

Abstract

Progressing from Corruption to Fidelity: An Exploration of Church-Initiated Agency in Nigerian Society

The Nigerian church has continued to grow numerically in recent times, with branches in many parts of Africa and around the world. At the same time, corruption has been growing in Nigeria over the past few decades, making Nigeria one of the most corrupt countries in the world and one of the most religious at the same time. This research sought to understand how the Nigerian church is acting as an agent of change in influencing a corrupt society.

A total of 125 people were interviewed from the four major blocks of the Christian Association of Nigeria: the Church of Nigeria (Anglican communion), the Evangelical Church Winning All, the Redeemed Christian church of God, and the Celestial Church of Christ. The churches were selected purposefully and through a nonprobability snowballing sampling method. After two years of fieldwork, the data was gathered, transcribed, and analyzed, and emerging themes are presented and discussed.

The following findings surfaced. First, Christians in Nigeria have no common understanding and perception of corruption. Second, the church is not only being caught corruption but has encouraged it in Nigeria. Next, the church's theological response, attitudes, and practices have made it ineffective in its attempt to bring about change from corruption to fidelity. While leadership in the Nigerian church has not been fully poised at making adequate changes, some leadership practices could help improve the church leaders and bring desired change from corruption to fidelity. Authentic leadership theory was used as a lens to suggest these practices.

PROGRESSING FROM CORRUPTION TO FIDELITY:
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Table of Contents

List of Illustrations	viii
Abbreviations	ix
Acknowledgments	x
Chapter 1: Introduction and Background of the Study	1
Autobiographic Background.....	1
The Nigerian Context.....	4
Statement of the Problem.....	6
Research Questions	7
Rationale for the Research	8
Definition of Key Terms	9
Scope and Delimitations	9
Research Plan.....	10
Chapter 2: Literature Review	12
Corruption Historically	12
Scholarly Definitions of Corruption	16
Forms of Corruption	25
Bribery	25
Embezzlement.....	27
Extortion	28
Nepotism.....	29
Fraud	29

Causes of Corruption	30
Public Choice Theory (Rational Choice)	30
Bad Apple Theories	31
Organizational Culture Theories.....	31
Clashing Moral Value Theories	31
Ethos of Public Administration Theories.....	32
Correlation Theories	32
Assessment of Corruption.....	32
Corruption and the Nigerian Experience	36
Cultural Dimension in Corruption	38
Weak Institution.....	39
Religion and Corruption	43
Corruption and the Church in Nigeria	46
Leadership Challenge.....	50
Learned Helplessness.....	56
Summary	57
Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework and Methodology	58
Theoretical Framework.....	58
Elite Theory	58
Authentic Leadership Theory	60
Analytic Framework	63
Methodology.....	64
Population	67

Sampling Technique	70
Administration of Instrument.....	71
Data Analysis	73
Chapter 4: The Church in Nigeria and Corruption—Data Presentation	74
Overview of the Chapter	74
Research Results	74
Corruption Perception and Definition.....	79
Corruption Defined	79
Moral Perversion.....	79
Public Office for Personal Gain.....	80
Broken Rules (Legal Dimension)	82
Religious Dimensions	83
Christian Perception on Corruption	84
Evidence of Corruption in Nigeria.....	85
Corruption and the Church.....	87
Proliferation of Churches	89
Financial Misappropriation.....	90
Sexual Corruption	93
Different Areas of Corruption in the Church.....	95
Ordination	95
Transfer of Minister	98
Causes of Corruption in the Nigerian Church.....	100
Church Agency and Change.....	104

Historical Perspective	104
Theology and Biblical Response	107
Music.....	108
Preaching/Sermons	109
Practices	112
Learned Helplessness.....	116
Discipleship Deficit	118
Faith-Work Bifurcation.....	120
Evidence of Church-Initiated Agency in Nigerian Society.....	123
Power Factor	125
Leadership Practices That Can Account for Measurable Changes.....	128
Summary of Findings.....	129
Themes for Discussion.....	130
Corruption—Perception, Definition, and Evidence.....	130
Corruption and the Church in Nigeria	130
Church Agency and Change.....	131
Leadership Challenges towards Fidelity.....	131
Chapter 5: Discussion, Implications, and Conclusions	132
Overview of the Chapter.....	132
Research Questions Revisited.....	132
Themes for Discussion.....	133
Corruption: Its Perception, Definition, and Evidence.....	135
Corruption and the Church in Nigeria	139

Church Agency and Change.....	145
Leadership Challenges	150
Missiological Implications.....	153
Conclusion	164
Bibliography	166
Appendixes	
A. Interview Protocol.....	180
B. Informed Consent Letter	181

List of Illustrations

Figures

3.1. A diagram of the elite theory	60
3.2. Authentic leadership	61
5.1. Authentic leadership theory	150

Tables

3.1. Authentic Leadership Analytic Model.....	63
4.1. Participant Gender	75
4.2. Church Affiliation of Participants.....	76
4.3. Educational Qualification of Participants	76
4.4. Ministerial Status of Participants.....	77
4.5. Interview Questions Corresponding to Research Questions.....	77
4.6. Categorization of the Definition of Corruption	79
4.7 Responses of Whether People Will Hire Family over Others	81
4.8. Decision Influence Based on Family's/Superior's Pressure to Be Corrupt.....	81
4.9. Evidence of Corruption in Nigeria.....	85
4.10. Corruption and the Church in Nigeria	87
4.11. Ranking the Causes of Corruption.....	100
4.12. Ranking of Suggested Leadership Practices	129

Abbreviations

CAN	Christian Association of Nigeria
CCC	Celestial Church of Christ
ECWA	Evangelical Church Winning All
EFCC	Economic and Financial Crimes Commissions
RCCG	Redeemed Christian Church of God
TI	Transparency International
CPI	Corruption Perception Index

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Background of the Study

Autobiographic Background

In the early summer of 2008, I had been admitted to begin the Doctor of Ministry program at Asbury Theological Seminary. Being a resident pastor of an independent Pentecostal church, I did not even possess a Nigerian passport for my journey. I, therefore, went very quickly to the Nigerian immigration service office to make my application, having read online and in the newspapers about the requirements for obtaining my passport. When I got to the office, I told them that I had read all the necessary documents and was ready to pay the necessary money.

I was then shocked when they told me that my fees were three times the official rate for getting the passport. I replied that I was not ready to pay any money that would not be receipted (i.e., paying only the official fees and nothing illicit). The officer attending to me then ignored me. After four hours of unsuccessful waiting, I returned home disappointed.

A friend of mine told me of a senior officer in the immigration service who was a pastor in my parents' denomination. I was excited that things would be different. I went the next day and introduced myself as a Reverend gentleman who wanted to follow the rules and was not willing to pay additional cost as demanded by the other officer. Unfortunately, the man reacted by avoiding having any transactions with me.

In frustration, I called his assistant who knew I had stayed around their office for five hours. He advised me to go back home and raise the necessary extra money, asserting that no officer would process the international passport for me at the official

rate. He declared, “All of us have to make extra money for ourselves and our boss, pastor or no pastor. *Man must wak*. This is Nigeria, and that’s how things work here.” I eventually had to pay more than double the official price in order to get my travel passport in 2008.

This experience was a frustrating one for me and reminded me of how I could not bail out of jail a member of my church who was wrongly accused by the police. Although the truth came out and the police knew that the young man was wrongfully accused, I was still asked to go and bring money to bail him out in spite of the fact that a notice on the board boldly stated that bail was free. The younger brother of this man had to sell his motorbike, which he was using to do his business,¹ in order to bail out his brother after he had stayed in jail for one week. This incident happened in a police station where many of the senior officers are Christian ministers in different churches, many claiming to be very religious.

The aftermath of the 2015 general elections is a strong indicator of the fact that even religious institutions are not insulated against corruption. During the preparation for the elections, various organizations were given money to procure votes for the president. New organizations alleged that the Christian Association of Nigeria received large sums of money to convince their congregations to vote for the incumbent president and demonize the opposition presidential aspirant, Muhammadu Buhari.² Sunday Adelaja, a

¹ Many people used their motorbikes in many parts of Nigeria to transport people from one place to another, and they get paid for it. This service provides income for their families. Therefore, the selling of the motorbike was a loss of income to the person and his entire family.

