

Fighting Corruption in Nigeria (Titus 2:7-13): A Hermeneutico-Theological Approach

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The Bible Text (Titus 2:6-14) in Greek

- 6 τοὺς νεωτέρους ὡσαύτως παρακάλει σωφρονεῖν
- 7 περὶ πάντα, σεαυτὸν παρεχόμενος τύπον καλῶν ἔργων, ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ ἀφθορίαν, σεμνότητά,
- 8 λόγον ὑγιῆ ἀκατάγνωστον, ἵνα ὁ ἐξ ἐναντίας ἐντραπῇ μηδὲν ἔχων λέγειν περὶ ἡμῶν φαῦλον.
- 9 δούλους ἰδίοις δεσπόταις ὑποτάσσεσθαι ἐν πᾶσιν, εὐαρέστους εἶναι, μὴ ἀντιλέγοντας,
- 10 μὴ νοσφιζομένους, ἀλλὰ πᾶσαν πίστιν ἐνδεικνυμένους ἀγαθὴν, ἵνα τὴν διδασκαλίαν τὴν τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Θεοῦ κοσμῶσιν ἐν πᾶσιν.
- 11 Ἐπεφάνη γὰρ ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ σωτήριος πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις
- 12 παιδεύουσα ἡμᾶς, ἵνα ἀρνησάμενοι τὴν ἀσέβειαν καὶ τὰς κοσμικὰς ἐπιθυμίας σωφρόνως καὶ δικαίως καὶ εὐσεβῶς ζήσωμεν ἐν τῷ νῦν αἰῶνι,
- 13 προσδεχόμενοι τὴν μακαρίαν ἐλπίδα καὶ ἐπιφάνειαν τῆς δόξης τοῦ μεγάλου Θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,
- 14 ὃς ἔδωκεν ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, ἵνα λυτρώσῃται ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἀνομίας καὶ καθάρσῃ ἑαυτῷ λαὸν περιούσιον, ζηλωτὴν καλῶν ἔργων.

The Bible Text (Titus 2:6-14) in English Translation

- 6 Likewise urge the younger men to control themselves.
- 7 Show yourself in all respects a model of good deeds, and in your teaching show integrity, gravity,
- 8 and sound speech that cannot be censured, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say of us.

- 9 Bid slaves to be submissive to their masters and to give satisfaction in every respect; they are not to be refractory,
- 10 nor to pilfer, but to show entire and true fidelity, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.
- 11 For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men,
- 12 training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world,
- 13 awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,
- 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds (RSV).

Introduction

The issue of corruption has drawn a lot of attention in Nigeria in recent times because it is becoming more frequent and alarming more than ever before. Corruption exists in other places of the world but that of Nigeria seemed more alarming than that of other places. Ayobami (2011:1) identifies the cause of corruption and poverty in Nigeria to be the Nigerian ruling and business elite. He accuses the ruling elite of lacking the kind of philosophical and ideological vision and orientation that is committed to developing "a dream society." It appears, the ruling class and business elites have no dream beyond the satisfaction of desires.

In the midst of wealth in Nigeria, we still see majority of Nigerians living in abject poverty and gross unemployment. The issue of poverty and unemployment can be seen as part of what is causing insecurity in recent times in Nigeria. It is amazing to see people living below the subsistence level in a country that is producing 2.4 million barrels of crude oil per day (Egbo, 2010:2). Paradoxically, some Nigerians are feeding fat on our national wealth either through exorbitant salaries and allowances or through looting. Corruption seems to be favouring some people in this country hence they are bent on truncating the manifestation of the rule of law. Everybody talks about and condemns corruption in Nigeria yet a deeper soul search will tell us that almost all of us are guilty of corruption. Therefore, using the methodology of Popular Reading Model, this paper aims at examining the situation of corruption in Nigeria and using the bible message (Titus 2:7-13) to fight against the status quo. The Popular Reading Model according to Ukpong (2006:260) is that type of reading in African Biblical scholarship that aims at making the bible message available to the ordinary people in a way that is congenial to the ordinary

people's way of reading the Bible. This model, according to him can also embrace both the inculturation and the liberation paradigms.

DEFINITION OF SOME KEY TERMS

Corruption

What is corruption? Ayobami (2011:1) quoting Ruzindana (1999) says that corruption in Africa is a problem of routine deviation from established standards and norms by public officials and parties with whom they interact. He also identified the types of corruption in Africa as bribery, private gain, and other benefits to non-existent workers and pensioners (called ghost workers). The dishonest and illegal behavior exhibited especially by people in authority for their personal gain is corruption. According to the ICPC Act (section 2), corruption includes vices like bribery, fraud, and other related offences. Corruption can also be seen as the abuse or misuse of power or position of trust for personal or group benefit (monetary or otherwise).

