

Christian Morality: A Panacea to Political Corruption in Nigeria

Emmanuel Williams Udoh PhD

Department of Religious and Cultural Studies

University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria

E-Mail: revemmaudoh@yahoo.com & emmanueludoh@unical.edu.ng

and

Akpanika, Ekpenyong Nyong PhD

Department of Religious and Cultural Studies

University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria

ekpesakpanika@hotmail.com & en.akpanika@unical.edu.ng

Abstract

The problem of corruption in Nigeria has reached an unprecedented level that all hands need to be on deck to fight it. This phenomenon is posing a danger to the corporate existence of Nigeria. The political scenario is endemic with politics of bitterness, ethnicity, the rigging of elections, obstructions of political processes, thuggery, snatching of ballot boxes, falsification of election results, vote-buying and godfatherism. These challenges by political corruption, therefore, demand serious attention. Hence, the need for Christian moral principles. This research adopts the qualitative method in gathering data; using literary materials for content analysis. The theoretical framework for this paper is viewed from the lenses of structural functionalism and conflict theories. From the research finding, the number of election-related cases at all levels of the courts in Nigeria shows the level of problems that exist in our body politic and cannot be considered free, fair and credible. This work, therefore, recommends the adoption of Christian moral principles such as mutual love for one another, peace, and the sanctity of life, servant leadership, tolerance and respect for individual's opinion. These virtues should adequately be taught in schools and inculcated in the minds of children and youth, to encourage a suitable political environment in Nigeria.

Keywords: Politics, Morality, Corruption, Political Corruption

Introduction

The task of fighting corruption in Nigeria's body politic and other socio-economic sectors is a concern for all well-meaning citizens. This is so because at present Nigeria is seeking for solution to counter the high level of corruption that is plaguing the country. It has come at a time when all instruments put in place by succeeding governments to fight the menace seem to

have failed. It is undeniable that corruption exists in every facet of our society. The family, religious organizations, traditional systems, government establishments are all citadels of corruption.

In the world indices, Nigeria is rated 144 of the 146 countries of the world (2017-2018), which shows that the problem of corruption is deeply rooted in the country's fabric. The anti-corruption agencies set up by the government include, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), with the assistance of the Police, DSS and the Civil Defense Corps, to mention but a few. These bodies are saddled with responsibilities of checking or fighting economic and financial crimes, but yet corruption is on the increase in the country. There is corruption in every institution and establishment in Nigeria.

There are different forms of corruption, economic, social, political corruption, and so on. This paper focuses on political corruption. An attempt has been made to define political corruption, and to explain Christian morality with a view to showing why it is necessary to employ its principles to solve or reduce corruption in Nigeria. In order to do justice to this topic, this paper looks critically at who a Christian ought to be. The reason being that most of those who claim to be Christians are clearly exhibiting anti-Christian morals. Christian life is not about answering Christian names but exhibiting lifestyle opposed to Christian principles. A Christian life is a consecrated life. The underlying ideas here are those of separation (holiness) for a particular purpose (the divine purpose), vocation, and differentiation. Hudson explains better, "The Christian is one whose whole life (mind, desires, will) is more and more clearly hallmarked, as time goes on, with the signs of consecration this understood" (1).

More explicitly it may be said, using the words of Biblical Paul, that the whole being of a Christian man or woman is increasingly surrendered to Christ Jesus as Lord (2 Corinthians 4:5), his life is a growing expression of his acknowledgement of Christ as Master and King, Sovereign supreme in every department of the individual life, and in all the relations of men with one another. According to Hudson, the Christian, "thoughts and his desire will be subordinated to the mind of Christ, and his conduct confirmed to Christ's pattern. His thoughts: he will strive, ever more earnestly, by making the fullest use of the mind which God has given him, for this purpose not less than for others, to ensure that his ideas about God are true and adequate. His desires: he will achieve, through his practice of the interior life of prayer and communion, an ever-deepening correspondence between what he wants and what he knows that Christ wants, in him and through him" (1).