² SaharaReporters, “Pastor Insists Jonathan Bribed CAN with 7 Billion Naira,” *Sahara Reporters*, February 25, 2015, <http://saharareporters.com/2015/02/25/pastor-insists-jonathan-bribed-can-7-billion-naira>; Midat Joseph and Isaiah Benjamin, “Jonathan Gave CAN N7bn Not N6bn, Pastor Dikwa Alleges,”

Nigerian-born pastor in Ukraine, asserts that religious leaders are the great encouragers of corruption as they have greater influence than academic institutions.³

A former petroleum minister in Nigeria said he stopped going to church because of the evident corruption in the different church strata. In his words as recorded in an interview by *Sahara Reporters*, “I don’t go to church again because I see a lot of corruption. Many of the things I was taught in church and in mission schools have been lost and I cannot practice their modern-day teachings.”⁴ He holds the same position as many people in Nigerian society who believe that the church has not had the needed impact on society.

Furthermore, I began to hear from many of other people as I revealed my frustration. They insist that organizations in Nigeria cannot change and that people should just continue enduring the current circumstances in Nigeria. They even insist that people should not expect the same effectiveness seen in organizations from other parts of the world. Many of them say that the only thing to do is to pray for God to change people and wait for the return of Jesus who will eventually make everything better. Since that week in 2008, I have continued to wonder if the presence of a principled and effective

Leadership: Nigeria’s Most Influential Newspaper, February 20, 2015, <http://www.leadership.ng/news/412848/jonathan-gave-can-n7bn-not-n6bn-pastor-dikwa-alleges>.

³ Morgan Winsor, “Nigeria Corruption Caused by Christian Churches? Pastor Sunday Adelaja Blames Religious Leaders for Immoral Values,” *Sahara Reporters*, August 10, 2015, <http://www.ibtimes.com/nigeria-corruption-caused-christian-churches-pastor-sunday-adelaja-blames-religious-2046170>.

⁴ Eromosele Ebhomele and Simon Ateba, “Nigerian Churches Stink with Corruption—David-West,” *Sahara Reporters*, May 17, 2013, <http://saharareporters.com/2013/05/17/nigerian-churches-stink-corruption-david-west>.

leader could bring about transformation in an organization that is already filled with a corrupt culture and why the church has not been able to have a lasting impact in Nigeria.

The Nigerian Context

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa. It is situated on the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa. Its neighbors are Benin, Niger, Cameroon, and Chad. The lower course of the River Niger flows south through the Western part of the country into the Gulf of Guinea. Swamps and mangrove forests border the southern coast; inland are hardwood forests. It is also surrounded on the southern side by the Atlantic Ocean and in the north by the Sahara Desert.

The nation of Nigeria received its independence from British rule in 1960. It is made up of thirty-six states and six geopolitical regions: Northeast, Northwest, North-Central, Southwest, Southeast, and South-South.

The capital city is Abuja, while the commercial city is Lagos, which is also the tenth most populous city in the world. The land area is about 351,649 square miles, and the total area is 356,667 square miles. The population according to the World Factbook of the Central Intelligence Agency is about 162,470,737 in 2011, including more than 250 ethnic groups, such as the Hausa and Fulani 29 percent, Yoruba 21 percent, Igbo 18 percent, Jaw 10 percent, Kanuri 4.9 percent, Ibibio 3.5 percent, and Tiv 2.5 percent. The official language is English, but more than 500 other indigenous languages are also used.⁵

According to a Central Intelligence Agency report, 50 percent of Nigerians are Muslims while 40 percent are Christians. The other 10 percent are people of indigenous

⁵ Central Intelligence Agency, "People and Society: Nigeria," in *The World Factbook*, accessed December 28, 2017, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geo/ni.html>.

beliefs. The Muslim population is expected to rise to 117 million in 2030.⁶ In the view of Patrick Johnstone, a Christian writer, Christianity makes up 51.3 percent of the population while Islam makes up 45.1 percent. Ethnic religion comprises 3.3 percent while nonreligious people represent 0.3 percent of the population.⁷

Statistics in Nigeria is a very controversial subject and its also very influence by the political class and has a religious dimension. The Christians will always claim to be higher in number, while the Muslims will also claim to the higher number. One thing that note- worthy is that, the birthrate of Muslims to Christian in Nigeria is significantly different, and this factor could well make Islam the larger religion in Nigeria at present or in the nearest future.

Among Christians, 35.5 percent are Protestant, 24.5 percent are independent, 20.4 percent are Anglican, and 19.6 percent are Roman Catholics. As of 2005, the total number of Anglicans in Nigeria is put at 18.5 million.⁸ This number is the highest total of Anglicans in any part of the world; however, one may not find all of them at any given time in the churches on Sunday morning although they seem to be on the church register.

The Christian church in Nigeria has become a major force in Global Christianity. Nigeria has produced a number of highly influential Christian figures. The Anglican Church being the first church to be successfully established in Nigeria, it has continued to generate its own influence in global Anglicanism because of its vibrancy and growth.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Patrick J. G. Johnstone, Jason Mandryk, and Robyn Johnstone, *Operation World*, 21st century, updated, and rev. ed. (Waynesboro, GA: Authentic Lifestyle; Gerrards Cross, England: WEC International, 2005), 798.

⁸ <http://www.worldchristiandatabase.org.ezproxy.asburyseminary.edu/wcd/esweb.asp?WCI=Detail&Mode=2&Detail=45&Key=nige&Instance=104725&LIndex=6>

Indigenous Pentecostal churches are also growing in numbers with new churches founded every day in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Corruption being endemic in Nigeria is no longer news. Many organizations, such as the church and private and public sectors, have continued to struggle with how to contain corrupt practices and create viable organizations.

In spite of a continuous outcry for change in these organizations in order to have a flourishing country, this transformation has eluded Nigeria. While some have argued that the church is the solution to the myriad of problems that Nigeria faces, the churches in Nigeria are continuously growing but still seem not to have created high fidelity organizations. Others have argued that the church has created more problems than solutions.

The church also seems to struggle with keeping its own fidelity in a country such as Nigeria. The church continues to receive accusations of corruption and infidelity to the Scriptures. In the words of Bernardin Mfumbusa, “The church is growing, corruption is crowing.”⁹ Christians in different leadership organizations have not been able to justify the fact that they can bring about transformation. The argument is evident in various allegations leveled against political, private, and religious leaders in the last democratic dispensation in Nigeria. Many have been indicted for corrupt practices, including Christians. It is, therefore, becoming almost impossible to assert that Christian leaders

⁹ Bernardin Mfumbusa, “The Church Is Growing; Corruption Is Growing,” *The Media Project*, August 11, 2010, <http://themediaproject.org/article/church-growing-corruption-growing?page=full>.

can bring about transformation. An average Nigerian speaks about the possibility of transformation in a corrupt environment with little or no sense of hope of redemption.

The challenge with all these negative perceptions of the church is enormous. One wonders if the church in Nigeria is guilty of corruption and how corruption is perpetrated in the church. How are Christian people and leaders responding to the allegation of corruption in the Church? What is the perception of about the role in which the church has played in response to corruption in Nigeria? Is there a major difference between the perception that people have about the church in the past and in the presence? Why is it becoming difficult for the church to do much about the corruption in Nigeria? If the church is the light and salt of the earth, how is the church in Nigeria translating this Scripture into reality? What are the impediments to the church agency in bringing about change from corruption to fidelity?

Research Questions

This research focused on describing the experience of Christians in Nigeria with corruption in the church: its dimensions and causes and the theological reflection around it. The study consequently suggests practices that may help leadership in Nigeria to move from corruption to fidelity. The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do Christian perceptions of corruption in Nigerian society compare to evidence-gathering corruption indexes?
2. How does Christian discourse on corruption reflect local theologizing in Nigerian society?
3. Can evidence be found that demonstrates church-initiated change agency in Nigerian society? If not, why?

4. If change agency could be found, what leadership practices account for measurable changes in organizations progressing from corruption to fidelity?