Corruption is a symptom of numerous difficulties within contemporary societies. It usually involves more than one party. It takes a form of an organized crime. At times, an organization can be established on corruption to beget corruption. Gbenga (2008) asserts that corruption is contagious. According to the perception index of Transparency International, Nigeria was ranked 144th out of the 146 countries, beating Bangladesh and Haiti to last position. An analysis of the anti-graft/anti-corruption laws in Nigeria shows that corruption will continue in spite of the laws because the perpetrators do not fear any consequences. It is now dawning on the Nigerian public that the so-called private enterprise and legislators are free from scrutiny, and governors claim to be immune. Corruption is found in the award of contracts, promotion of staff, dispensation of justice, and misuse of public offices, positions, and privileges, embezzlement of public funds, public books, publications, documents, valuable security, and accounts. Corruption can be systematic in nature and affect the whole life of an organization or society.

Hermeneutics

Exegesis and hermeneutics are interrelated in biblical studies but with slight variation. Thus, while exegesis draws out the meaning of a text within a context, hermeneutics on the other hand deals with the contextual methods, theory and art of interpretation of any text (Patzia and Petrotta, 2002). The word hermeneutics according to Hartin (1947) is a science and termination which was derived from a

Greek god called Hermes, who was the messenger and herald of the gods, and the interpreter of Jupiter. From a biblical point of view, hermeneutics is a science of interpreting the Bible (Hartin, 1947). The term hermeneutics also, refers to the principles and methods used to interpret scriptures as well as the science and art of biblical interpretation (Youngblood, Bruce and Harrison, 1995). A German philosopher called Hans-Georg Gadamer who published a book on Truth and Method, a work of literary theory that distinguishes him as a leading thinker in 20th-century, also sees hermeneutics as the science of interpretation. Gadamer focuses on the dynamic relationship between text and interpreter, arguing that reading is a creative act that necessarily places the text in new and different interpretive contexts (Paul, 2007). The Encarta Dictionary (2008) defines hermeneutics as the branch of theology that is concerned with explaining or interpreting religious concepts, theories, and the science and methodology of interpreting texts, especially the books of the Bible.

In Biblical Studies, Paul (2008) postulates that the theologian's quest of how the original meaning of a text has been developed in the course of doctrinal history, and what it might be taken to mean in the theologian's own time and cultural situation involves hermeneutics (the science of interpretation) and that some hold the view that interpretation is itself a creative, innovative act, not just the transposition of meaning from an ancient to a modern context. It could be seen here that even a transposition intended to reproduce the exact meaning of the original text may result in substantial changes. Scholars believe a biblical text must be interpreted according to the language in which it was written, its historical context, the identity and purpose of the author, its literary nature, and the situation to which it was originally addressed. In this sense, exegesis and hermeneutics can be seen as interwoven.

Theology

Theology according to the Complete Christian Dictionary for Home, School and Offices (2002), is the study of the nature of God and religious truth. It is also an organized body of beliefs concerning god and man's relationship to God. According to Bromile (2004), theology is that which is thought and said concerning God. Theology, according to Paul (2008) is a discipline that attempts to express the content of a religious faith as a coherent body of propositions. In his view, theology is narrower in scope than faith, for whereas faith is a total attitude of the individual, including will and feeling, theology attempts to bring to expression in

words the elements of belief that are explicitly or implicitly contained in faith. In the same vein Evans (2002) defined theology as the orderly, systematic study of God and of God's relations to His creatures. Evans(2002) also points out that there are many different types of theology and their presuppositions as follows: philosophical theology which attempts to discern what can be known about God without presupposing any particular revelation or church teaching as authoritative; biblical theology which attempts to develop theology out of the study of biblical texts, and it comes in more specific forms, such as Old Testament theology, New Testament theology, Pauline theology, Markan theology, etc; Systematic theology which dwells on both biblical and philosophical theologies to develop a comprehensive account of God and His relations to the world; and dogmatic theology which attempts to do theology from the perspective of the teachings (or dogmas) of the church or some specific church and Liberation Theology which uses the Bible to address injustice and oppression. The theological approach addresses the question of what God is saying about a situation or an issue whether then or now.