Furthermore, it is important to mention that the gospel which the Christian bears carries with it the mandate to ethical duty. All Christians of every conceivable tradition are agreed that the

gospel has ethical implications. John Stott in his book, "I believe in Preaching" states, "Justification leads inevitably to sanctification. Doctrine without duty is sterile; faith without works is dead. But what are the 'works' which are the fruit of faith?" (155). It means, therefore, that Christian virtues must be practical. It is more beneficial when it positively impacts other peoples' lives. By their fruit we shall know them (Matt. 7:20). Next is to examine some of the ethical issues which have social and political dimensions.

The moral duties of the Christian are beyond individual, ecclesiastical and domestic duties. It includes social questions which affect our behavior in the community at large. For instance, the "Sermon on the Mount" teaches non-retaliation on the one hand and loving our enemies on the other (Matt. 5:38-48 and Luke 6:27-36). Paul also places side-by-side the duty of the individual Christian to 'repay no one evil for evil' and the duty of the state to punish the evil-doer (Rom. 12:14-13:5). The Christian is not to avenge any wrong done to him. The act of vengeance belongs to God. It is His prerogative to avenge the wrong done to his follower.

Christians are expected to 'do good to all men' (Gal. 6:10); to love even their enemies and to express our love in action (Matt.5:43-48). According to Stott, "It is an unavoidable extension of the biblical doctrines of the unity of the human race, the stewardship of the earth's resources and the injustice which is inherent in inequalities of privilege" (62). This statement affirms that, yes, the Christian will be confronted with these challenges but is expected to respond different as Christ would have done.

There is also an issue in Christian ethics, the political, which promotes social injustice, which requires political action for it to be ameliorated or remedied. What attitude are Christians to take up towards major ethical issues? Some of the social problems which stare one in the face and press upon one from every side include human oppression, and the cry for liberation; poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease, environmental pollution, work, unemployment, dehumanization of the technocracy and the bureaucracy, the list seems endless. The Christian life is such that there is no separation between the sacred and the secular. They are no distinct spheres. God is concerned about both of them.

In this context one needs to define morality. According to Ekeopara, morality is the subject matter of ethics. In most cases the two words, ethics and morality are used interchangeably (6). Volkov agrees that, "... ethics is not restricted to dispassionate theoretical analysis of morality but provides recommendations on the choice of a particular standard or pattern of behavior, that is, it has a normative character similar to that inherent in everyday social consciousness... ethics and morality at times overlap as far as their content is concerned" (6). Explaining this concept further, Ekeopara stresses that, ethics is defined as a scientific discipline while morality is its subject matter...ethics sets out the moral principles, which guide and regulate human

conduct in the society. Moral principles spell out what constitute right conduct and what constitute wrong conduct and the penalties for violating the codes (26).

It means therefore that Christian morality provides the roles for right conduct and prohibitions against wrong acts, rules, regulations and prohibitions, which are valid for all members of the society. We can agree with Ekeopara that “morality refers to the established and recognized social customs and traditions in their many or diverse ramifications, the virtues which regulated the behavior and conduct of individuals in the societies (26). Morality here will mean those Christian principles which guide the life of Christians. These principles were observed by the people of Antioch who first gave the title “Christian” to followers of Christ. These principles were seen manifested or practiced by the disciples, it was their lifestyle, morally speaking. Christian morality therefore, lays emphases on both the individual and the group (positive or good). The individual life lived as Christ must impact both the Christian group and the society at-large.

Theoretical Framework

This research, again, is viewed from the lenses of structural functionalism and conflict theories from the perspective of Ralf Dahrendorf. This scholar conducted a comparative analysis of these two theories and resolved that they work together to establish a veritable society. Dahrendorf recognized that society could not exist without both conflict and consensus, which are prerequisites for each other. Thus, we cannot have conflict unless there is some prior consensus (265). According to the functionalists, every element in society contributes to stability, whereas the exponents of conflict theory see many societal elements contributing to disintegration and change. Furthermore, functionalists tend to see society as being held together informally by norms, values, and a common morality. Conflict theorists see whatever order there is in society as stemming from the coercion of some members of those at the top.