Rationale for the Research

The first reason this study is important is that the definition of corruption as perceived by the generality of the Nigerian people is very crucial when attempting to fight corruption. If people do not see certain practices as corrupt, they will have difficulty being willing to change those particular behaviors.

This study is also important in that the way pastors and Christians in Nigeria articulate the issue of corruption determines whether they will be able to ameliorate such challenging situations. The Nigerian people are very religious, and religious leaders are, therefore, highly influential in shaping people's beliefs, values, and actions in Nigerian society.

Third, this study attempted to find out what the people believe about the Nigerian church and its role in fighting corruption in order for the church to take its meaningful place in the transformation of Nigerian society. Having evidence that people have effected change in their own organizations in Nigerian society will encourage others that such change is possible.

The fourth reason for this study is that the ability to see organizations in Nigeria that are creating change and transformation will provide examples of practices that can create progress away from corruption. Nigerian will then begin to transform from infidelity to fidelity. If the practices can be learned, more people will be able to lead others in this kind of experience.

Definition of Key Terms

According to many scholars, including the World Bank and Transparency International, the simple definition of *corruption* is “the abuse of public office for private gain.”¹⁰

The *Corruption Perception Index (CPI)* is the measurement of the perceived levels of public sector corruption in different parts of the world. It was first launched in 1995. The CPI has been widely given credit for putting the issue of corruption on the international agenda. Nigeria ranked 136 among 175 countries in 2014.¹¹

Transformational leadership has different theoretical dimensions, but it concerns the leadership style involved in the holistic growth of the follower, thereby making him or her a better team member and achieving the set vision of the organization.

Transformational leadership has a strong relationship with authentic leadership theory.

Authentic leadership theory affirms the fact that leaders are only able to lead well when they take an inner assessment of themselves and empower themselves as effective and transparent people. From their inner strength, they are then able to impact those they lead, bringing about transformation.

Scope and Delimitations

For this research to accomplish what it set out to do within the given time, the scope of the study must be defined. The research will concern itself with four church

¹⁰ The World Bank, “Corruption and Economic Development,” in *Helping Countries Combat Corruption: The Role of the World Bank*, September 1997, <http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/anticorrupt/corruptn/cor02.htm>.

¹¹ “Corruption by Country/Territory,” *Transparency International*, accessed September 11, 2015, <http://www.transparency.org/country#NGA>.

organizations in Nigeria. Being a Christian scholar, I did not examine the other two major religions in Nigeria—Islam and traditional religion—in order to avoid complications with theological variations in these other religions. Christianity itself already has complex theological variations, so including the other two religions would be much more difficult.

The four churches included in the scope of this study were the Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion, which represents the established/traditional churches (e.g., Methodist, Catholic, Presbyterian); the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), which represents the Evangelical churches found mostly in northern parts of Nigeria; the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), which represents indigenous African Pentecostal churches in Nigeria; and, the Aladura churches (Celestial Church of Christ), which represent the Africa-initiated churches (AIC). The Anglican Church has over eighteen million members with branches all over Nigeria. The ECWA church has over six million members in Nigeria, while the RCCG has over three million members with over five thousand churches in Nigeria. These churches represent a majority consensus in theological, social, and economic understanding of Christianity modern Nigeria. Furthermore, because of the snowball nonprobability sampling used, I traveled to the different places where I was able to secure the participants for the interviews, as long as they met the criteria of being Nigerians who are Christians.

Research Plan

The first chapter is the introduction, while the second chapter examines some literature in relation to corruption and the church in addition to the review of materials on leadership and a few theories related to this work. Chapter 3 explains the methodology and lays out the various steps taken to conduct the field research. Chapter 4 presents the

data using tables and figures. It continues with the coding of the various interview questions into themes, which were used to arrange and organize the fourth chapter with the summary of the major findings. Chapter 5 discusses the various themes revealed through the data collected in the light of the existing literature and current happenings, drawing missiological implications and finally concluding with various recommendations.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This research was undertaken to find out how the church in Nigeria has engaged with the problem of corruption in Nigeria. The problem of corruption is multifaceted. It includes issues of leadership and change and other related concepts; hence, this chapter endeavors to look at the relevant literature in a thematic form. The work intentionally looked at literature with direct bearing on this topic and excluded those not considered relevant.

This study began by looking at the state of scholarship as it relates to corruption, leadership study, elite theories of society, and authentic leadership theories and corruption in Nigeria. The corruption in the church has also received some attention in recent times. The gaps in present scholarship in leadership, corruption, and the church were also brought forward in preparation for the field research for this study.

Corruption Historically

Corruption has been a phenomenon within the human race from the earliest of times, beginning with the patriarchs in the Bible to the time of the kings of the kingdom of Israel and Judah, and the Greek and Roman emperors. The Old Testament prophets from Isaiah to Jeremiah, the rest of the later prophets spent a lot of their time in the confrontation of injustice and corruption in their society. John T. Nooman asserts, “there are records of bribery laws from ancient times.” Archeological evidence proved that employees accepted bribes in ancient Assyria. In Egypt, the edit of Horemheb proclaimed that any judge who received reward in order to deny justice to the people would be

subject to capital punishment.¹² At the beginning of each Olympic games in ancient times, all the umpires, athletes, their relatives and trainers swore to the gods that they would uphold Olympic rule.

Corruption manifests itself in other countries, such as Ancient Greece, India, China, Babylonia, and the Roman Empire. The New Testament is not without evidence of corrupt practices from Pilate to the political and religious class of Jesus' time and beyond. Different scholars have pontificated about the problem of corruption from ancient times to the present, from Plato and Aristotle to present scholars and social critics. The medieval period also had corruption. Mbugua discusses the response of some theologians such as John of Salisbury, Thomas Aquinas, and Giles of Rome.¹³

As seen from this list, corruption has been an element within public institutions for centuries in many societies, yet only in recent times has it been brought in very convincing and continuous way to the public sphere and received very strong scientific analysis. It is, therefore, evident that the concept of corruption has been around for thousands of years, but the academic discussion surrounding it did not begin until the last half of the previous century. The scholarly work began in the 1950s and has continued to grow until the present time.¹⁴

Scholars recognize two eras in the academic study of corruption. First, when different scholars in various fields of study began to write about corruption in the late

¹² J. T. Noonan, *Bribes* (New York: Macmillan, 1984), 702-3.

¹³ David Mbugua, "A Christian Moral Response to Corruption in Kenya," (PhD diss., The Catholic University of Eastern Africa, 2013), 13–20.

¹⁴ Johann Graf Lambsdorff, *The Institutional Economics of Corruption and Reform: Theory, Evidence and Policy*, 1st ed. (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 3.

1950s and the 1960s. The second era began in the 1990s and continues to the present day. These eras are also connected with the general interest in democracy and development. In the early 1950s and throughout the 1960s, people became interested in corruption as new nations were becoming democratic in the developing countries. In the early 1970s, for example, James Scott wrote, “Recent speculations about corruption by social scientists is mostly centered in the growing body of literature devoted to the less developed countries.”¹⁵ While there was little disagreement among scholars with regard to corruption’s effect on cynicism about politics (i.e., corruption tended to encourage cynicism), there was not yet a clear consensus on the economic and societal effects of corruption. Not too surprising, the earliest definitional debates between the *moralists* and the *revisionists* mirrored disagreements over the effects of corruption.

The moralists universally condemned corruption because they considered it a scourge on the societal, economic, and political well-being of society. The revisionists, contrarily, argued that we have to start studying corruption in a more objective way. For scholars such as Huntington, corruption is as a result of the incompatibility between traditional cultures with new political institutions and corruption in this kind of society, could promote efficiency.¹⁶

This functionalist (i.e., revisionist) view of corruption was challenged in the mid-to-late 1970s by a new generation of scholars, such as Anne Krueger and Susan Rose-

¹⁵ James C. Scott, *Comparative Political Corruption* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972), 9.

¹⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 61.