Analysis of the Contemporary Context of Interpretation

The contemporary situation of the interpretation of Titus 2:7-13 is the situation of corruption in Nigeria. Although corruption exist in the developed world, that of Nigeria is worst. Corruption in Nigeria is systemic and endemic. Corruption drives both in the poor and on the street, the civil servant, the private business sector, the economic sector and the ruling class. Bribery is not strange to Nigerian. Some people who have committed prefer to jump to stick to justice by offering bribe to those who ought to prosecute them. Having collected the bribe, the culprits are allowed to go free. This act encourages the culprit to continue in crime in the sense that he knows how to maneuver his way even when caught.

In the judiciary, which suppose to be the hope of justice for the common man, justice seems to be far. Those who have money bribe judges to turn justice upside down. It appears justice has become an ostentatious commodity which cannot be affordable by the poor. The police prosecute cases which will stay for a very long time in the court either as a result of poor preparation or on the part of the court who delay judgment unnecessary. It has been alleged that some unscrupulous officers rent firearms to criminals who use them to harass the public and engage in highway robberies. The police are also alleged to be collecting an unauthorized fee before granting bail to anyone who is arrested. Some police in traffic control

collect a graduated illegal charge on all operators of inter- and intra-city drivers on transit. Some tax officials are alleged to be using two types of receipts to collect revenues. Some tax and revenue collectors print their own receipts thereby depriving government of its legitimate revenues.

Moreover, corruption does exist in our political system. The state and National Houses of Assemblies are saddled with the responsibility of making laws but it is amazing to see that some of those politicians who make the laws are the same people who break the law. Having broken the law they resist prosecution with the antics of immunity clause in the law of the land. Some of them eventually have their ways. On the other hand, when a poor man or those who do not have strong connections break the law they are sentenced to jail in a hurry. Some in the apex leadership of the nation and their cohorts loot public funds with impunity and immunity and at the end they go free. It appears institutions such as the economic and financial crime commission (EFCC), the independent corrupt practices commission (ICPC), etc are well empowered enough to handle corruption in Nigeria. It seems they are selective in their prosecutions and some times, they are indicted with alleged corruption. On the other hand, the legislature and judiciary seems to water down the paw for looters of public funds. In the sense that no one who was convicted embezzlement of public funds has been told to refund and pay interest for all the fund system. So Nigeria keep losing the nation's resources to some powerful Nigerians.

What about the common man on the street who points accusing fingers on the ruling class; is he or she free from corruption? Some of the petty market men and women who cheat on their customers. What about the producer who produce substandard materials. Some producers of drugs produce substandard drugs and this has killed many people. Some medical doctors are not faithful in their duties and as such are more committed to their private clinics while at the same time in the employment of the government. The poor people who cannot afford their exorbitant charges recline to the fate of death being that available and affordable government hospitals are not adequately equipped and staffed. Contractors and awarders of public contract awarders are unfaithful and untransparent in their dealings. Some contractors are so corrupt in that money given to them for mobilization to execute projects are some times embezzled and the projects are never done to specifications. They frustrate the government and the people in the sense that they are always in the business of over inflating the cost of work in

collaboration with some government officials who are corrupt. They know how to even manipulate figures and facts.

Some powerful people try to frustrate the effort of some of our good political leaders who are willing to work and deliver the dividend of democracy to the people. They use their powers to truncate genuine transactions because of what they want for themselves. Some times in order to make peace political leaders sacrum to terms of settlement in which some percentage of money goes to them and their cohorts. If this money is not paid to them they will make sure the community is ungovernable. In the area of employments, jobs are given to people not on the basis of qualification or competence but on the basis of who know man. Those who do not have big godfathers or people that matters cannot have a job. In some cases, people bribe their way into offices or jobs. Some times, people in charge of employment put price tag on vacant jobs and the poor who are qualified but cannot afford such monies are edged out by the day.

In election and electioneering process, some powerful politicians do everything within their power to truncate the system. Some times, some powerful politicians rig elections. Some of these powerful politicians buy INEC officials over. Parents cannot be exonerated from the cancer of corruption in Nigeria in the sense that some parents pay the way of their children into Universities through bribery. Some parents encourage their children in examination malpractise during JAMP and WAEC examinations in order for them to pass in high grades or at least meet the minimum grade of five credits and University score bench mark. Corrupt practices also exist among lecturers in higher institution of learning. Within the university system, some students resort to "sorting" (finding ways of purchasing of high and unmerited mark from a lecturer in order to enhance the grade in their final examination.) Such students can even offer their bodies to the lecturer for sex. Some lecturers demand sex and money from their students as if it is part of the school's curriculum. It is not out of place to see lecturers and students printing fake receipts, which they use in collecting school fees and other levies. Some lecturers exploit students in the name of handout and textbook which they make compulsory for students to buy or fail. All these issues exist in the Nigerian society. It is against this backdrop that Titus 2: 7-13 is being interpreted here.