Dahrendorf noted that to the functionalists, the social system is held together by voluntary cooperation or general consensus or both; however, to the conflict theorists, society is held together by enforced restraint; thus, some positions in society are delegated power and authority over others. This delegated authority has been exploited by those given the mandate to exercise the authority. One form of the manifestation of the exploitative tendencies is corruption. There is conflict of interest between the person in authority and the ordinary person in society who is opposed to corruption because it affects him negatively. This fact of social life led Dahrendorf to his central thesis that the differential distribution of authority invariably becomes the determining factor of systematic social conflict (1959, 165). Therefore, social environment is determined by the way the occupants of positions of authority utilize same because authority does not reside in individuals but in positions. Those who occupy positions

of authority are expected to control subordinates, that is, they dominate because of the expectations of those who surround them, not because of their own psychological characteristics. Like authority, these expectations are attached to positions, not people.

Interestingly, conflict theory reveals that within every association, those in dominant positions seek to maintain the status quo, while those in subordinate positions seek change. A conflict of interest within any association is at least latent at all times, which means that the legitimacy of authority is always precarious. No wonder corruption is too endemic in our political system, because politicians when elected or have managed to secure their position use such to corruptly enrich themselves. Consequently, it becomes difficult for them to leave office even after the expiration of their tenure. They want to remain in office not necessarily because they want to serve but because that position gives them authority and power to perpetuate acts of corruption.

Another function of conflict theory is its relationship to change. Dahrendorf felt that the conservative function of conflict is only one part of social reality, conflict also leads to change and development. He argued that once conflict groups emerge, they engage in action that lead to changes in social structure. When conflict is tense, the changes that occur are radical, when it is accompanied by violence, structural change will be sudden (1959, 165). The national outcry and frustrations being suffered by Nigerians as a result of political corruption may soon result in conflict that hopefully will lead to some structural changes in the body politic and reform the social environment in Nigeria.

The Political Atmosphere in Nigeria

The speech of Brigadier Murtala Muhammed, the late Nigerian Head of State in the first televised broadcast to the nation, after the July 29th, 1975 bloodless military coup, cited by Nwachukwu Iwe explains or gives a vivid analysis of the situation, thus,

...despite our great human and material resources, the government has not been able to fulfil the legitimate expectations of our people. Nigeria is being left to drift...the affairs of State... became characterized by lack of consultation, indecision, indiscipline and even neglect.... Things got to a stage where the Head of the administration became virtually inaccessible even to official advisers, and when advice was rendered, it was often ignored. Responsible opinion includes advice of eminent Nigerians/Traditional rulers, intellectuals, etc. was similarly discarded. The leadership either by design or default, had become so insensitive to the true feelings and yearnings of the people. The nation was thus being plunged inexorably into chaos (17).

The above quoted speech of a Nigerian Head of State in 1975 shows that the political structure has long been observed to have been corrupted by the leadership. It is a confirmation of the true position and characteristics of leadership in Nigeria. These characteristics are visible in all spheres of human endeavours in Nigeria. Nigerians are witnesses of the government's insensitivity to the sufferings of the masses, high level of corruption at all levels of government and government institutions, tribalism, nepotism, disregard for talents and intellectuals and many more. The leadership here in Nigeria is being hampered by all these malpractices and improprieties. Iwe, in his "Socio-Ethical Issues in Nigeria", assesses the situation in Nigeria, thus:

With political leadership in the predicament described above, the socio-political scene has for long reflected corruption and graft, tribalism and partisanship in politics, lack of the spirit of service, stifling bureaucracy, repressive measures, and social stagnation and misery for the common man (18).

