

CORRUPTION IN GHANA: A DISCUSSION OF THE DEPTH OF CORRUPTION AND THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN FIGHTING THE PHENOMENON.

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Abstract

The issue of corruption has attracted the attention of leaders across the globe calling for a concerted and collaborative effort to fight the phenomenon. It has become imperative for countries to engage in this warfare because corruption has been identified as an anti-development agent working against the progress of countries. Corruption is estimated to cost the world £2.5trillion whereas Africa alone loses US\$148billion each year. The African Union has devoted 2018 to fight corruption on the continent because of the venom the phenomenon spews into the socio-economic progress of member countries. Ghana loses millions of dollars annually to corruption which could help in the development of the country. Through personal experience and observation, this article reveals that corruption has sank very deep in the Ghanaian society to the extent that senior high school students engage in corrupt practices. Since Ghana is predominantly Christian, the article observes that the Church has a major stake in this fight against corruption. Due to the fallen moral standards even in the Church, corruption has risen to alarming heights in Ghana. By playing its core mandate of making disciples for the Lord Jesus Christ, the Church can help to reduce the levels of corruption in the country.

Key words: Corruption, Development, Church, Morality, Bible.

Introduction

Corruption is now a global phenomenon which interests many world leaders. It is estimated that corruption costs the world £2.5trillion.¹ This challenge, according to David Cameron, requires a global collaborative effort to overcome. In his address to the participating countries in the Anti-Corruption Summit held in London on May 11-12, 2016, Cameron said;

Corruption is one of the greatest enemies of progress in our time. It is the cancer at the heart of so many of the world's problems. It affects everything – from a family's ability to send their child to school, to the credibility of the world's favourite sport, football... It is an enemy of progress and the root of so many of the world's problems. It destroys jobs and holds back economic growth, traps the poorest in desperate poverty, and undermines our security by pushing people towards extremist groups.²

The realisation of the phenomenon of corruption as a major obstacle challenging the development of Africa led to the adoption of the theme; "Winning the Fight Against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation" by the African Union for the celebration of 2018 Africa Union Day. AU reports that over US\$148billion is lost to corruption on the continent.³ During the launch of the 2018 theme at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on January 28, 2018, President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria said; "corruption deprives our young citizens of opportunities to develop meaningful livelihoods. We must therefore, work together to defeat this evil."⁴

Ghana, Malaysia and Singapore gained political independence from Britain around the same time. Among the three, Ghana was the first to gain independence on March 6, 1957. Malaysia followed on August 31, 1957 whilst Singapore seceded from Malaysia to join the league of independent states on

¹ Joseph Atsu Aryee, "The Roots of Corruption: The Ghanaian Enquiry Revisited." The Institute of Economic Affairs, Ghana, 2016:6.

² United Kingdom, "Anti-Corruption Summit: London 2016 – GOV.UK" May 31, 2016 <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/anti-corruption-sumit-london-2016>. Accessed on May 14, 2018.

³ Ghana News Agency, "Over \$148billion lost to corruption – AU Report" graphic.com.gh. Accessed on May 27, 2018.

⁴ African Union, "President Buhari of Nigeria Launches the AU Theme of The Year 2018 on Fighting Corruption in the Continent, January 29, 2018 <https://au.int>. Accessed on May 25, 2018.

August 9, 1965. However, Singapore and Malaysia are far ahead of Ghana in terms of socio-economic development. The GDP per capita income of Singapore as at 2016 was US\$52,962.5. Malaysia stood at US\$9,508.2 whilst Ghana recorded a GDP per capita income of US\$1,513.5.⁵

One of the reasons identified by economists and political analysts to be responsible for Ghana's slow development is corruption.⁶ It is reported that Ghana lost about GH¢7.5billion (US\$1,618,618,864.9)⁷ between 2003 and 2014 in public offices through corruption.⁸ This amount would help a lot in infrastructural development with its multiplying effects on industry, health, education, etc. In fact, Corruption Watch estimates that 500km of a two-lane, single carriageway, asphalt-concrete paved road, 1,250 6-unit classroom blocks, 600 Community-based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) compounds and 3,102 boreholes were denied the people of Ghana as a result of GH¢2,165,542,375.14 (US\$467,358,365.48) blown away by the various Ministries, Departments and Agencies through corrupt practices per the 2016 Auditor General's Report.⁹ A total of about GH¢8billion (US\$1,726,526,789.2) is reported to have been lost in that year due to infractions.¹⁰