Some Cases of Corruption in Nigeria

Corruption does exist in Nigeria just like in some other part of the world just that, the one of Nigeria is very alarming. In spite of efforts by successive administrations to check the culture of corruption, it has continued to wax much stronger (Ukase, 2012:113). Moreover, Ukoni (2010:15) quoting Ribadu Nuhu, the former Chairman of the economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) Nigerian past leaders stole N64 trillion equivalent to US\$500 billion at the current exchange rates, from public coffers within a period of forty (40) years, and when this figure is benchmarked against the 2008 budget of N2.456 trillion, this translates into a budget of 26 years. At this point, it is not enough to say there is corruption in Nigeria, we need to know some of the people who have been involved in corruption in Nigeria especially those who stole the Nation's money. Historically, Ukase (2012: 115-116) agreeing with Admoyega (9181:873; Ifamose 2004:80; Odunuga: 227) give the historical antecedence of corruption as follows:

- i. In 1966, the first civilian administration collapsed extensively due wide spread corruption that had prevailed over the nation.
- ii. From 1966 to 1974 the country passed through here military leaders, all of whom promised to build a corruption free Nigeria but corruption even grew stronger at the end of the day. This showed up more rapidly when in the midst of oil boom between 1970 – 1974 which rose from 26% to 82% yet out white elephant projects were abandoned and monies went into private pockets.
- iii. Between 197-1974, second National Development plan and 1975 – 1980 – the third National development plan of which N3.5 billion and N53.6 billion respectively were expended, the government could not realize anything meaningful due to massive looting trend and misappropriation of investment capital.
- iv. As at 1979 when the General Olusegun Abasanjor's administration vacated scenes, there was an investigation into alleged financial misdemeanours which amounted to N2.8 billion, but the report never saw the light of the day.
- v. Also, from 1979 -1985 under the civilian government of president Shahu Shagari, it appears corruption escalated to its highest peak in the sense t hat politicians with the assistances of their cohorts looted one nation's treasury with reckless abandon.
- vi. In 1983 when General Mohammed Buhari took over, the leadership of the Nation, people though that corruption will come to an end when he arrested and detained many politicians in the process.

- vii. In this same year 1983 General Ibrahim Babagida overthrew Buhari. Between 1983 to 1995, under the administration of Babagida, corruption is said to have been institutionalized in Nigeria in the sense that he manipulated public laws to allow unbridled corruption. He also put the central Bank of Nigeria under the direct control of the presidency, while the windfall of the Gulf war, which amounted to US \$5 billion realized from the sales of petroleum was diverted, as most of the money was simply stolen by loyalists to the regime. Conservative estimates have put the personal fortunes of General Babangida at about US \$ 4 billion. Paradoxically, at the end of his tenure, the regime of Babagida left a budget deficit of N90 billion.
- viii. During the interim National Government of Chief Ernest Shonekan in 1995, General Sani Abacha overthrew and continues their programme of looting the Nation. After the death of Abacha in 1998, it was discovered that he placed \$1.8 billion in Brazil, Lebanon, Britain and Switzerland and in November of the same, the state announced that \$675.2 million, \$75.3 million and N252 million of Nigerian's fund had been recovered from the Abacha's family. The Naira Equivalent of the loot at that time stands at N64.66 billion and at May, 2000, US \$ 1 billion is said to have been recovered from Abacha's loot.

In recent times, looting of state and other sector's fund is not strange. Former Inspector General of Police, Mr. Tafa Balogun was said to have once paid the lip service of kicking against corruption was accused of unlawfully enriching himself with to the tune of over N13 billion and was sacked from office and was convicted (Igbuzo, 2008:22). Some state governors, DGs, (Director General), Members of state and national house of assemblies have identified with the vanguard of corruption. The former governors of Bayelsa State (Depreye Alamesiaghae who was recently given a controversial presidential pardon), Delta State (James Ibori), Edo State (Lucky Igbinedion), Ogun State (Gbenga Daniel), etc were indicted of looting their state funds. The former speakers of the House of Representatives (Felicial Eteh and Dimeji Bankonle) were also indicted of financial misconduct. During the subsidy regime probe under President Goodluck Jonathan, Farouk Lawan a member of the House of Representatives who was appointed the chairman house committee on subsidy probe in 2012 was indicted by Otedola of accepting bribe of some amount of dollars to remove his company's name from the list of defaulters. Also, Hembe, a member of the house of representative, chairing the committee that probed the near collapse of the Nigeria Stock Exchange was indicted by Mrs. Arona Oteh (Director General of Security and Exchange Commission) for asking