Ackerman,¹⁷ who argue that on the whole corruption and rent-seeking behavior had a negative effect on political and economic development. Instead of viewing corruption as a structural phenomenon and as a necessary component in the modernization or transitioning process, corruption was instead recast as an individual choice. Corrupt acts were viewed as carefully calculated decisions that maximized benefits for the parties involved but which ultimately came at a cost to society. This approach towards corruption gained increasing popularity, particularly among economists and political scientists who used transaction cost economics or principal-agent models in their work. Further, an increasing number of scholars argued that corruption, especially of the bureaucratic type, should be studied in the context of the institutional structures in which they exist. In the 1980s, when the definitional debates had largely subsided, books and articles on corruption increasingly involved individual case studies. Countries plagued by both high levels of bureaucratic corruption and high levels of political corruption seemed to be of particular interest to scholars: the Philippines under Ferdinand Marcos, Indonesia under Mohammed Suharto, Zaire under Mobutu Sese Seko, Zimbabwe under Mugabe, Haiti under Jean-Claude Duvalier, just to name a few.

In spite of the promises by different government to control corruption since the 1980s, the efforts have not yielded much. From India to Thailand and Indonesia, the rate of corruption had continued to increase all over the world. In Africa, Mobutu Sese Seko's four-decade reign in Zaire had high levels of corruption, but the next government of Kabila did not fare better as the corruption continued to an even greater extent. In

¹⁷ Anne Krueger, "The Political Economy of a Rent-Seeking Society," *American Economic Review* 64, no. 3 (1974): 291–303; Susan Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences, and Reform* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Zimbabwe, the corruption level of Robert Mugabe's presidency is still evident today. The Nigerian situation is not better; from the 1980s up to the present, the corruption level in Nigeria continues to grow higher by the year. From Shehu Shagari's civilian government to Buhari, and then Babangida, Abacha, and Abdulsalam Abubakar . Corruption continue to reign supreme in different ways. The ushering in of the democratic government in 1999 has not helped in curtailing corruption. Unfortunately, corruption has just continued to grow within Nigeria even though many make the assumption that as states grow stronger and economies become more developed corruption recedes.

Interest in corruption has grown in the last few decades because many scholars have argued that corruption is very harmful to human societies. It increases the cost of government, is antagonistic to democracy, and undermines civil society.¹⁸ It impacts negatively on investments and thereby has a negative influence on the economic development of the society.

Scholarly Definitions of Corruption

Definition debates started with the moralists and the revisionists. While the moralists generally condemn corruption because they believe it has a huge impact on the economic and political progress of society, revisionists argue that corruption is not necessarily harmful but is considered a necessary part of the process.

Revisionist scholars such as David Bayley and Nye believe that corruption is a result of disequilibrium between different systems.¹⁹ Huntington asserts that corruption is

¹⁸ Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption and Government*.

¹⁹ David Bayley, "The Effects of Corruption in a Developing Nation," *Western Political Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (1966): 719–32; J. S. Nye, "Corruption and Political Development: A Cost-Benefit Analysis," *American Behavioral Scientist* 8 (Nov. 1964): 417–27.

“thus a product of distinction between public welfare and private interest which comes with the modernization.”²⁰ Colin Leys thinks that the moralists’ view seems to have a Western bias as he examined their work. Moralists believed that the result of nepotism and other forms of corruption is bad.²¹ He posits that although the practice of nepotism is seen as bad from Western standards, family-based appointments are not always looked at as corruption in other societies. The result is that the moralist stance on nepotism and corruption was insensitive to cultural differences and biased in favor of the perspective of Western countries.

In the late 70s scholars such as Krueger Susan Rose-Ackerman argued that instead of seeing corruption as having a negative impact on society, corrupt acts are to be great cost to society.²² Authors such Nathaniel Leff, J. S. Nye, and Anne Krueger²³ are among the early modern scholars who wrote about corruption as a subject. This discussion on corruption has continued to grow in contemporary times.

A search through the Internet shows that in 1970, only about seven journal articles were published directly related to corruption as a subject. This statistic rose to thirty-four in 1982 and then moved up to 402 by 2008. There were about sixty-seven books on corruption in 1970 and 276 by 2008. Interestingly in the last three years (2016-18), dissertations related to corruption and Africa yields 3,510 on the Proquest Dissertations

²⁰ Huntington, *Political Order*, 61.

²¹ Colin Leys, “What Is the Problem about Corruption?” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 3, no. 2 (Aug. 1965): 215–30.

²² Krueger, “Political Economy,” 291–303.

²³ Nathaniel Leff, “Economic Development through Bureaucratic Corruption,” *American Behavioral Scientist* (1964): 8–14; Krueger, “Political Economy,” 291–303.

and Theses search engine. They are in different disciplines such as business, policy study, law and international relations, policing, and oil production and refining. Among this various research, fewer than fifty have any relationship with religion or the church. This discovery is discouraging, knowing the impact that religion has in the general life of Africans.

Robert Klitgaard and Rose-Ackerman have a very strong influence on the World Bank's perspective on corruption. Rose-Ackerman was among the first to talk about the difference between *big type* or grand corruption and petty corruption.²⁴ Some early definitions of corruption focus on public service. The first is by M. Mullan who describes three scenarios: (1) a public official collecting money or its equivalent for doing something that he or she is required to do anyway as a part of the job, (2) a public official collecting money or its equivalent for not doing something he or she should not do as part of the job, or (3) a public official collecting money or its equivalent in order "to exercise a legitimate discretion for improper reasons."²⁵

Bayley, in his own view, says that though corruption is tied to bribery, in general, it includes the "misuse of authority as a result of considerations of personal gain", this gain may not be money; it could be prestige or other non-material things which may not be money.²⁶ Another definition comes from Nye: He posits that corruption is a behavior that "deviates from the formal duty of a public role because of private wealth or status gains

²⁴ Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption and Government*.

²⁵ M. McMullan, "A Theory of Corruption," *Sociological Review* 9, no. 2 (1961): 181–201; Andrei Shleifer and Robert W. Vishny, *The Grabbing Hand: Government Pathologies and Their Cures* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

²⁶ Bayley, "Effects of Corruption," 719-32.

or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private influence.”²⁷Nye’s definition accounts for the fact that both politicians who are elected and bureaucrats who are appointed can commit corrupt acts. The assertion also explains that people could have private gains to their personal accounts or to the accounts of their family members or friends. This definition builds on the previous works of Bayley and McMullan by providing the explanation “ that private gain can be in terms of wealth or in terms of status.”²⁸The use of family members of the corrupt officials has become part of the mechanism for corruption in many parts of Africa, especially Nigeria, where corrupt officials do not demand money but request political favors in which they are rewarded with political appointments that they then extend to their families and their friends.

The definition given by Nye does not, however, include the role of lobbyists, interest groups, and tribal associations, to name a few. In order to bridge this gap, Shleifer and Vishny add that corruption is the “sale of government officials of government property for personal gain.”²⁹ They also argue in their work that competition among businesses may lead to the spread of corruption, and when this competition is encouraged among government officials for positions, the result is an increased spread of corruption.³⁰

²⁷ Nye, “Corruption and Political Development.”

²⁸ McMullan, “Theory of Corruption,” 181–201.

²⁹ Shleifer and Vishny, *Grabbing Hand*.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

One scholar, Arnold Heidenheimer, identifies three types of corruption: “public office-centered, market-centered, and public-interest-centered.”³¹ This classification generally focuses on the “behavior of corruption,” which portrays corruption as basically an abuse of public office power and resources for private benefit.³² Donatella Porta and Alberto Vannucci push the same argument,³³ Mbugua notes, “Corruption is a kind of behavior, which deviates from the norm actually prevalent or believe to prevail in a given context.”³⁴ An additional definition from a moral perspective ,affirms,

Corruption is an immoral and unethical phenomenon that contains a set of moral aberrations from moral standards of society ... From an etymological analysis, corruption is from the Latin *corrumpere*, “meaning ‘to break’; it implies that in corruption, something is destroyed or broken up. What is destroyed or broken up might be an ethical code, or more often, and administrative rule of law.” The person who breaks it derives, therefore, from some recognizable benefit for him/herself, family, tribe, party or some other relevant group.³⁵

Edward Banfield as far back as 1958 wrote that corruption is a result of lack of moral behavior and has been holding societies back from further development.³⁶

In continuation of the legal and breaking of law dimension of the definition Lasswell and Rogow add

³¹ Lambsdorff, *Institutional Economics*, 3.