Unfortunately, these vices or cankerworm have eaten so deep into the fabrics of our political life that political maneuvering, thuggery, carpet crossing, buying of votes, godfatherism and many such malpractices have clearly become the characteristics of our body politics. It may be added here that political ignorance and prejudices lie at the basis of most of the political and social ills and short-comings being experienced in Nigeria today.

Our national political scene had been and is still being dominated by dishonest politicians mongering for high offices and the spoils of office, by political scheming and cabalising, gross electoral malpractices, and by conspicuous disregard for the rule of law, and for the principles of human rights and social justice. Today, the challenge posed by our political culture to all our responsible citizens, as incidences of abuse of party-politics, political victimization and other violations of rights stare us in the face (Iwe 23).

Another malady of our nation's political sphere is the enslavement to money and decline in public morality. It is now a common knowledge and experience that many Nigerians ignorantly worship money, wealth and all that money can buy, as their only god. This unhealthy quest for money has led many astray and to even robbery with violence and murder. It seems in Nigeria nothing is more important than money; citizens are prepared to divert the course of justice for money, sacrifice morality and professional ethics on the altar of mammon, betray, maim and murder for monetary rewards. They are even disposed to pollute and jeopardize the future of the country, if only financial or other material gratifications could be forthcoming. It is clear that materialism, money and hedonism have poisoned our land almost beyond redemption. Here is a stark challenge to our nation requiring an urgent solution (Iwe 24).

In Nigeria's political system, selfishness is very visible especially in positions of leadership, authority and public office. In these spheres of our social life, selfishness is chronic and rampant, with very few personal exceptions. Often political appointments are not based on evident competence and merit. The vested interests of the appointing authorities account for more than other factors. The common practice is to buy your way up to the position of authority. Those who succeed in securing the position see it as their inheritance or divine right. Even with clear evidence of incompetency and gross ineptitude are no obstacles to tenure of office in Nigeria. Madiebo is quoted by Iwe, that "in Nigeria, like most parts of Africa, where the policy is once in power, always in power, only force could remove a government" (Iwe 34).

Nigeria is faced with these imperatives of under-development, she cannot afford the expensive and dangerous luxury of political extremism, and recklessness. However, it is acknowledged that in the election periods, there is evidence of extremism in the political horizon. Some unscrupulous politicians and power-mongers, charge our political atmosphere with intemperate words and gestures. Symptoms of political thuggery are reported from time to time. Political fanaticism and violence still remain a pernicious luxury that our nation can ill-afford. The path of refined politics must avoid such features of political extremism as inflammatory language, screaming of abuse, imputation of motives, whipping up of mass hatred and tribal sentiments, character assassination, imprisonment without trial, ambushing and the obstruction of the movement of political opponents and so on (Lewis 74-75).

Understanding Christianity/Morality

Morality, by definition is "the quality in human acts by which we call them right or wrong, good or evil. It is a common term covering the goodness or badness of a human act without specifying which of the two is meant" (Fagothey 39). For Iwe, it is "the standard of human conduct in terms of the good or the bad or the indifferent" (in Okon 34).

Man is universally recognized as a moral being. He is equipped with intellectual faculty which makes him aware of the nature and implications of what he is and does, and his will power makes him answerable naturally, equipped with these qualities, and so is held accountable for what he does and does not do. Iwe sums it up thus,

[Christianity] as the teacher and custodian of human and social values is a powerful agency for the education and socialization of man's conscience – that powerful and indispensable barometer of his moral life. Religion without morality is dead and impotent. Religion must meet man at the ethical plane in order to be relevant, meaningful and consequential for man and society (in Okon 38).

Morality is enriched, taught and encouraged by religion spiritually and institutionally, for clarity and sanity, comprehensiveness and richness. Every religion, including Christianity, contributes, significantly to human society and culture, because religion is an embodiment of morality or ethics. Although Christianity contributes so much to promote morality, there is morality outside religion. Omoregbe clarifies this argument thus, “rejecting the view that there is no morality without religion, but religion is not the foundation of morality nor is morality dependent on religion. Religion is simply one of many ways of looking at morality; it is a perspective from which morality can be viewed at and practiced. The same morality can also be looked at and practiced from other perspectives, such as humanistic, social, philosophical perspectives (302).