for bribe or illegal fee. Most recently, Mr. John Yusufu Yakubu, the former head of the Police Pension Board was discovered to have embezzled ₦23.3 billion of the police pension fund. The most alarming situation is the laxity with which the court handled the case (Ugegbe and Onykwere, 2013: 1 and 6). People frowned against this judgment because it appears to be encouraging people to loot the nation. In all of these allegations, one hardly see convictions on cases of corruption went on plea bargain, paid some few amount of money and went Scot free in police escort. Can we succeed in the fight against corruption if we continue like this?

Another aspect of corruption in Nigeria porous and malfunction or incapacitated system is civil administration. Civil administration does exist in Nigeria. Anti-corruption institutions do exist in Nigeria but not fully empowered to function. During the late president Musa Yaradua and the president administrative of Dr. Goodluck Jonathan is on the vanguard of the rule of law yet some powerful people are trying to truncate the system from working perfectly. They are doing this because a porous system enables them to carry out corruption practices. Files are mysteriously missing from offices, and large numbers of ghost workers are on government pay roles. Employments are being manipulated. Election malpractices are not new to us. One example of this is the rigging of elections that brought Shagari Shehu to power in 1983 (Odey, 2001:39) and the riggings we have experienced in recent times among politicians contracts are being inflated by politician and their cohorts.

How to Tackle Corruption in Nigeria

Some other scholars have suggested some ways through which we can fight the cancer of corruption in Nigeria. Achebe (1983:37-38) postulated that corruption be made difficult and inconvenient for those who intend to indulge in corruption in Nigeria and that the right philosophy and ideology be imbibed by leaders and sundry in Nigeria. In this same vein, Ogunwole (2006:322-331) opined that if we must fight corruption in Nigeria, those who purport to have the fear of God especially in the sacred and secular leadership and even sundry should imbibe self discipline; sound moral minds; doctrine of honesty, justice, faithfulnesses, etc. In like manner, Odey (2001) suggested that both the legislators, anticorruption institutions and the leadership of the church should handle the fight against corruption with all seriousness and that the anti-corruption institutions in Nigeria be fully empowered to fight corruption. Ukase (2012:120) in an attempt to answer the question of what can be done to win the war against corruption, posited that

Nigerians should do some kind of soul search in all aspects of their lives including the sacred and secular whether we have been fair and faithful to our nation; Nigerian political leaders should cultivate the political will to fight corruption especially through the instrumentality of the Freedom of Information Bill (FIB) and other anticorruption agencies; political leaders should be proactive in strengthening our anti-graft institutions so as to make them more result oriented; Nigerians should match words with action on this matter; societal transformation, especially in the judiciary, legislators, law enforcement institutions the executive and sundry should come to manifestation in Nigeria; and the press in collaboration with civil society organizations should rise up to the task of fighting corruption in Nigeria.

In this same line of thought Ayobami (2011) exploring the Achanism model also contributed that in order to prevent corruption from happening at all, Nigeria should emphasize on transparency, integrity, and accountability in all their private and public transactions and that culprits of corruption be severely punished like it was done to Achan in the Old Testament (Josh.7). Moreover, Ayobami argues further that the following ideas can proffer solution to corruption in Nigeria:

Social Transformation: Transformation in education of the public is a necessary factor in social transformation. There is need for formation and reformation, orientation and re-orientation of the minds and heart of Nigerians, for them to see that corruption is the enemy of development. Enforcement of Anti-Corruption Law. The law should be enforced to its fullest and without fear and favor. Improvement of Sociopolitical and Economic Life. This is another weapon against corruption in Nigeria. The multiplying effects of this improvement will reduce the tendency of public servants to demand and take bribes and get involved in other corrupt practices.

All the above scholars have made their contributions to the solution of how we can win the war against corruption like gallant soldiers, but one which they did not cover is the issue of fighting corruption in retrospect. This is the aspect this paper intends to explore. Therefore if we must fight corruption in Nigeria we must sincerely answer the following questions:

- i. when did public corruption start in Nigeria? We need to know when it started so that we can know where to start the fight. If a person wishes to kill a tree

properly, the person must kill that tree by totally uprooting that tree totally from the root, other wise it will sprout again from various areas of the tree. If we can trace the very time it started we will know who started it and uprooting it from there. It is not enough to identify the time or period, we must take appropriate action.