³² Lambsdorff, *Institutional Economics*, 3.

³³ Donatella Porta and Alberto Vannucci, *Corrupt Exchanges: Actors, Resources and Mechanism of Political Corruption, Social Problems and Social Issues* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1999), 16.

³⁴ Mbugua, “A Christian Moral Response,” 27.

³⁵ K. J. Arvina, *Corruption: Ethical Dimension* (London: Academic Press, 2001), 19. See also Seumas Miller, Peter Roberts, and Edward Spence, *Corruption and Anti-Corruption: An Applied Philosophical Approach* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2004), 60–61. The authors affirm that corruption is an abuse, judging by the social standards and moral principles guiding the society system of public order, role and resource allocation.

³⁶ Edward C. Banfield, *Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (New York: Free Press, 1958), 85-86.

that a corrupt act violates responsibility toward at least one system of public or civic order and is in fact incompatible with (destructive of) any such system. A system of public or civic order exalts common interest over special interest; violations of the common interest for special advantage are corrupt.³⁷

According to Robert Klitgaard, Ronald Abaroa, and Lindsey Parris, corruption is “the misuse of office for personal gain.”³⁸ E. F. Floristeanu makes his case broader by stating that corruption is “the abusive use of power with purpose of satisfying personal or group interests.”³⁹ Samuel Huntington defines it as “the behavior of public individuals which deviates from acceptable norms in order to serve private ends.”⁴⁰

Corruption is often regarded as a problem endemic to developing economies or countries from the majority world, but watching recent events and reports, corruption obviously cannot be a stereotypic property only of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. It is also evident in Europe and North America in its various facets.

A Catholic African moral theologian adds an important dimension when he states, “Corruption, in all its forms, is a kind of deterioration of moral standards in the society, the pervasion of the integrity that causes harm to people and society.”⁴¹ With this point in mind, “we can see the negative impact in the loss of moral values and a progressive

³⁷ Arnold A. Lasswell and Harold D. Rogow, *Power, Corruption, and Rectitude* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1963), 132.

³⁸ Robert Klitgaard, H. Lindsey Parris, and Robert B. Hawkins, *Corrupt Cities: A Practical Guide to Cure and Prevention* (Oakland, CA: ICS Press, 2000), 2.

³⁹ E. F. Floristeanu, “Causes and Consequences of Corruption,” *Revista Academiei Forteor* 58, no. 2 (2010): 251-57.

⁴⁰ Samuel Huntington, “Modenization and Corruption,” in *Political Corruption: A Handbook*, ed. Arnold J. Heidenheimer, Michael Johnston, and Victor T. Le Vine (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1990), 377–88.

⁴¹ Mbugua, “Christian Moral Response,” 35.

reduction in the ability to act morally non-corruption manner persons and public officials.”⁴² This impact is especially seen in places such as Nigeria today.

Klitgaard, Abaroa, and Parris in their book, *Corrupt Cities*, present a very vivid and impressive explanation of how corruption works and our various contexts:

Corruption tends to be reduced by the separation of powers; checks and balances; transparency; a good system of justice; and clearly defined roles, responsibilities, rules and limits. Corruption tends not to thrive where there is democratic culture, competition, and systems of control, and where people (employees, clients, overseers) have rights to information and right of redress. Corruption loves multiple and complex regulations with ample and uncheckable official discretion.⁴³

These scholars took time to explain the way corruption works the way corruption works and the explanation gives the details on how corruption works within many Nigerian

society They explained this by adopting a metaphoric formula: $C = M + D - A$.

Corruption (C) equals monopoly power (M) plus discretion officials (D) minus accountability (A):

If someone has monopoly power over a good or service and has the discretion is to decide whether someone gets that good or service or how much a person receives, and there is no accountability whereby others can see what the person is deciding, then we tend to find corruption. A strategy against corruption is to look for ways to reduce monopoly power, limit and clarify discretion, increase transparency, all the while taking account of costs, both direct and indirect of these ways.⁴⁴

Another point they noted is that “corruption is a crime of calculation, not of passion. People will tend to engage in corruption when the risks are low, the penalties mild, and the reward great. This insight overlaps the formula just mentioned because the

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Klitgaard, Parris, and Hawkins, *Corrupt Cities*, 32.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 27.

rewards will be the greater as monopoly power increases.”⁴⁵ This point is very crucial when looking subsequently at the various ways to reduce the occurrence of corruption in African society.

On the African continent, “corruption is not just endemic but [an] integral part of the social fabric of the life.”⁴⁶ In Africa, corruption is not just a thing practiced by a few people who have been corrupted in their minds. It is :

an expected element of every social transaction for those at the bottom end of the society... the sale of the limited amount of power they process is virtually their own means of survival. Higher up, extortion is one of the major avenues of enrichment; it facilitates social advancement and the upholding of one’s position.⁴⁷

This statement is not a matter of prejudice but something to which most people who live in the countries will admit. The new daily experiences of people from the entry point at the airport to the various government institutions demonstrate that extortion and bribery of different sorts that have become normal behaviors in many of these countries.

Douglas Yates argues that one major cause of corruption in Africa is what he calls the scramble for oil. In his book, he posits that the ownership of oil and natural resources have created countries that suffer from “enclave industrialization, limited economic diversification, and vulnerability to price shocks, decay of their manufacturing and agricultural sectors declining terms of trade, misguided economic policies and a

⁴⁵ Ibid., 32.

⁴⁶ Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 99.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 99.

fundamental neglect of human capital.” This situation is evident all over Africa and especially in Nigeria.⁴⁸

Another recent book by Dambisa Moyo moves in the direction of recognizing corruption in many government sectors in Africa. Moyo, an African economist, argues that the provision of aid rather than investment created a long regime of dependency by many African leaders on free money. They have used these monies for their own personal gains and have many times stashed the money in foreign banks.⁴⁹

The definition of corruption is ambiguous, but many scholars see corruption broadly as the abuse of public office, powers, or resources for private benefit. This definition includes most unethical practices such as bribery, embezzlement of public funds, nepotism, and many others.

Kempe R. Hope recently provided a very comprehensive definition, indicating that corruption is a crime:

It involves behavior on the part of the office holders or employees in the public and private sectors, in which they improperly and unlawfully advance their private interests of any kind and/or those others contrary to the interests of the office or position they occupy or otherwise enrich themselves and/or others, or induce others to do so, by misusing the position in which they are placed.⁵⁰

Many studies show that corruption always leads to economic inefficiency and waste because it affects the ways funds are allocated, the process of production, and even consumption services.

⁴⁸ Douglas A. Yates, *The Scramble for African Oil: Oppression, Corruption and War for Control of Africa's Natural Resources* (New York, NY: Pluto Press, 2012).

⁴⁹ Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa*, 1st ed. rep. (New York: NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010).

⁵⁰ Kempe Roland Hope, Jr., *Corruption and Governance in Africa: Swaziland, Kenya, Nigeria*, 1st ed. (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 2–3.

Kempe Hope mentioned five categories of corruption in Africa which are very instructive in the understanding of the menace they are highlighted below:

The principal types of corruption existing in most African countries are 1) bribery, kickbacks and facilitation payments; 2) embezzlement, theft and fraud; 3) offering and receiving of unlawful gratuity, favor or illegal commissions; 4) favoritism, nepotism, patronage, and clientelism; 5) money laundering; and 6) conflict of interest/influence peddling.⁵¹

Susan Rose-Ackerman explains that petty corruptions are those that regular citizens “encounter in their everyday lives like bribery during implementation of existing laws, rules regulations and service delivery.”⁵² The majority of the populace have to go through this in their everyday life. They experience it in schools, hospitals, and police checkpoints as well as in other social settings. Grand corruption refers to high- or elite-level people. This type of corruption includes politicians changing legislation, treasury practices, and similar experiences. Rose-Ackerman adds, “Petty corruption, moreover rarely exists in a vacuum and small payments often lead to demands for larger payments. In turn, these lead to other distortions in the economy aimed at safeguarding the positions of those who benefit from petty corruption.”⁵³ Knowing that corruption is a complex phenomenon, it continues to take different forms, and the various forms of corruption are worth discussing at this point. While different people categorize corruption in different ways, this research looks at the basic categories.