According to the 2010 population and housing census, Christians in Ghana have an overwhelming majority of 71.2% of the entire population.¹¹ In other words, Christians are in control of almost all the socio-economic establishments in the country. Since independence, all heads of state of the country – from the first president Kwame Nkrumah to the current president Nana Akufo-Addo – have claimed to be Christians. Presently, majority of the ministers of state are Christians. The interpretation of these facts is that majority of the people who are in control of the country are members of the various denominational churches in Ghana.

Notwithstanding, corruption permeates our political, social and economic lives to the levels where it has become injurious to the country's development. All institutions of state are drenched with corruption and in the view of the Centre

⁵ <https://data.worldbank.org>. Accessed on May 12, 2018.

⁶ Kwaku S. Afesorgbor, "The causes, consequences and control of corruption in Ghana" <https://www.graphiconline.com>. Accessed on May 12, 2018.

⁷ US\$1-GH¢4.63358, exchange rate as at 09:30GMT on May 26, 2018. <https://www.xe.com>.

⁸ Ace Ankomah, "OccupyGhana: Gh¢7.5 billion lost through corruption in 11 years" <https://www.graphic.com.gh>. Accessed on May 12, 2018.

⁹ Ghana/myjoyonline.com, "Ghana lost 1,200 classrooms blocks, 3,000 boreholes due to corruption" <https://www.myjoyonline.com>. Accessed on May 12, 2018.

¹⁰ Oswald K. Azumah, "Auditor General: Ghana lost about GH¢8billion to infractions in 2016." <https://www.myjoyonline.com>. Accessed on May 12, 2018.

¹¹ Ghana Statistical Service, 2010 Population and Housing Census, Summary Report of Final Results, Ghana Statistical Service May, 2012:6.

for African Democratic Affairs (CADA), “the culture of the Ghanaian society has made almost every citizen more prone to corrupt activities.”¹² If the country is predominantly Christian, it presupposes that Christians are the main perpetrators of these corrupt practices identified to be the bane of Ghana’s development albeit not the only culprits. This then places a hefty burden on the Church to help deal with this cancerous phenomenon of corruption in the country. Against this backdrop, this article discusses the depth of corruption in Ghana, the biblical perspective of the phenomenon and recommends ways the Church can help fight it.

Definition of Corruption

Corruption is a complex term to define. Scholars explain that corruption is relative to society.¹³ What may be considered as a corrupt act in one society may not pass as corruption in another. For instance, it is customary for a person visiting a traditional ruler in Ghana to present a gift or token as a way of showing respect for the authority of the ruler. Hence, it is never considered a corrupt act in the country although the person who presented the gift may later obtain favours from the ruler in terms of land acquisition, for example. In another society, presenting a gift to a person in authority who may have influence on decision making which can affect the giver is considered as corruption.

In view of the foregoing socio-cultural antecedents, there is no strict definition of corruption. Nonetheless, it is agreed by scholars that the “misuse of office for unofficial ends”¹⁴ can be broadly considered as corruption. This definition implies that all persons who use their official positions (whether in public or private office) to profit themselves perpetrate corruption. Through the position a person occupies, he or she can take certain decisions which can redirect part of the institution’s resources or revenues to his or her personal advantage. Also, every action that by-passes bureaucracy and results in some personal gain (whether in cash or kind) amounts to corruption. They include bribery, over-invoicing, extortion, embezzlement, creation of ghost names on government payroll, ghost projects, etc.

¹² Centre for Democratic Affairs, “Impact Of Corruption On Ghana’s Development Agenda: Concerns Of The Centre For African Democratic Affairs (CADA),” January 26, 2015. <https://www.modernghana.com>. Accessed on May 12, 2018.

¹³ Aryee, “The Roots of Corruption,” 15.

¹⁴ Aryee, “The Roots of Corruption,” 16.