- ii. How did corruption begin in Nigeria? We must know the very root cause and how it started so that we can fight it from there. If we can truly know how it started we can also know how to fight it.
- iii. Who started corruption in Nigeria? We need to know the specific persons or groups who started the corruption in Nigeria. If such person is discovered, whether dead or alive, then we can know who started, we should demand for refunds of every Naira and kobo that were stolen from our national and state coffers
- iv. Who are those that have been involved in corruption since it started in Nigeria? Corruption cannot just thrive in a vacuum, there must be an accumulated numbers of persons or groups who may have promoted civil or public corrupt practices in Nigeria. There were people did multiple progressive loots on national funds. Having identified the people such people should be made to pay back all they have stolen.
- v. Have we actually proportionately punished those involved since the inception of corruption in Nigeria? We are yet to see any person convicted of financial embezzlement, who has been told to refund all that he stole and giving a stiffer punishment that commensurate with the crime of financial loot. If we can recover the some of N64.66 billion from Abacha's loot even after his death and we cannot do same to others in his shoes, Nigeria must apologize to the Abacha's family. Many of the people who stole our money are even richer than Nigeria as a nation. All those who have ever stolen from Nigeria should made to refund all our monies and in addition, their properties be seized and they should be reprimanded in jail for the rest of their lives but for those who have died, our money should be recovered by seizing all their properties that worth the amount of the money stolen.
- vi. What are the things that are giving corruption the enabling environment to survive in Nigeria? Can there be smoke without fire. Corruption has survived in Nigeria over the years because an environment was created for it to survive. The laws against financial corruption in Nigeria are too watery. Being that the law is giving corrupt people soft landing especially for those who looted public funds; as such people find it easy to loot our nation. It is against this backdrop

that could have mused Achebe (1983) to assert that: "Nigerians are corrupt because the system under which they live today makes corruption easy and profitable; they will cease to be corrupt when corruption is made difficult and inconvenient." To succeed in this fight our anti-graft agencies should be fully empowered by the law, the media and civil society groups should rise up to the task of fighting the cancer of corruption. The Freedom of Information Bill should be allowed by politicians to swing into action in the issue of fighting corruption in Nigeria.

It could plausible for one say here that if the Judiciary and the Nigerian leadership can be determined enough to handle the above questions about how we can tackle corruption in Nigeria, we can boast of making headway to minimized and if possible eradicate corruption in from our nation. We have spoken more about fighting financial corruption in Nigeria in this paper because, money is the driving force behind corruption in Nigeria. Why do people rig election? Why do rituals? Why do people scheme for position? Why do people add ghost workers to list of workers? The question goes on and on. The simple answer is money. Some good numbers of Nigerians are too material conscious hence they prefer to do anything to make money for themselves.

Socio-Economic Context of Titus 2:6-14

A biblical passage can be approached from different context such as socio, political, economic and even religious and cultural contexts. In this case, Titus 2:6-14 would be located in a socio-economic context. The Pauline and Titus Church community was characterized by various crisis of which Titus was seen as a one being sent by Paul to settle conflicts (McCain, 2008:252-262). This epistle of Paul to Titus is called one of the Pastoral Epistles of Paul. Paul wrote this letter to Titus to abreast him of the corruption being carried out by some false prophets in the church community (Andria, 2006:1484). Moreover, Andria, Pointed out that these false teachers did not only teach false doctrines but were also involves in the defrauding of the people financially. They carried this out due to greed and indiscipline. This letter of Paul to Titus was a warning as well as instructions against laziness, fraud, indiscipline and lust. The Roman government accepted slavery in the Greco-Roman world and gave authority to slave masters to exploit their slaves and denied such slaves of their human rights (Hiebert, 1996:1852). Being that the Pauline and Titus Church Community was situated in the Roman province; they were under the Roman authority. Under the Roman government

within the New Testament Church community, there existed a strata which consisted of contractors, and others who lived in luxury as the upper class, the middle class who use slaves and the less privileged to get job done; and the poor and the peasant who always depend on the government and the rich in the family for support (Gundry, 1981:27). Farmers, artisans and small businessmen made up most of the population of the community.