⁵¹ K. Hope and B. Chikulo, eds., *Corruption and Development in Africa: Lessons from Country Case Studies*, 2000 ed. (Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999).

⁵² Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption and Government*, 307.

⁵³ Ibid.

Forms of Corruption

Corruption includes different types of immoral practices. These various expressions may differ in extent, depending on which part of the world is being examined. Some of these practices are bribery, embezzlement, fraud, extortion, and nepotism.

Bribery

Bribery is one activity that is very controversial in explanation. John T. Noonan defines bribery as a: “morally deficient action, offered as an inducement, improperly influencing the performance of a public function, which is made to be gratuitously exercised. It is the payment whether in money or in kind, that is given or taken in a corrupt relationship.”⁵⁴ Bribery betrays trust and confidence; it obstructs justice. It encourages the breaking of rules and deceptive behavior. Giles Wyburd asserts this about Bribery, “It is based on wrong disposition and lack of moral character. It makes people more corrupt, dishonest, more irresponsible, more careless, more self-centered, and more selfish.”⁵⁵ In some societies, it is rejected while in others, it is seen as gift-given and required. It can come in different forms such as money, goods, privileges, objects of

⁵⁴ J. T. Noonan, *Bribes* (New York: Macmillan, 1984), 702–3.

⁵⁵ Giles Wyburd, *Competitive and Ethical? How Business Can Strike a Balance* (London: ABC Books, 1998), 53.

value (e.g., land),⁵⁶ marriage gifts (when giving their daughters to be married),⁵⁷ or anything that is used to change a person's action, especially if he holds a public office

In Nigeria, bribes have different names, such as public relations, brown envelope, appreciation, *egunje*, *baba wa gbope wa*, 10 percent, and kickback. It is discerned to make things pass quickly, smoother, and more favorably in one's own interest.

By giving *egunje*, many corporations and individuals are able to buy political favor and escape the payment of the adequate tax required for their operation in the country. Others are able to maintain their monopoly and fight against any competition. It is common in Nigeria for a policeman to ask for bribe from a traffic offender to avoid being taken to the police station.⁵⁸ Another area is when a civil service director visits different agency under his or her leadership and comes back with gifts in the trunk of his or her car from loyal staff who earn far less than the director.⁵⁹

Embezzlement

Embezzlement is the stealing of public resources by officials; it is seen as the misappropriation of public funds. The government officials take the public's money from

⁵⁶ Buying land and building houses for public officials has been another way to give bribes in Nigeria. This helps to keep the transactions out of the records. The building is given to the official as a birthday, Christmas, or New Year's gift.

⁵⁷ In many places in Nigeria, people promise to supply young ladies from the universities to spend weekends with politicians as a way of paying bribes to people.

⁵⁸ Almost no Nigerian nor visitor on the street of the big Nigerian cities has avoided this experience. It is a daily occurrence in different offices and agencies. The governor of Lagos state recently banned the Vehicle Inspection Officers in the city because of the rate of extortion of the public, but they have also done the same to some politicians who eventually brought it to the notice of the governor.

⁵⁹ In many cases, these *gifts* are required by the various departments, which they bring out of their budget, but sometimes from their salaries. Another issue of concern is that this practice is very common in most churches in Nigeria. The issue that has arisen from this practice is to make one wonder when a gift becomes a bribe and if they are technically different in this context.

the resources they administer on behalf of the state. It is also possible for employees in private firms to embezzle their employers' and firms' money and other resources. Stories of nurses in government hospitals stealing medicines that are meant for the sick. They then go to sell to roadside pharmacies. Food that are provided by aid organizations are converted into private pocket and sold to individuals. Government cars and properties are diverted by some senior civil servants into their private pockets. One example is the embezzlement of government money provided to take care of displaced people in Northern Nigeria by the secretary to the federal government.⁶⁰ Some have pointed out that embezzlement should be regarded in strict legal terms not as corruption but as theft. According to Mbugua, "in authoritarian and semi-democratic countries, a system of embezzlement can develop in a closed institutional and moral universe, independently of the public moral, and with few possibilities of public sanctions."⁶¹ Embezzlement is a fundamental part of how the ruling elite steals from public resources and may even be more harmful to society than extraction through bribes.⁶²

Extortion

In extortion, someone is forced through violence or Threats to give away his resources or money. While bribes may be demanded in order to do something, some

⁶⁰ The secretary to the federal government is presently on suspension, but not much has been heard from the investigation set up by the government.

⁶¹ Mbugua, "Christian Moral Response," 13–20.

⁶² Numerous examples abound in Nigeria about how public officials continue to steal from public funds: from governors to senators and even local government chairpersons. Most people in public office see government money as a national fund from which they should have a turn to take advantage of it for their own purpose.

corrupt officials threaten to use state power in order to inflict harm or deprive someone of his or her happiness in order to demand some form of payment or other.

To extort is to compel people to pay for something they are not supposed to pay for. Neil Jacoby and his colleagues define extortion as a payment made to a payee to keep that person from harming the payer in one form or other.⁶³ Extortion from an economic dimension is broadly defined as the act of threatening someone in order to obtain benefits. It causes someone, by illegal force or threat, to act in a way he or she would otherwise not wish to act.⁶⁴

The extortion made by the police, military, and paramilitary arm of government has become a daily occurrence that many in countries such as Nigeria have become so accustomed. It is also possible that big corporations commit this crime when they threaten host countries to relocate their capital, technology, and total assets to another country unless the nation reduces their taxes, tariffs, transport costs, and labor costs and loosens environmental regulations or even labor laws or grant them trade monopolies.

Nepotism

Nepotism is a type of corruption that involves the unjustified appointment of friends or relatives to public office, thereby violating the norms and rules of the undertaking.⁶⁵ Mbugua mentions that nepotism is a special form of favoritism, rooted in

⁶³ Neil H. Jacoby, *Bribery and Extortion in World Business: A Study of Corporate Political Payments Abroad* (New York: Free Press, 1977), 90.

⁶⁴ Thomas Carson, "Bribery, Extortion and the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act," *Journal of Public Economics* 76 (2000): 497.

⁶⁵ Hussein Syed Alatas, *The Sociology of Corruption: The Nature, Function, Causes, and Prevention of Corruption* (Singapore: Times Books International, 1980), 4.

one's very biological nature that makes an official prefer to present members of their own family and close relations to positions of authority. It makes people treat members of their own family or ethnic group more preferentially than nonmembers.⁶⁶ He raises reasons why nepotism is very problematic; it offends a sense of fair play. It destroys any sense of duty or common cause and makes every position an opportunity for personal profit. Another problem is the promotion of incompetents who then cannot be dismissed.⁶⁷

Fraud

Fraud involves a kind of use of trick to take someone's property, it can involve forgery, illegal trade and other things. Joseph Wells asserts that fraud involves a wide variety of conduct that even includes petty theft. It can encompass any crime for gain that uses deception as its principal modus operandi.⁶⁸ Fraud involves a manipulation of facts for the benefit of the practitioner.

Causes of Corruption

There are various causes in the literature that have been attributed to corruption.] The agreement among religious scholars is that the core reason for corruption is the self-centeredness in the heart of human beings. The main problem is that human beings have a problem in their core. The following sections present major causes as noted by social scientists.

⁶⁶ Mbugua, "Christian Moral Response," 49.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁶⁸ Joseph T. Wells, *Corporate Fraud Handbook: Prevention and Detection*, 2nd ed. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2007), 14.

Public Choice Theory (Rational Choice)

The public choice theory affirms that the official decides to do the acts of corruption out of his own personal volition. Rose-Ackerman and Klitgaard⁶⁹ popularize this position. It concentrates on the official and insists that public officials are corrupt because the benefits exceed the potential cost: “It is a free official making a rational decision that leads him to a more or less a predetermined outcome.”⁷⁰ This choice could be at the micro or macro level.