William Agbodohu and Ransford Quarmyne Churchill describe two levels of corruption; high and low levels.¹⁵ These levels are ascribed to developing countries¹⁶ and Ghana for that matter. High level corruption is explained as misconduct by people in political office.¹⁷ Several motivating factors are identified to be driving this kind of corruption and these include greed, desire to remain in office, election campaign financing and dispensing favours to political allies.¹⁸ Low level corruption on the other hand is the illegal practices in the civil service where workers take unapproved payments to execute their mandate. All kinds of bribes taken by officers entrusted in various positions in the country to serve the citizenry fall under this category. It is generally perceived that civil servants with insufficient salaries engage in this kind of corrupt practice.¹⁹

Ahmad Mashal highlights three major types of corruption associated with democratic societies. These are Grand Corruption, Bureaucratic Corruption and Legislative Corruption.²⁰ Grand corruption is the abuse of power by the political elite through the making of economic policies to serve their own interest. Public spending is usually diverted to certain sectors of the economy where the government can make great gains from such diversion to the disadvantage of the general populace. Bureaucratic corruption, also known as petty corruption, involves the acts of bureaucrats who would require bribes from the public before rendering the service for which they were appointed to perform or to speed up the bureaucratic process. This occurs at all levels of public institutions. Lastly, Legislative corruption is when legislators are influenced through bribes to vote in a certain pattern.

The Depth of Corruption in Ghana

All of the various levels of corruption identified by the authors mentioned in this discussion exist in Ghana. For instance, Grand Corruption can be seen in the light of the Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency (GYEEDA),²¹ Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA)²²

¹⁵ William Agbodohu, Ransford Quarmyne Churchill, "Corruption in Ghana: Causes, consequences and cures" *International Journal of Economics, Finance and Management Sciences*, 2014, 2(1):95.

¹⁶ Ahmad M. Mashal, "Corruption and resource allocation distortion for 'ESCWA' countries" *International Journal of Economics and Management Sciences* 1, no.4, 2011:73.

¹⁷ Agbodohu & Churchill, "Corruption in Ghana," 95.

¹⁸ Agbodohu & Churchill, "Corruption in Ghana," 95.

¹⁹ Agbodohu & Churchill, "Corruption in Ghana," 95.

²⁰ Mashal, "Corruption," 72.

²¹ Emmanuel Ebo Hawkson, "GYEEDA scandal: Abuga Pele, Assibit jailed 18 years for causing financial loss to the state," February 23, 2018. <https://www.graphic.com.gh>. Accessed on May 21, 2018.

²² Raju Parwani, Gloria Kyeremeh, "SADA rot: Over GH₵32m unaccounted for," August 16, 2017. citifmonline.com. Accessed on May 21, 2018.

and the Smarttys Bus Branding²³ scandals which caused several millions of public funds to be diverted to some syndicates under the guise of implementing public policies and programmes. Bureaucratic corruption is very common in the country and is especially encountered when one visits any of the public institutions such as the ministries, departments and agencies. Our legislators have in recent times been accused of receiving bribes to make sure certain policies and laws are passed.²⁴ Moreover, all of these find themselves within the spectrum of high and low levels of corruption. The Woyome GH¢51.2million (US\$11,049,771.451) saga,²⁵ the ISOFOTON deal²⁶ and other related cases are all examples associated with high level corruption.

What I discover is that corruption in Ghana has gone beyond the levels of the political class and people in public offices. Two specific cases which have drawn my attention and interest to the issue of corruption in Ghana and necessitated this article is corruption among students at the senior high school level. Senior high schools in Ghana are populated by adolescents between the ages of 14 and 18. These are children being trained to take up the mantle of leadership in Ghana in the near future. If at this level they are involved in corrupt practices then the future of the country looks bleak.

In 2013 in a senior high school in Kumasi in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, a student who played truancy was reported to the authorities of the school for sanctioning. The young boy protested that he was regular in class and therefore the accusation was false. Although the members of his class attested to his regular absenteeism, he stood by what he said. The authorities called for the attendance register of his class from the class prefect. This was to show whether indeed he had been present or otherwise. To the astonishment of his classmates, the class prefect had marked him present in all the days. When the class prefect was asked why he marked the boy present, he remained speechless.

