esto*”<sup>31</sup>, the Catholic Church in Auchi Diocese has a role of saving the Catholic youths from themselves or from the situations or conditions they might be in. The Catholic Church in Auchi Diocese has a role of sounding very relevant to the youths by means of showing them that God has the answers to their questions, the medicine for their deepest mars, and the love and nourishment to fill them with optimism at the hub of their existence.

One of the most significant roles the Catholic Church in Auchi Diocese can play in the lives of the Catholic youths in the present day is providing guidance and knowledge. It is true that many Catholic youths are blessed with amazing parents, supportive guardians or dutiful teachers; some do not have that endowment and luxury. As a result, to save the Catholic youths from themselves, the Catholic Church in Auchi Diocese has to demonstrate to them, in convincing terms, the virtuous or righteous alleyway that consists in relying on, as well as believing in the power of God to make available all their needs according to His riches in glory. With the help of brilliant soul-searching homilies, that elucidate the Church’s teachings on how the Catholic youths can gain healing through the Sacrament of Penance and how God can still feed them with the Living Bread, which only comes down from heaven in the Sacrament of Eucharist, let those already engaged in ritual killings know that they can still be saved if they repent.

The Catholic Church in Auchi Diocese can be a great help to youths who have gone into ritual killings and are ready to return to God to find purpose in their lives. With the help of other Church members like the Laity, which consists of all members who are not part of the Clergy<sup>32</sup>, the Catholic youths can find a place for God in their hearts and lives once again. As the proverb goes: “there is nothing truly novel in existence; every new idea has some sort of precedent or echo from the past”. The youths can learn from other older people’s experiences of their involvement in ritual killings and the consequences they had to suffer. They can share their own stories and hear responses from others. As the Yoruba axiom goes: “words of elders are words of wisdom. If those words do not materialize in the morning, they will surely materialize in the evening”<sup>33</sup>. To ignore the counsel of this saying is to open oneself to repeating the mistakes of others before him or her.

The Catholic Church in Auchi Diocese may think about offering didactically oriented and instructive programs for young people in a bid to teach the youths how to be good, faithful people in the future. With the guidance of the Diocesan Youth Chaplain, the program may come up often within the year. Topics on the Lives of the saints, works of great prophets, stories from the scriptures that give instructions on living a good life and shunning evils like ritual killings or other societal anti-human behaviors may be the focal issues. These programs should provide information on morality that youths cannot find in the classroom or in the confines of their homes.

Apart from providing guidance for the Catholic youths, the Catholic Church in Auchi can also offer the Catholic youths with certain forms of support and backing. The support can come from any person in the place of worship and it can be in any form, size or sharp. The support can be spiritual in the sense of introducing Bible Study Groups and other programs where the faith of the Church is explained to them. Financial, by way of empowering them to be gainfully employed. They can also be offered job opportunities in Catholic Church owned establishments like the Justice Development Peace Commission office in the Diocese, the PROMISE Newspaper, Sacred Heart Pure Water Factories, our Catholic schools and other

establishments around the Diocese. Moral support, when they need it most, should not be treated with levity, because if the Catholic Church in Auchi Diocese pushes them away they will go to their peers on the streets to learn their trade. The youths are to a certain extent a defenseless transitional group; they should be given all the support they can get in their turbulent journey towards adulthood.

### **Recommendation: Towards Rescuing the Future of Catholic Diocese of Auchi**

The Church is that part of the human community, that responds first to God in Christ and to Christ in God. It is the sensitive and responsive part in every society and humankind as a whole. Is the church part of the community? Yes, the Church is part of the community. The Church is a community of believers in one locality who have been drawn together by their common experience of the grace of God in Jesus Christ. Thus, Christians<sup>34</sup> are never called to be followers of God in isolation. The Catholic Church in Auchi Diocese needs the community to be better and must continue to shun the existing evils in the community, like the upsurge of ritual killings among our Catholic youths.

To shun this evil in our midst, the Catholic Church in Auchi Diocese must encourage our Catholic youths to discontinue this evil act of swindling people of their money whether diabolically or otherwise. Offerings from those youths who engage in fraudulent practices should be rejected just as God did to Cain's sacrificial offerings. The Catholic Church in Auchi Diocese, like never before should raise her voice against the evil act. Sin remains an offense against reason, truth, and right conscience.<sup>35</sup> Social sin is, every sin committed against justice due to relations between the individuals, between the individual and community and between the individual and others in the community<sup>36</sup>. If the Catholic Church in Auchi Diocese mutes her voice, the future of the Catholic Church in Auchi Diocese will be under threat. A Church without youths is a Church without a future, and if the Church does not take care of the youths, it will be like a house founded on sand. Where

is the future of the Catholic Church in Auchi Diocese without our Catholic youths?