There is no doubt about the role of Christianity, as an institutional religion in society. Its function in society consists mainly in helping people find meaning and purpose in life and in helping them to live moral life and providing them with the incentives to do so. According to Omoregbe, “Its highest achievement is that of promoting morality in society....It would have no reason to exist if it fails to promote the course of morality” (303).

Understanding the Nature of Christianity and Christian Morality

Christianity is one of the world religions found all over the globe. We could say that Christianity is one of the most universal religious activities of man. Christianity is practiced at various levels among tribes, nations, and languages. It is also found in diverse forms – episcopal, Pentecostal, evangelical, reformed catholic, African Independent Churches and so on. Wherever it is practiced, it permeates every facet of the society and its branches are found everywhere.

John Stott describes Christianity as “a historical religion because it arose in a particular historical context and looks back to its founder Jesus Christ and/or to a succession of formative teachers. Christianity, however, makes an even stronger claim to be historical because it does not rest only on a historical person, Jesus of Nazareth, but on certain historical events which involve him, especially his birth, death and resurrection” (15).

The blessings derived from the facts of its history give us a solid foundation for our faith. It also constitutes a problem, however because they took place such a long time ago. The question of its moral and spiritual content still being relevant in our contemporary society may be mind bugging. Stott responded to these fears clearly by saying, “We are constantly exhorted in Scripture to look back to them with thankfulness (16).... The historical origin of Christianity is a great blessing. Our faith is not built on legends, fairy tales or even myths but on actual events (6).

Stott went further in response to the insinuation that Christianity is hopelessly out of date, stating that,

Our fundamental Christian conviction is that God continues to speak through what he has spoken. His word is not a prehistoric fossil to be exhibited under glass, but a living message for the contemporary world. It belongs to the market place, not to the museum. Through this ancient Word, God addresses the modern world.... Even granted the historical particularities of the Bible, and the immense complexities of the modern world, there is still a fundamental correspondence between them, and God's word remains a lamp to our feet and a light for our paths (Ps.119:105) (17).

The Value of Christianity

The role of Christianity cannot be trivialized. It has the role of making a good citizen out of the individual. It helps man to cope with life's crises" (Anyanwu 162). It also considers morality to be of paramount importance in society and so expects all her faithful to be champions and paradigms of good morality in the society (Iwuchukwu 5). Also contributing, Uka says, religion contains values that promotes human rights, human relationships and human virtues (165).

According to Uchegbue, Christianity has also impacted greatly in modifying our cultural heritage. There were certain aspects of our cultural life that were disreputable and obnoxious before the advent of Christianity. Africans were deep in the practice of their religion most of which permitted ritual sacrifices, immolation, killing of twins and the use of the deadly *esere* beans to detect witches (52). He contended that: "Beyond the destruction of tyrannical costumes, Christianity paved the way for the evolution of a new culture in the areas of material, social, economic, scientific, technological and medical systems" (52).

Evidence of the role of Christianity in reshaping the Nigerian state abounds. As an institutional religion, it has contributed immensely to discipline and stability to public morality. It has been seen as the repository and custodian of human and social values. According to Iwe,

As a religion (Christianity) plays its priestly conservative and stabilizing role, it stands as an indispensable agent of social control, functioning as the custodian and defender of established norms and values in all human arena – personal and spiritual, domestic and political, social and cultural against all threats and violations (in Okon 29).

It must be noted that Christianity certainly laid the historical and spiritual foundations for such social revolutionary concepts and values as the sanctity of human life, human freedom and

equality before God and the law, and the common brotherhood of all human beings (Okere in Okon 8-11).