Another case occurred in April 2018 when the leaders of the Students' Representative Council (SRC) of the same school bought four 50litters Tridot plastic bins with metal stands for the school for the disposal of waste. The leaders reported that they spent GH¢500 (US\$107.91) per bin arriving at a

²³ Mabel Aku Banaseh, "Smarttys make final payment of refund for bus branding," April 4, 2016. <https://www.graphic.com.gh>. Accessed on May 21, 2018.

²⁴ Martin A. B. K. Amidu, "The Seventh Parliament Must Restore The Confidence Of Citizens In The Honour And Integrity Of The Legislature," January 9, 2017, Accra. Citifmonline.com. Accessed on May 21, 2018.

²⁵ Ghana/myjoyonline.com, "Woyome loses again as Supreme Court gives green light for asset chase," October 20, 2017. <https://www.myjoyonline.com>. Accessed on May 21, 2018.

²⁶ Mabel Aku Banaseh, "Isofoton to vomit judgement debt following Supreme Court order." <https://www.graphic.com.gh>. Accessed on May 21, 2018.

total cost of GH¢2000 (US\$431.63) for the four. My investigation from the same supplier revealed that even a 250litters bin costs GH¢350 (US\$75.54) which means that the boys played a fast one on the school. Each of the bins together with the metal stand they purchased costs approximately GH¢150 (US\$32.37), therefore the boys inflated the cost of the project by about 333%. Through this act, they made away with GH¢1400 (US\$302.14) to share among themselves.

Both cases cited represent an abuse of leadership positions for personal gain. In the first case, the class prefect used his position to assist his classmate to escape a possible sanction from the authorities. There was every indication that the prefect took some amount of cash from his truant mate. Also, the leaders of the SRC used their office to profit themselves through the over-invoicing they did. They intentionally created booty to share.

I have chosen these two particular cases from this school for this discussion for two reasons. Firstly, the school was established by the Roman Catholic Church with the aim of offering formal education through sound moral training. For this reason there is a chaplaincy in place manned by a minimum of two priests to see to the spiritual and moral needs of the students. Secondly, all the students involved in the two cases profess to be Christians. I assume that they have received Christian training from their homes before entering the school. It is expected that the training they received from both the home and the school would produce in them a strong moral character. Unfortunately, this has not been so. This then raises queries about the performance of the Church in imparting morality to adherents.

Biblical Perspective of Corruption

God has shown from biblical accounts that He abhors corruption. One classic case is the one involving Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli the priest and leader of Israel. These two men misused their priestly positions to profit from the sacrifices the community offered to God (ref. 1 Sam. 2:12-17). They also had sex with the women who served at the tent of meeting (see 1 Sam. 2:22). Although the people complained about their actions, they would not refrain. This was considered to be very sinful for it is written: “the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the LORD; for the men treated the offering of the LORD with contempt” (1 Sam. 2:17, RSV). The failure of Eli to call his sons to order made him to incur the displeasure of God and as of consequence Hophni and Phinehas lost their lives and the progenies of Eli lost their place in the priesthood forever (ref. 1 Sam. 2:27-36).

After the death of Eli and his sons, the leadership of Israel fell in the hands of Samuel who led the people with justice. As he became old and weak, he appointed his two sons, Joel and Abijah, to be administrators of the nation. According to Flavius Josephus, Samuel divided the nation into two administrative districts having their seats of government at Bethel and Beersheba with Joel heading one and Abijah the other.²⁷ These sons of the righteous Samuel followed the examples of the sons of Eli in corrupt practices instead of their father. They misused their offices for self-gratification and this also became a matter of great concern to the people they governed. In the words of the author of the Book of Samuel, "They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice" (1 Sam. 8:3, NIV). It was due to these corrupt practices of the children of Samuel which caused the people to demand new leadership ushering in the era of the kings.

Besides idolatry, one of the issues God picked against Israel was the corrupt practices of the leaders who were entrusted with the government of the people. Both the northern and southern kingdoms were guilty of this offence. For this reason God raised prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel to speak against these practices. Isaiah, for example, said "Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless" (Isaiah 10:1-2, NIV). Jeremiah also spoke: "...from the least to the greatest everyone is greedy for unjust gain; from prophet to priest, everyone deals falsely" (Jer. 8:10, ESV). In the same vain, Ezekiel uttered the following words to the leaders of Israel:

"Ho, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fatlings; but you do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the crippled you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them" (Ezek. 34:2-4, RSV).