Gundry (1981: 27-28) states that the Roman leaders imposed taxes and toll fees on the people of which the tax and toll collectors exploited the people by collecting some moneys illegally. In the society bribery of toll collectors by the rich increased the financial burden of the poor and as such, the masses deeply resented toll collectors. While the rich get richer, the poor get poorer due to corruption in the society. It was a common place to see slaves who were more educated than their masters yet they were slaves. Those who could afford it bought their freedom. Both the rights and materials of the lower class including the church community of Paul and Titus were simultaneously defrauded. It was against this background, that Paul instructed Titus, a church leader in Crete to leave above reproach and pass same to those who aspire to become a bishop or an elder (Guthrie, 1983:23-624). The church leaders and even public officials are expected to imbibe high sense of self-discipline against any form of immorality and frauds. Also, the situation of corruption among leaders and the led can be placed in this context, hence Titus 2:6-14 resonated with Nigeria situation of economic and other act of corruption.

Analysis of Titus 2:6-14

In a short work of this nature, long bible passages can be exegeted thematically. In this case, Titus 2:6-14 will be analyzed thematically to reflect the issues in resonance with the situation in view. Some of the themes include: *aphthorian* (v.7), *didache* (vv. 7, 10), *pistis* (v. 10), *dikaiois* (v. 12) and *kalon ergon* (v. 14). The Greek noun *aphthoria* (Incorruption or uncorruption) connote material (bodily) and ethical understandings. When it is connected to *phtheiro* (corruption) it refers to the physical decay of the human body and the metonymy of anything which is liable to corruption and it also refers ethically to the physical gratification of evil desires and lust (Vine, 1996:131). The later resonates with the matter under discuss here *aphthoria* or *adiaphthoria* means sincerity and integrity. The leader in this context is expected to be sincere and above reproach.

Also, another relevant New Testament word that also fit into the sanitation of religious and even public offices is the word *didache* and it refers to the activity or content of teaching, instruction and doctrine (Strong, 2001:1260). In the case of (Titus 2:7, 10, 12) under consideration here, it refers to both negative and positive teachings. The negative teaching reflected the pollution of truth carried out by some false prophets who did it to gratify their lustful desires to defraud the church. While on the other hand, the positive teaching refers to the consolidation of truth (*aleteia*), righteousness, (*dikaiosune*), integrity (*aphtharsia*), self-control (*egkrateia*) and above all, living as an example (*tupos*) for positive change. The teaching of right doctrine must go through the lips and deeds of the believer in Christ for societal transformation. Moreover, the concept of *pistis* is also present in the pericope (Titus 2:6-14) and it means faith, fidelity, trust or faithfulness (Summer, 1995:180). While *pistis* means faith in God through Jesus Christ for Salvation of the human soul on the one hand, it also means the soundness of the mind in keeping faith or being faithful in all that one does. Another thing that help the church leader to be faithful is *dikaiois* and it means a state of being righteous or just (Summer, 1995:175). Righteousness has to do with doing what is right in the sight of God and man. It is even stated elsewhere in the Old Testament (Prov. 14:34) that: "Righteousness exalts a nation but sin or wrong doings is a reproach to a nation and even the people.

Another New Testament word that was used in Titus 2:6-14 is *Kalon ergon* (good works). Good works was a true show of righteousness and integrity. In the New Testament the words most frequently translated "good" are *agathos* (physical or moral quality as can be seen in Matt.5:45; 7:11) and *kalos* (beautiful, honourable, pleasing, useful, noble, worthy in a moral sense as could be seen in Mt 5:16; 26:10; Mk 14,6; Jn 10:11,14,32; 1 Tim 5:4). (Jn 5:29). The verb form *agathoergeo* (1 Tim 6:18) and *agathopoieo* (Mk 3:4; Acts 14:17), means "to do good." Its Hebrew equivalent is *Tobh* which also means desirable qualities, tidings, benevolent, etc. On the other hand, in the New Testament, *ergon* (work) or *erga* (works) is a favorite designation in John for the wonderful works of Jesus (John 5:36; 10:38; 15:24). Work as it used in Titus 2:14 connotes good deeds that goes side by side with faith (cf. James 2:14-26). The Hebrew equivalent of *ergon* is *asah* or *paal* and it means the works both of God and man. When *Kalon and ergon* are used it reds good work. In this context, it can refer to excellent, honourable, noble and credible works.