One needs to acknowledge that Christianity also had impacted negatively on society and humanity. However, the negative aspects and historic failures of this religion are just but one side of the coin. With Zunini, we must here affirm and uphold that it is an unjustifiable mistake to look on any institutional religion from this point of view and no other (328). This is so because organized religion on the balance sheet of history, has a much greater claim to admiration than to contempt, and its positive dimensions is far richer than its negative features (Iwe in Okon 34).

In this paper, an attempt has been made to discuss in great length the positive values of Christianity so as to clearly show how the latter could stand as a panacea to political corruption in Nigeria. And certainly, its positive values outweigh the negative in the context of one's discussion.

Christians and Politics in Nigeria

Having examined the Nigerian political scene above, it becomes clear that the political environment really needs to be revamped. This is because it has been polluted with moral deficits, including corruption, and all forms of vices that are against the Christian faith. As a result of these vices, Christians do not have the required encouragement to venture into politics. A few Christians that have braved it into the turbulent, corrupt and polluted water of politics have not been given adequate opportunity to actualize themselves. Some decided to abandon their faith and then join the bandwagon of cultism, oath taking in shrines, and adopting of prominent political godfather, in order to remain relevant. A few committed Christians who want to retain their faith and morality have stepped out of politics, and vowed not to return there. A close friend and one time chairman of a local government caretaker committee in Akwa Ibom abandoned politics because according to him, at several of their meetings some of the politicians attend the meetings with guns and openly will display such on the table. In addition, they threaten to use it if the meetings do not favour them.

There are also several politicians in the present Nigerian political environment bearing Christian names but are actually not Christians by their fruits. They answer these names either because they were born into families that profess Christianity or their parents were church members. These or such people are found at all the levels of the political leadership – national, state and local government. Despite their number in politics, the Nigerian political environment has not been sanitized. The reason is obvious, there is no Christ inside of them.

A definition of politics here will assist in the understanding of enormity of the problems associated with political corruption in Nigeria. Politics is simply all about the struggle for power. It is the process through which power is captured to control state apparatus. Political is a way the affairs of government are carried out. However, a cursory look at the political scene reveals that several reasons why most Christians seem to shun politics in Nigeria. Politics in Nigeria seems to divide the people than unite them. There are over 60 registered political parties in Nigeria. The most prominent amongst them are All Progressive Congress, People Democratic Party and many others. And each time election is conducted and the political party that wins “takes it all”, the others (losers) become “opposition.” In most cases they oppose even good policies of the government; they seek to undermine the giant stride the party in power makes, and consistently struggle to unseat even good government. In Nigerian politics, morality is backed by government laws and not freely exercised by the citizens and politicians. A political stalwart once said “if you come or join his political party, your sins will be forgiven.” This means, if a person had corruptly enriched self by embezzling government fund and committed heinous crimes while in power, such will not be prosecuted if such a person becomes a member of his political party. The genuine Christians see this as a challenge to true Christian values. It makes the political environment hostile to people of morals, who seek to unite, encourage peaceful co-existence, economic and infrastructural development of the country. And so, true Christian men and women keep themselves out of politics.

Furthermore, it is difficult for anybody to expect church leaders to abandon their primary duties as “shepherds of the flock of God” to become actively involved in politics to the point of contesting for elective position. This may sound awkward. But some of these church leaders are making serious contributions through teaching, preaching, publications and exemplary living – to encourage and to prepare other Christians to get into active politics. And some of them are doing very well. Today in Nigeria, the Vice President, Osibanjo is pastor of a church. However, if Christians in Nigeria are given the necessary support, the face of politics in Nigeria can be changed from that of a “dirty game,” “do-or-die affair, to a system of performance, achievement, direction, focus, and service to humanity based on ideological foundations aimed at transforming the society and creating a guaranteed future for our youth....” (Ekanem 115)

In Nigeria’s political environment, there is too much oath taking. These oaths are administered at various places including shrines, cultic temples, and homes of political god-fathers. In 2019 local government elections in Akwa Ibom State in Nigeria, the Governor, threatened to delist any contestant known to have been involved in oath taking for the purpose of contesting the election. The Okija shrine saga cannot be quickly forgotten. Such acts cannot guarantee a genuine and an acceptable political environment that will attract true Christians or encourage good Christian morals.