These references clearly reveal God's indignation for abuse of power or office for personal gain which was being perpetrated by the leaders of Israel. Their refusal to change their ways caused God to send them into exile to be punished by Gentile nations.

²⁷ William Whiston, Paul Maier ed., *The New Complete Works of Josephus* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1999):198.

During the era of John the Baptist, Israel was under the political dominion of Rome. However, some Jews served in the government of the day and the commonest of them were the tax officials. Many state officials including those of Jewish descent were engaged in corrupt practices. Zacchaeus and Levi (Matthew) are typical examples of Jews who served the Roman government in the area of tax collection and were grossly involved in corruption (see Luke 5:27-30, 19:1-10). Some of these officials of the government went to John to listen to his teachings. It was in one of those days that some of the officers inquired from John the behaviour acceptable to God in relation to their jobs. Luke writes:

Tax collectors also came to be baptised and said to him, Teacher, what shall we do? And he said to them, Collect no more than you are authorised to do. Soldiers also asked him, And we, what shall we do? And he said to them, Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages (Luke 3:12-14, ESV).

John's response is a brazen demonstration of God's repugnance to corruption. Further, the Lord Jesus Christ taught faithful conduct to the disciples. In His teaching, Jesus explained to the disciples that a person ought to perform the duties assigned to him or her accordingly but not to abuse the position from which such a task ought to be performed. The teaching also reminded them that there shall be a day of reckoning when humanity shall account for what they were tasked to do. Any servant or officer found to be corrupt would definitely be punished (see Matt. 24:45-51). This instruction of Jesus Christ applies to the daily activities of every believer and hence Christians are admonished to be incorruptible wherever they find themselves whether in official duties or private transactions.

Since the Church is built on the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is the responsibility of its leaders to make sure that they put into practice these teachings in the first place, and in turn teach members to replicate them everywhere in the second place. The world was corrupted from the time of Adam when the first couple abused their authority to take what they were not required to take. To save the world and hold it in balance till the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Church was born. It is for this role that Jesus described the Church as the salt and light of the world. The Church is to give meaning and direction to humanity. When the Church fails, the world will be consumed by evil.

The Church and Corruption in Ghana

In Ghana, it appears that the Church is failing in the area of moral training. The socio-economic challenges of the country seem to be defining the policies and projects of the Church. Many denominations are erecting magnificent temples for worship, establishing schools, building hospitals and in some places providing potable water to support the efforts of government in bringing socio-economic development to the people.

Providing these facilities is good for national development because they have correlation with the quality of life of the people. It was in recognition of this fact that the United Nations Organisation introduced the Millennium Development Goals for its member states through the Millennium Declaration in 2000 to be achieved in 15 years. This was to see to the eradication of extreme poverty from the international community. The MDGs are eight and they include eradicating extreme hunger and poverty, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing global partnership for development.²⁸

Although the biennial report released jointly by the Republic of Ghana and the United Nations in 2015 on the progress of the MDGs reveals that significant strides have been made in the achievements of the MDGs, they have not been fully attained. For example, targets like halving extreme poverty, halving the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water, and universal primary education have been achieved. Others like reducing under-5 and child mortality, reducing maternal mortality and reversing environmental resource loss and improving sanitation have not been attained.²⁹

According to a Ghana News Agency (GNA) report, even with our achievements of the MDGs, only 27% of Ghana's population access drinkable and safe water.³⁰ This means that majority of Ghanaians face the threat of water borne diseases because of unsafe water and that is a sign of low standard of living. Hence, the efforts of churches to partner government to ameliorate the people from this poor and degrading condition are commendable.

In addition, there cannot be socio-economic development of any country without education. An educated population ensures rapid transformation of an

²⁸ Republic of Ghana, United Nations, "Ghana Millennium Development Goals 2015 Report," (September 2015):1.

²⁹ Ghana & UN, "Ghana MDGs," vi.