Hermeneutico-Theological Implications of Titus 2:6-14 for the Nigerian Milieu

Behind every biblical text, there is a meaning and a theology. These meanings and theologies are not read in the vacuum but contextualized to address the contemporary situation in which it is being read because the original writers wrote within a cultural Milieu that may not be the same with the contemporary cultural environment of interpretation. It is on this basis that Abogunrin (2000:1-18) and Odoemene (2007: 19-39) agree that one of the ways we can make the Bible message useful in the African soil is by contextualization. Behind the pericope (Titus 2:6-14) before us, there are some hermeneutical and theological messages that can be deduced. First, the lesson of living above reproach is a lesson every leader especially church leaders must imbibe (vv. 6-8). With the consciousness of living above reproach, every leader both in the sacred and secular will awake to self-control, integrity, good communication and faithfulness to duty. When the leaders of today imbibe the above, they will become a model of good conduct for the present youths and posterity. All of these can be translated into the fear of God. It even said in Proverbs 1:7 that: the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. If every leader in Nigeria can see God at the center of all activities, it will be natural for them to see good conduct as something that pays off in the day.

Second, enlightenment can be used to drive home the message of respect, trust, and godly morality (vv. 9-10). When Christian leaders enlighten the Church through teaching and exemplary deeds, the Church will in turn make godly teaching attractive to the society. In other words, righteousness and holiness should not end in our lips, it should manifest in the society by our action and as such, Christians in Nigeria will be able to influence the society towards God. This righteousness from God in our lives will make Christian leaders not to cheat on their subordinates and the subordinate will also give due respect to their superiors. Third, every Christian leader who had found his or her self in Church or secular leadership must possess the gift of being firm to reject corruption (vv. 11-14). This type of person must put into cognizance the parousia of Christ and the eschatological hope of living with Him in paradise for practicing godliness. This shows that everything we do; does not end here on earth because we shall give account to God when He finally consummates the eschatological kingdom. The Christian with this type of grace (*Charisma*) is the type of Christian who does not just proclaim religion but a person who has been transformed by Jesus Christ ways of life and as such this person is dead to sin (Ehamblin, 1993:773). When a Christian gets to that level of being dead to sin, he can also be dead to corruption in public office even though he or she is exposed to it.

Fourth, a lesson of a Christology above and beneath (vv.13-14). In Ukpong (1995:1-21), he describes Christology and inculturation in the context of the question of the meaning of Jesus the Christ for the inculturation movement in the church today. In the opinion of O. Collins (1993:4), "all church reform remains theologically shallow and pastorally ineffective unless it clearly bases itself on the founder of Christianity Himself and our faith in Him as Son of God and Saviour." The Christology above refers to the study of the Christ that came from above and the Christology beneath is the Christ that came from above to lived on earth in biblical history. The Christ who came from above and lived among men on earth is the Christ that Paul referred to in his letter to Titus (2:13-14). John (1:1-14) also spoke about the Christ who came from above to live among men. Our concern here is not talking about Christ in the light of inculturation but to reconstruct what Paul meant in Titus 2:13-14). This Jesus who came from above lived on earth as an epitome of holiness, righteousness, perfection and grace. The system of the world could not corrupt Him hence, He was able to transform the earth's society then, now and for posterity. On this understanding, therefore, the Church is saddled with the mission of bringing the gospel message to all people and through it transform the human race including Nigeria. Therefore, every Christian in both sacred and secular leadership must see Christ as the Saviour and Redeemer of Mankind and as the perfect model of moral character in a corrupt system like ours in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The scourge of corruption is gradually and drastically destroying Nigeria. Both some Christians and none Christians alike are yet to live above corruption. This paper has addressed the issue of corruption from both the secular and sacred perspectives. Free thinking alone cannot handle the phenomenon of corruption in Nigeria, hence the application of biblical moral lessons particularly from Titus 2:6-14 is explored to deterred Christians in both Church and public offices from being involved in corruption. What more lesson can we learn from Paul's letter to Titus. In this passage, the need to live above reproach, shown ungodliness, be firm enough to say no to corruption and imitate Jesus' life of holiness, righteousness and perfection in all dealings in life was a front burner. The church must not allow the society to influence her into corruption but the church must influence the society for Christ in both speech and deeds as practiced by Christ Jesus.

Recommendations

In addition to the way forward which was been enumerated above, Nigeria should fight corruption:

- i. By making the NASS to make laws that can attract capital punishment for corruption especially for those in public offices or if anyone is found to have stolen our money, such person should be made to serve a jail term of 20 years, pay back all that was stolen with 20% interest and all the person's properties be confiscated by the state.
- ii. By being proactive in the prevention of corruption rather than waiting for someone to loot our resources before reacting; and
- iii. By giving national reorientation to Nigerians on the need to imbibe the fear of God and integrity in all they do.

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