The decision to go into politics should first not be that of the individual but that of the people choosing the person and the person in turn accepting to lead the people because of the deep love for them. Love is an essential quality in all Christian relationships. However, true love is not sentimental tribalistic, partisan, ignoring the wrong or sweeping the problems under the carpet. True Christian love confronts those things that need to change which are wrong and where necessary, rebukes those who fail. There is no gain saying that demonstrating such love causes pain.

The Bible sets standard for leadership, and that applies to every level of Christian leadership. There are twelve of the characteristics that are worth mentioning in this work. These include, Being Able and God-fearing (Ex. 18:21, 2 Sam. 23:3); Having hatred of covetousness – Ex. 18:21; Being truthful – Ex. 18:21; Deut. 16:19; Having a disposition to refuse bribe – Ex. 23:18; Wise and Understanding – Deut. 1:13; Prominent in the community – Deut. 1:13; Having love for justice and judgment – Deut. 1:16, 16:18-19, Zec. 7:9-10; Without respect of persons – Deut. 1:16, 16:19, 25:1; Is.5:23; Fearless – Deut.1:17; Conscientious – Deut. 1:17; Strong and Courageous – Josh. 1:7; Obedient to the Law - Josh. 1:7-8. The political environment in Nigeria needs to benefit from this rich Christian heritage, if Christians get involved in politics.

Christian Morality a Panacea to Political Corruption

The topic of this paper suggests the need to adopt the principles of Christian morality to solve or reduce the present level of political corruption in Nigeria. In light of the foregoing reflections, one may modestly make the following suggestions as remedy for political corruption that militates against genuine and rewarding democratic environment that attracts dividend to the governed. The aspects of Christian morality to be considered as recommendations include the principles of love, justice, servant-hood, shepherding, humility, magnanimity, spirit of service and brotherliness.

1. Christian Concept of Service

There is no gain saying that the world of today is characterized by unjust political and economic structures, which limit people's ability to develop as children of God. The present atmosphere in Nigeria in which Christians are called to service leaves much to be desired. The trends are discouraging, the objective reality is one of widespread pain, suffering and corruption. In the midst of such frustrating experiences how can there be commitment and hope and joy. What is required is viewing our positions in society as God's call to service. In addition, people given position of leadership should be such that are able, people of very best character.

2. Justice

From the Christian perspective, justice is the standard by which the benefits and penalties of living in society are distributed. The teachings on justice is spread across various books of the Bible. Importantly, justice is founded in the being of God, for whom it is the chief attribute, and it is primarily focused upon the oppressed with particular attention given to specific groups, such as the poor, widows, the fatherless, slaves, resident aliens, wage earners, and those with physical infirmities (Job 29:12-17, Ps. 146:7-9). It is demanded of everyone, particularly of political authorities (Deut. 10:18-19). The context for carrying out of justice is the creation of community and the preservation of people in it (Lev. 25:35-36, Lk. 7:29-30).

Justice is a deliverance, rectifying the gross social inequalities of the disadvantaged (Ps.26:9). It puts an end to the conditions that produce the injustice (Ps.10:18). Such redress will now mean that the oppressed are raised; the oppressors are judged (1 Sam.2:7-10; Lk.1:51-53). (Mott 519). Christian legal luminaries should pursue and enforce godly justice without giving unfair advantage to the more important persons in society. There should be no evading of the law to please those in high position in government.

3. Love

Love is a relation of self-giving. In Hebrew, the word *ahab*, is love with a wide range of meanings. The English translation “love” has two dimensions in meaning – Man’s love for God (Ex. 20:6), and the love God has for his people (Hos. 3:1; Deut. 7:13).