³⁰ Ghana News Agency, "Only 27% of Ghanaians access potable water – Report, March 20, 2018." <https://www.myjoyonline.com> Accessed on May 20, 2018.

economy and countries like Singapore and Malaysia were able to progress faster by investing in the education of their people. The early missionaries who entered the then Gold Coast recognised this and so invested their resources in the establishment of schools to train the local people to be functional in the then emerging state long before the full commitment of the colonial government in 1927 when Gordon Guggisberg built the Prince of Wales College (now Achimota School).³¹ By 1841, about nine Wesleyan Mission schools had been established to educate the coastal dwellers.³² Again, the Basel Mission had been able to establish one Training College, three grammar schools, seven boarding schools for boys and girls and ninety-eight day schools by 1894.³³

Apart from educating the people for development, the establishment of schools also helped to spread the gospel very rapidly. This was the major approach adopted by the early missionaries who evangelised the then Gold Coast. They taught Christian religion in their schools and through this they were able to reach many people occupying the land and by so doing got hold of the majority of the citizens. Till date, many of the public schools in Ghana, both basic and second cycle schools, are those which were established by the missionaries. Together, the missions have helped to educate many of the country's human resources who have contributed and are still contributing to national development in diverse ways.

Unfortunately, the quest to provide support to government in raising the standard of living of Ghanaians is at the same time causing many denominational churches to veer off the path of their core mandate. Churches in Ghana are now greatly concerned with raising money to support such projects. This fact is attested to by the annual financial targets of churches which culminate in end of year fund raising activities organised by almost all churches in the country. Often, the head-offices of these denominational churches have their own financial expectations for the year and these are communicated to the various branches or assemblies for their mobilisation. Branches which are able to meet such expectations are greatly praised and the leaders of such branches obtain favours from the head-office.

In order to meet such financial obligations, the leaders of the various branches also resort to stratagems aimed at luring members to give more money. The pastors of these churches tend to pay more attention to congregants with strong financial backgrounds to the neglect of the less privileged. Some of

³¹ www.tobeworldwide.org. Accessed on May 20, 2018.

³² www.education.stateuniversity.com. Accessed on May 20, 2018.

³³ Brief history of education in Ghana pdf, www.tobeworldwide.org. Accessed on May 20, 2018.

these affluent people are offered opportunities to chair various committees in the churches. Close relationships develop between the pastors and such members with the pastors regularly visiting their homes. Even when such members err, they are not corrected. Simply put, raising money rather becomes the focus of the leaders.

This trend has created an atmosphere for the neglected to also want to have that feeling of belongingness. For this reason, they too strive to be recognised. In the end, some become corrupt in order to get money and gain the status that others have in the church. By inference from this discussion, churches are indirectly contributing to corruption in the country and it also accounts for the reason morality is not the focus of the teachings of the churches.

More so, the unemployment situation and economic hardships in the country have made some people to enter into Christian ministry. Such ministers usually do not accept postings to rural areas where they feel their needs might not be met. For them to remain in big towns and cities, they offer gifts and bribes to their national officers for their consideration especially during the periods of transfers and postings. It becomes very difficult for such ministers to preach morality because they are grossly involved in it.

What exacerbates the rot in the Church and makes her ineffective in dealing with corruption is the activity of some of the independent charismatic churches especially those operating the prophetic ministry. David Okai asserts that the 21st century prophetic ministry in Ghana proceeds from a deceitful intent which manifests itself in the economic exploitation of desperate and vulnerable people.³⁴ After evaluating the activities of some of these prophets who regularly appear on various television stations in the country, Okai concludes “it is absolutely clear in the light of God and His Word that such prophets and their prophetic ministry are a grievous arena of thieves.”³⁵ In the nutshell, the Church is weakened by the corrupt practices of the leaders making them lack the moral justification to tackle this cancerous phenomenon.

Contributing factors to the growth of Corruption in Ghana

Agbodohu and Churchill name the two underlying causes of corruption to be “need driven” and “greed driven” but admit that it is difficult to distinguish between the two.³⁶ My critical observation of the situation in Ghana from two

³⁴ David Kwadwo Okai, “Evaluating The Effects Of Merchandizing Ministry On Some Television Stations In 21st Century: A Study Of Prophetic Ministry In Ghana.” *American Journal of Biblical Theology* Volume 18(20) May 14, 2017:2. www.biblicalthology.com/Research/OkaiDK03. Accessed on September 28, 2018.