### **Concluding Remarks**

African culture and tradition are embedded in strong moral considerations. It has a famous regulation on wealth acquired through falsification, prevarications and error. Guilty parties in this regard; are more often than not, shown up, shamed or mortified around the community before the presence of all and sundry. This depicts how the African milieu treats crime in the community. If a boy, for instance, steals a tuber of yam from his neighbor's farm and he is caught in the act, having been stripped of his clothes, he is usually paraded in the community with ash dust poured all over his body. Little wonder the dreadfully disconcerting feelings on how the youths in Nigeria are money ritual driven, taking the evolution from measly swindling of funds from clients to employing metaphysical aids.

The Nigerian youths are at the heart of this peril. Since Catholic youths are also within the age bracket of the Nigerian youths, they are very much in this crisis that needs immediate attention. The paradigmatic budge from the trendy "yahoo yahoo", which depends exclusively on internet legerdemain and agility to oppress victims to the diabolical aspect of ritual killings amongst Catholic youths, is more frightening and ominous to behold. With the radical push towards acquiring material gratification among Catholic youths in our day, and the exodus of this group of young boys or girls in the cyberspace to continue criminality, there came the surfacing of "yahoo plus" phenomenon.

This assemblage of young boys relies on the spiritual resources of Native Doctors, mania Preachers of the Gospel message as well as Islamic Prophets. With dire consequences involved in "yahoo plus" for the reason that charms may guarantee success for the time being, the charms may bounce back leading to a sudden demise, psychosis or deformation. Most itinerant crazy women and men on our streets these

days may possibly be because of their malevolent toil. The end product may well be idiosyncratic or in a broad-spectrum.

Catholic youths are an integral part of the Catholic Church in Auchi; since they are the present and future of the Church. The Church in Auchi Diocese has a very important role to play in showing her youths the light at the end of every tunnel and ensuring that they follow in the same direction, come rain, come shine. On the other hand, the Catholic youths should not allow themselves to be induced into going into ritual killings for wealth, for the reason that it will be their destruction. As an alternative, hard work, endurance, patience and industriousness should be the guiding words of the Catholic youths in Auchi Diocese, with the optimism that someday, they will meet Jesus Christ waiting for them at the “Well flowing with Living Water”, just like the Samaritan Woman did in John 4: 4 -45, to bless the good works of their hands.<sup>37</sup>

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup>Dalal P. (2006), *WirelessSecurity: Some Measures*, Computer Crime Research Center. Retrieved September 9, 2022, from <http://www.crime-research.org/articles>

<sup>2</sup> Adeniran A. (2008), The Internet and Emergence of Yahoo Boys Sub Culture in Nigeria. *International Journal of Cyber Criminology (IJCC)* 2 (2), p. 368

<sup>3</sup> “Las Las School na scam...” is a street jam by the fast rising Nigerian singers and songwriters named Gururu and TDY who made this song in Nigeria Pidgin Language, explaining that going to school or being educated is a waste of time and resource. This song is misleading a lot of young boys and girls into leaving school, with plans of going making quick money. It is commonly said slogan within the Nigerian youths who have seen their contemporaries excelling in yahoo yahoo.

<sup>4</sup> Paulinus Ezeokafor (2022). *Youths, Money Ritual and Internet Scam*. Awka: Awka Press. Art. 5

<sup>5</sup> “Rome was not built in a day” originated in France. In medieval times, the collection *Li Proverbe au Vilian* (circa 1190) was the first publication to mention the proverb. It read as “Rome ne fu pas faite toute en un jour”, and did not make the leap into an English proverb until a John Heywood publication in 1953. The adage is said to mean

that it takes a long time to do a job or task properly, and you should not rush it or expect to do it quickly.

<sup>6</sup> Bourdieu, P. (1986). The Forms of Capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, Greenwood Press: New York. p 2411

<sup>7</sup> Danquah P., Longe, O.B. (2011). Cyber Deception and Theft: An Ethnographic Study on Cyber Criminality from Ghana Perspective. *Journal of Information Technology Impact*. No 3. p. 169.

<sup>8</sup> Oludayo Tade (2013). A Spiritual Dimension to Cybercrime in Nigeria: The YAHOO PLUS” Phenomenon, in, *Institute for Research in Social Communication*, Slovak Academy of Sciences. Versita Publishing Center, London, p. 121

<sup>9</sup> “Cyber Spiritualism” involves the procurement and use of mystical, spiritual and supernatural powers by yahoo boys to cast a spell on their victims. Through this method, victims become hypnotized and, without objection, offer their treasures to the fraudsters.

<sup>10</sup> Dalal P. (2006), *WirelessSecurity: Some Measures*. Computer Crime Research Center. Retrieved September 9, 2022, from <http://www.crime-research.org/articles>

<sup>11</sup> Smith, J. D. (2007), *A Culture of Corruption: Everyday Deception and Popular Discontent in Nigeria*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, p. 78

<sup>12</sup> Talbot, P. A. (1923), *Life in Southern Nigeria*, Macmillan Press, London, p. 73

<sup>13</sup> Hushpuppi is a Nigerian former Instagram influencer and convicted felon sentenced in the United States to 11 years for conspiracy to launder money obtained from business email compromise frauds and other scams, including schemes that defrauded a US law firm of about 40 million dollars. Illegally transferred 14 million dollars from a foreign financial institution, and targeted to steal 124 million dollars from English Premier League Club.