In the New Testament, the Christian love is rendered in Greek as “agape”, divine love. The nature of this type of love is expressed in Mk. 12:28-31 “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” The Second is this, ‘you shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than this.’ Here, God expects to be loved with the totality of one’s being; the neighbour is to be loved with the same love as one has for oneself (Matt.19:19).

In Matt. 5:44 the Bible strongly encourages Christians to love even their enemies. Luke’s gospel states, “But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.” It is 1st John that has given us the well-known verse “He who does not love does not know God, for God is love (4:8). In this context the writer stresses again the priority of God’s love in Christ in response to which the believers are permitted and encouraged to love one another (Donfried 578). The Christian love is steadfast, compassionate and sacrificial. The concept of Christian love demands that people are treated equally, employment process should be fair to all. Showing your neighbour the same level of love you require others to show to you.

4. Power

Power means, the actual and potential capacity to effect something by virtue of inherent excellence or rightful authority. God is the ultimate source of power (Ps. 66:7; Job 10:6). God's power is made manifest in nature, history and His redemptive act, through the life and deeds of Jesus Christ (Mk.6:2, Lk.4:14). His followers were empowered by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8, 4:33). Power in Nigeria should not mean "today what has been since independence, the power to accumulate wealth for oneself and one's family, cronies and support group (Diamond 17). Politicians and indeed all people in power should see it as a privilege to ensure peaceful co-existence, justice, and love for all.

5. Respect for human life

The human life is to be highly valued. The principles of sanctity of life should be respected. Exodus 20:13 says, "You shall not murder." This verse speaks clearly against premeditated and deliberate act of terminating human lives. Politics in Nigeria has become a do-or-die affair. Political parties and candidates seeking elective positions have well trained and armed thugs. These boys have no respect for human life. The principles such as taught in the Bible and cited above, if enforced to guide Nigerian politicians and their supporters will sanitize politics and reduce political corruption in the country.

6. You shall not Steal (Ex. 20:15)

This is the eight (8th) commandments. Most Nigerians get into politics for the purpose of getting rich quick. Politics is seen as the easiest way to amass wealth. In an attempt to gain public recognition, they defraud the system, steal, bribe and embezzle funds placed at their disposal for infrastructural development. The fact remains that every act of dishonesty in all areas of human life is an act of corruption. John Calvin (in Eme 173) comments on Ex. 20:15 thus,

We will dully obey this commandment, then if, content with our lot, we are zealous to make only honest and lawful; if we do not seek to become wealthy through injustice, no attempt to deprive our neighbour of his goods to increase our own; if we do not strive to heap up riches cruelly wrung from the blood of others; if we do not madly scrape together from everywhere, by fair means or foul, whatever will feed our avarice or satisfy our prodigality.... Let this be our constant aim; faithfully to help all men by our counsel and aid to keep what is theirs, in so far as we can; Let us share the necessity of those whom we see

pressed by the difficulty of affairs assisting them in their need with our abundance (173).

Calvin's statement seems to have x-rayed the corruption in Nigeria's political system. It is our common knowledge that dishonesty, lawlessness, injustice, deprivation, cruelty and blood shedding, foul means of making wealth abound in Nigeria's political scene. These acts can be curbed if the biblical injunctions are obeyed. Wealth should be seen from the Christian perspective, as God's blessings, especially when it is justly acquired. Nigerians should learn to make this a guiding principle in all their endeavours. Leaders should be of a disposition to refuse bribe (Ex. 23:18).

Conclusion

Corruption in Nigeria's political system is alarming. Politics seems to be a gateway to corruption. There is corruption in the leadership, as well as among the followership. Chinua Achebe wrote in 1985, that, "The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely of failure of leadership" (2).

There is corruption within the political parties, the electoral umpire, the security agencies, and so on. Something needs to be done to reduce if not eradicate corruption in Nigeria political system. This work strongly recommends the teaching of Christian moral principles (as taught in the Holy Bible), in schools as part of Nigeria's national orientation campaign.

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