³⁵ Okai, “Evaluating,” 12-13.

³⁶ Agbodohu & Churchill, “Corruption in Ghana,” 96.

basic institutions – the Church and the School – reveals that the failures of these institutions are contributing greatly to the growth of corruption in the country.

On the curriculum of Basic Schools in Ghana, pupils are taught Religious and Moral Education (R.M.E.). The focus of this education is to impart good moral conduct in the learners to become responsible adults. However, the same teachers who instruct the children at that level also indirectly teach them bribery. During the Basic Education Certificate Examination (B.E.C.E.), the pupils are directed by their teachers to contribute some amounts of money to be given to invigilators of papers to induce them to allow the pupils to cheat in the examination rooms. This is common knowledge to the people involved in the examination process at the various centres across the country. The children progress to the Senior High School with this same perception that to succeed one must pay his or her way through. In order to fund such dubious activities, one must also engage in any practice capable of raising money. Therefore, through formal education the student consciously or unconsciously learns that corruption is the norm.

The moral relapse in the Church which I have earlier related is another factor. The failure of the Church to teach morality and punish the immoral has strengthened the perception that corruption is not an issue. Church leaders and followers alike downplay the issue of corruption and its effects on society. Aquiline Tarimo sums up the failure of the African Church in this manner: “The Church has done very little in promoting integral human development which includes awareness in social justice, human rights, common good, and social responsibility. In brief, the African Church lacks a theology of life.”³⁷

If corruption is attributed to greed, the Bible makes clear that the life of the follower of Christ must be devoid of greed (see 1 Cor. 5:11, 6:9-10, Col. 3:5, 2 Pet. 2:14). In Ghana where the overwhelming majority are Christians, the level of corruption is clearly an indication of total failure by the Church in imparting morality.

Again, if corruption is need driven, the Bible teaches that God supplies the needs of the faithful for it is written: “Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you: never will I forsake you’” (Heb. 13:5, NIV). Adherents of the Christian Faith are admonished to worry not about their needs because God is

³⁷ Aquiline Tarimo, “Ethnicity, Common Good and the Church in Contemporary Africa” September 25, 2000. <https://sedosmission.org/old/eng/Tarimo.html>. Accessed on May 30, 2018.

already aware. Rather, righteousness is what must be pursued (ref. Matt. 6:28-34).

Conclusion

All of the issues I have raised in this discussion relative to the contemporary trend in organised denominations and independent churches in Ghana give credence to the notion that the Church is submerged in corruption and has become part of the problem for the deep seated corruption in the country as a whole. As stated earlier, when the Church fails humanity cannot stand and it is therefore not surprising that corruption has reached this unimaginable height in the country as being described in this discussion.

Therefore, the Church has a major stake in curtailing corruption in the country. The discussion has placed corruption in Ghana at the door step of the Church. So, if the Church would wake up to its call and begin to live up to the Great Commission, then corruption in Ghana would be brought to a very low level.

Recommendations

The Church's approach at fighting corruption can proceed from diverse quarters. But, the effort must be conscious and consistent. Below are some actions I recommend in this drive:

1. Churches in Ghana must focus on making disciples for Christ (ref. Matt. 28:19) rather than making financial gains and material projects. I have already stated that the projects are good to make the people live dignifying lifestyles. Nevertheless, if the people are corrupt, all of the projects would be destroyed in no time and the efforts of the Church would be futile. The reason is simple, corrupt people would deliver shoddy projects at high costs and such projects would not last. Training people to follow the examples of Christ would rather make them responsible and in the long run deliver quality and cost effective projects lasting for a longer period.
2. Appointment of leaders of the Church should be based on the example of the seven deacons chosen to serve in the early Church. Their selection was based on their possession of honesty, wisdom and the Holy Spirit (see Acts 6:3). These attributes should be paramount before any other consideration.
3. Churches should openly denounce members who have been found and proven to have engaged in corruption of any sort. Leaders of churches

whose members occupy positions in government and in other public offices should admonish them to remain clean in their dealings with people. If found corrupt, they should be suspended by their churches and announced to all the congregants to deter others from doing same (ref. 2 Tim. 4:2). The shame brought on them and their families as a result of the action by the church can help reform the culprits.

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