<sup>14</sup> Femi Otedola is a Nigerian businessman, philanthropist, and former chairman of Forte Oil PLC, an importer of fuel products. He is the founder of Zenon Petroleum and Gas Ltd, the owner of a number of other businesses across shipping, real estate and finance.

<sup>15</sup> Aliko Dangote is a Nigerian billionaire business magnate. He is the founder and current chairman and CEO of the Dangote Group, the largest industrial conglomeration in West Africa. He is the richest person in Africa, the richest black person, and the 65th richest person in the world.

<sup>16</sup> John Walters. (2010). *Role Models*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux Press, New York, First Edition, Google Books. p. 34

<sup>17</sup> Dal, V.I. (2018) *Note on Ritual Killings (Russian Edition)*, Book on Demand Ltd, Russia, p. 7

<sup>18</sup> Jimmy Lee Shreeve, (2008), *Human Sacrifice: A Shocking Expose of Ritual Killing Worldwide*, Barricade Books, Fort Lee, new Jersey, USA, p. 59

<sup>19</sup> Aleksander Pluskowksi, (2011), *The Ritual Killing and Burial of Animals: General Perspective*, Oxbow Books, Oxford, England, p. 214

<sup>20</sup> McKenzie S. (2000), *Child Safety on the Internet: An Analysis of Victorian Schools and Households using the Routine Activity Approach*. A Thesis Submitted to the University of Melbourne. Retrieved on September 3, 2022, from <http://www.criminology.unimelb.edu.au/research/internet/childsafety/index.html>

<sup>21</sup> Soucy Jon (2000), *What do Catholic Youth Want?*, Adoremus Bulletin VI, La Crosse, Wisconsin, United States, no. 4. Art. 5

<sup>22</sup> Paulinus Ezcokafor, (2022). *Youths, Money Ritual and Internet Scam*. Ibid, p. 9

<sup>23</sup> The Catholic Diocese of Auchi is located in the City of Auchi, Edo State in the Ecclesiastical Province of Benin City. It is geographically located in the Northern part of Edo State, Nigeria.

<sup>24</sup> Akowe John-Duke (2018), *Are Nigerian Youths Truly Lazy? An Article* Publication in "PUNCH NEWSPAPER", January 2018.

<sup>25</sup> Akowe John-Duke (2020), *Cyber Crime, Filthy Riches, and Diabolism of Youths in Nigeria*, an Article Publication in "THE PROMISE NEWSPAPER", September 2020.

<sup>26</sup> Akowe John-Duke (2016), *The Church and the Youths: Towards a Reconciliatory Mission*, an Article Publication in "THE LINK NEWSPAPER", January, 2016

<sup>27</sup> Akowe John-Duke (2017), *Youthful Exuberance and Loss of Sense of Shame*, an Article Publication in "THE NATIONS NEWSPAPER", June 2017.

<sup>28</sup> Afecz Hanafi. Vanguard Newspaper, (2022). *Greedy Youths in Search of quick Fortune Resort to Money Rituals, Send Victims to Early Grave*. <http://www.vanguardngr.com/20891/greedy.youths.in.search.of.quick.money>. retrieved September 8, 2022.

<sup>29</sup> Akowe John-Duke, (2016). *Electoral Violence: A Threat to Democracy*, an Article Publication in "THE PROMISE NEWSPAPER", February 2016.

<sup>30</sup> Akowe John-Duke (2016), *Youths and Electoral Violence*, an Article Publication in "VANGUARD NEWSPAPER", August, 2016.

<sup>31</sup> "Salus animarum suprema lex esto" is a Latin version of: "the salvation of souls is the supreme law in the Church". This is the ultimate goal of the Church for all her members. (CODE OF CANON LAW, 1752)

<sup>32</sup> "Clergy" is the body of all people ordained for religious duties, especially in the Christian Church. They are known as rabbis, ministers, priests, imams, and other titles. They conduct religious worship and provide spiritual and moral guidance to members of a congregation. They also maintain the practices and beliefs of a particular religious faith and denomination.

<sup>33</sup> The above quotation is an axiomatic Yoruba adage that can only be faulted at one's own peril.

<sup>34</sup> Many people think that going to church occasionally or simply believing in God makes them a Christian. However, the Bible presents a different perspective and definition of a Christian. A Christian is someone whose behavior and heart reflects Jesus Christ. Followers of Jesus were first called "Christians" in Antioch. Acts 11: 26 says, "...for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch". They were called Christians because their speeches and behaviors were like Christ. However, in the Catholic Church, the Sacrament of Baptism makes a person a Christian.

<sup>35</sup> CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, paragraphs 1849 – 1850.

<sup>36</sup> COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH, 118

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