Bad Apple Theories

These theories states that people behave in a corrupt manner because of something that is foundational. It begins with a bad character that eventually culminates in corrupt acts. It may be based on the background of the one who practices corruption.⁷¹

Organizational Culture Theories

Organizational culture theories state that the structure of a government is not properly established, it can lead to corrupt practices. De Graaf asserts, “a causal path from a certain culture—a certain group culture—leads to a certain mental state. And that mental state leads to corrupt behavior.” There are other facilitating factors that affect the organizational structure.⁷²

⁶⁹ Susan Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption: A Study in Political Economy* (New York: Academic Press, 1978); Robert Klitgaard, *Controlling Corruption* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 70.

⁷⁰ GJalt De Graaf, *Causes of Corruption: Towards a Contextual Theory of Corruption*, Spring 2007, <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un-dpadm/unpan049603.pdf>, 45.

⁷¹ Graaf, *Causes of Corruption*.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 51.

Clashing Moral Value Theories

Values and the various qualities that the societies appraise or encourages could create an environment for people to be corrupt. Many societies such as Africa make clear distinctions between one's private life and one's public life. An example given by Rose-Ackerman is the issue of gift giving, whereas it is accepted in private life but not expected in public life.⁷³ In this class of theories, a major point is the basic contradiction between two major value systems and worldviews.

Ethos of Public Administration Theories

The ethos of public administration theories notes that when there is no intentional plan to encourage integrity, the organization creates an environment where people are more interested with people being effective rather than do the right thing."⁷⁴ This theory does not seem to have empirical research to back it up but is supported by a few scholars.⁷⁵

Correlation Theories

Correlation theories involve the idea that various factors are involved in encouraging corruption. Factors such as political situation, leaders within the organization. This is the way the Transparency International create their corruption perception indexes.⁷⁶ Many scholars are not in support of these sets of theories.

⁷³ Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption and Government*, 91.

⁷⁴ De Graaf, *Causes of Corruption*, 56.

⁷⁵ H. G. Frederickson, *The Spirit of Public Administration* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1993); R. Gregory, "Social Capital Theory and Administrative Reform: Maintaining Ethical Probity, Public Service," *Public Administration Review* 59 (1999): 63–76.

⁷⁶ De Graaf, *Causes of Corruption*, 56.

Assessment of Corruption

Different methods have been developed to measure levels of corruption in various societies. These measurements help to find out the rate of corruption in a particular society. The most popular is the Corruption Perception Index (CPI). This instrument helps to rank countries in relation to the way people perceive them. This instrument is designed and produced by Transparency International (TI). With this, instrument, those who want to pursue businesses in such places are able to make decisions on what kind of risks they should be expecting if they would want to do business in such places.

Since every instrument always has its own limitations, TI produced what can be called complementary indices for providing other analysis for corruption. They include the Global Corruption Barometer (GCB). The instrument asks respondents if they paid a bribe, if corruption has increased in their country, and if the government is effectively tackling corruption. In 2015, the GCB affirmed that citizens from Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Liberia, and Ghana are most negative about the scale of corruption in their countries.⁷⁷ The report estimates that nearly 75 million people have paid bribes in the year under review (2014-2015).

The next is the Bribe Payers Index (BPI), which can be located on the Transparency International website. This was launched in 1999 to evaluate how organizations abroad react to the demand for bribe in the developing world

The Global Corruption Report (GCR) is one of TI's flagship publications and can be found on TI's website. It brings the expertise of the anticorruption movement to bear

⁷⁷ *People and Corruption: Africa Survey 2015—Global Corruption Barometer*, Dec. 1, 2015, https://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publication/people_and_corruption_africa_survey_2015.

on a specific corruption issue. Reports focus on corruption in climate change, the private sector, water, and the judiciary. It highlights qualitative and quantitative research that helps in understanding the dynamic of corruption and seeks to provide practical ways to improve governance and accountability.

The National Integrity System (NIS), also found on TI's website, helps give a complete guide on the way different countries analyze corruption in different sectors of the country: by assessing how the countries are generally attempting to stamp out corruption. Transparency in Corporate Reporting (TICR) assesses how different companies disclose major important financial information on country-country basis. This information began from 2012.⁷⁸

The top seven most transparent countries in 2016 were Denmark (1), New Zealand (1), Finland (3), Sweden (4), Switzerland (5), Norway (6). The least transparent countries were Libya (170), Sudan (170), Yemen (170), Syria (173), North Korea (174), South Sudan (175), and Somalia (176).⁷⁹

Nigeria improved slightly with a score of 28 over the previous year when it ranked 136 among 176 countries. From the late 1990s, scholars began to do more empirical research on corruption and began to work more on cross-country analyses. They used these analyses to provide suggestions for investment in business. John Lambsdorff was correct as far back as 1999 when he wrote, "Data on corruption are to a large extent subjective assessment of the highest level of corruption in various countries."

⁷⁸ Barbara Kowalczyk-Hoyer, *Transparency in Corporate Reporting: Assessing the World's Largest Companies* (Berlin: Transparency International, 2012).

⁷⁹ www.transparency.org.

⁸⁰He concluded that perceptions are commonly a good indicator of the real level of corruption.

Assessments can be subjective; hence, multiple assessments when working with any country are helpful. Some assessments on corruption in some countries have been rated based on the number of public officers convicted on corruption charges. However, Lambsdorff reacts to this perspective by saying that this type of assessment will not be the indication for the actual figure on corruption since it only presents the strength and influence of the judiciary in these places: “In this case, conviction rates are not adequate indicators for the actual incidence of corruption, but rather, reflect the quality of the judiciary.”⁸¹ This fact is corroborated by Sharabani Saha, Rukmani Gounder, and Jen-Je Su as they insist, “Objective data of corruption mostly reflects the success of anti-corruption initiatives rather than the actual levels of corruption.”⁸² This has certainly limited how some people take impact of the assessment.

Many organizations use the corruption indices developed and used by Transparency International. Others use the Political Risk Services, the Institute for Management Development, the World Bank and University of Basel, or the World Economic Forum. Research on the causes of corruption mostly focuses on political

⁸⁰ H. E. M. Uslaner, “Trust and Corruption,” in *The New Institutional Economics of Corruption* ed. J. G. Lambsdorff, M. Taube, and M. Schramm (London: Routledge, 2004), 14.

⁸¹ Uslaner, “Trust and Corruption,” 18.

⁸² Shrabani Saha, Rukmani Gounder, and Jen-je Su, “Is There a ‘Consensus’ towards Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index?” *International Journal of Business Studies* 20, no. 1 (Dec. 2012): 1.

systems, public salaries, and an examination of colonialism, gender, and other cultural dimensions.

Bertram Spector's edited work, *Fighting Corruption in Developing Countries*, is another relevant book on the direct subject of corruption. The articles within the book are a collection of studies in different areas in developing countries. The book analyzed how the corruption "problems stunt economic growth, distort governance, limit democratic participation and makes the people unsettled."⁸³ The work examines nine sectors of every nation: education, agriculture, energy, environment, health, justice, private business, political parties and public finance. The book suggests how some practical initiatives will impact these nine areas.

In order to be effective, anticorruption reforms must include prevention, education, and enforcement. Incentives need to be created for good behavior, as well as a system for external accountability, broad coalitions between reformers inside and outside of the government, and a substantial commitment to fighting corruption.⁸⁴

While Spector's work is praised for looking at corruption in the nine major areas of a nation's life, the fact that the work avoids the religious arena makes it deficient in an attempt to recommend how to fight corruption, especially in Africa. For example, in Nigeria, the majority of the population is religious, and religion plays an important role in shaping the people's attitudes and worldview.

⁸³ Bertram I. Spector, ed., *Fighting Corruption in Developing Countries: Strategies and Analysis* (Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, 2005), 12.

⁸⁴ Spector, *Fighting Corruption*, 248.

A few dissertations on corruption have been written recently. One, by David Sebudubudu, examined Botswana, South Africa, and Namibia. The work reviewed anticorruption agencies and why they have continued to fail.⁸⁵ Another work, by Chinelo Okekeocha, researched corruption and public accountability in Nigeria. He examined the public sector in Nigeria and posits the different reasons why corruption has continued in the country. The need for survival and provision for the family are behind public officers' embezzlement of funds, and he suggests that the solution to this problem is that the government should endeavor to take care of its employees.⁸⁶

A work by Nicole Bissessar compared 110 countries and their rate of corruption. She determined whether development affects corruption or vice versa. After her empirical analysis of different regions of the world, she came to the conclusion that sub-Saharan Africa is characterized by persistent corruption, and where the area has an absence of significant development, a high level of corruption certainly exists.⁸⁷ Corruption has continued to plague many countries in Africa and especially Nigeria.

Peter Anassi in his book, *Corruption in Africa: The Kenya Experience*, affirms that corruption is woven into the fabric of everyday life, and "corruption is central to the economic woes of Africa."⁸⁸ He also asserts that the developed countries encourage and

⁸⁵ David Sebudubudu, "Combating Corruption in Southern Africa: An Examination of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Botswana, South Africa and Namibia" (PhD diss., University of Leeds, 2002), <http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/379/>.

⁸⁶ Chinelo Okekeocha, "A Case Study of Corruption and Public Accountability in Nigeria," (Master's thesis, Kennesaw State University, 2013).

⁸⁷ Nicole Bissessar, "Does Corruption Persist in Sub-Saharan Africa?" *International Advances in Economic Research* 15 (June 12, 2009): 347.

⁸⁸ Peter Anassi, *Corruption in Africa: The Kenya Experience* (Victoria, BC: Trafford Publishing, 2004), 19.

participate in conflicts in many African countries so that they can exploit the natural resources of these countries. He then categorizes corruption as institutional, political, and bureaucratic. The book looks at the different departments in Kenya and the areas of massive corruption from the police to the political groups. He then spends fourteen pages out of more than three hundred on Christian ethics and prosperity theology as it relates to corruption.

Corruption and the Nigerian Experience

Lack of good purposeful leadership in addition to corruption have affected the growth and development in Nigeria.⁸⁹ In August 2012, Obiageli Ezekwesili, the former World Bank vice president for Africa declared that about a lot of Nigeria's income has been squandered since the time of independence, using the disguise of subsidy for the domestic fuel. Former central bank of Nigeria Lamido Sanusi announced some time ago that \$18.5 Million of the government Fuel Company, which must have been diverted illegally into a private account or accounts. Since the beginning of the present dispensation in Nigeria, the rate at which large sums of money are recovered is so alarming.

Some people have argued that the impact of corruption on the financial fortunes of Nigeria is enormous; over 185 Billion Dollars have been lost to corruption.⁹⁰ The truth is also that in spite of all the money received from oil, 69% of Nigerians live below the poverty line. Obviously, corruption has dealt a devastating blow on the people of Nigeria.

⁸⁹ Lauren Blanchard and Tomas F. Husted, *Nigeria: Current Issues and U.S. Policy* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service. March 11, 2016), <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33964.pdf>.

⁹⁰ Hope, *Corruption and Governance in Africa*.

After the Nigerian Independence, the military regimes exploited the wealth of the nation with their use of guns and intimidation. These brutal and careless regimes affected the economic and leadership climate of Nigeria; exploitation of the country's wealth is still the dominant narrative in the country today.⁹¹ According to Olowu, the historical antecedents have made Nigeria to become known for drug trafficking, scam syndicates, which has tarnished the image of Nigeria; an international criminal identity emerged.⁹²

Those in positions of leadership are continually under the pressure of extending favors to people in various areas: “What obtains in Nigeria is the ongoing undermining of the institution of governance—aided and abetted by their unethical ethical leadership—and their lack of functioning in the interest of the public good.”⁹³ Now many almost assume that people cannot do things based on merit in Nigeria. Most Nigerians stopped struggling working and doing things based on merit had gradually disappeared among Nigerians, which has enabled corruption and other continue to benefit from this malady. Hope strongly notes, “It must be pointed out here that this culture of corruption is opposed by large segments of the Nigerians notwithstanding the fact that they said culture of corruption represents the environment and norms through which they live their daily lives.”⁹⁴ However, the elite seem to have made it a part of the daily lives of the people.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Dele Olowu, “Governance and Corruption in West Africa” in *Where Corruption Lives*, ed. G. E. Caiden, O. P. Dwivedi, & J. Jabbra (Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, 2001), 110.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 112.

⁹³ Hope, *Corruption and Governance in Africa*, 137.

⁹⁴ Hope, *Corruption and Governance in Africa*, 138.

⁹⁵ It is important to note that the Nigerian government during the time President Olusegun Obasanjo created the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), and Independent Corrupt

Toyin Falola and Matthew Heaton wrote a historical book about Nigeria that looks at the political and sociological trajectory of Nigeria before the colonial era and the major players who have affected the direction of the country today. Toyin, who is a Nigerian professor in the United States, took time to look at the issues of corruption and how it has affected the fortunes of the country.⁹⁶ The book also mentions the fact that the Pentecostal churches in Nigeria provide hope for people in times of difficulty. The authors look at the state of the Nigerian nation during the present democratic system and conclude that not much has been done.⁹⁷

Cultural Dimension in Corruption

There are many gray areas when we consider corruption in the light of many cultures around the world. Mark Granovetter opines in his exploration of the social life of bribes, “Identical actions may be interpreted very differently depending on the circumstances.”⁹⁸ The story of the Chinese student in America who gave his professor gifts at Christmas is instructive, whereas this action may raise suspicion if it comes from an American student. For this Chinese student, it is part of his culture and does not

Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC); however, the two agencies have been accused at different times of political intimidations and being used against political enemies of the ruling party. The scope of the research will not allow consideration of these institutions.

⁹⁶ Toyin Falola and Matthew Heaton, *A History of Nigeria* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008). For example, they opine, “While Obasanjo’s government had some successes in at least slowing down economic decline, he did not do so in a way that improved standards of living for the majority of Nigerians. He did not address many societal ills. Obasanjo was also accused of using the anti-corruption agencies he established as a tool of attacking his political opponents. He also had the ambition of elongating his tenure against the constitution.

⁹⁷ Toyin Falola and Matthew Heaton, *A History of Nigeria* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 235.

⁹⁸ Mark Granovetter, “The Social Construction of Corruption,” in *On Capitalism*, ed. V. Nee and R. Swedberg (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 165.

necessarily become corruption: “For students to confer gifts on their teachers in return for the knowledge imparted, it’s in line with the student’s sense of appropriate gift giving.”⁹⁹

From research and data gathered, this action does not in any way imply corruption.

Political scientist Eric Uslaner adds to this discussion when he asserts that in general, when trust is high in any country, corruption is likely to become low.¹⁰⁰

One can easily see why this might be the case. If, to a large extent, bribery involves illegitimate exchange, its prevalence can come to undermine faith in legitimate trade of gifts or favor. This given of gifts make critics to begin to question the motives behind supposedly innocuous offerings and perhaps wonder whether reciprocity is such a great system more broadly.¹⁰¹ Uslaner also affirms that while a country such as China seems to be an exception to the rule in the trust-corruption relationship, in recent times, people have come to distinguish between a gift given that is a virtue in society and a bribe that destroys society.¹⁰² More on the cultural influence on corruption will be discussed when reviewing materials of some key Africanists. The next issue associated with the discussion is the problem of weak institutions.

Weak Institution

In Nigeria, there are many anticorruption agencies like EFCC, ICPC and other institutions in government and out of government. However, these agencies have not

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Uslaner, “Trust and Corruption.”

¹⁰¹ Uslaner, “Trust and Corruption,” 166.

¹⁰² Ibid., 167.

succeeded. The former minister for Finance and former vice president of World Bank, Ngozi Okonjo- Iweala express frustration over this problem

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, states that “corruption has persisted in Nigeria because the country lacks the institutions, systems, and processes to prevent it”. She says that people would be compelled to do the right thing if they knew appropriate systems were in place to monitor and ensure compliance.¹⁰³ These institutions have been undermined. This assertion is justified by Fukuyama when he says, “If a country has legitimate, strong, and effective political institutions, the discovery of diamonds or oil on its territory will not tempt rebel groups to grab them or foreign powers to meddle in their exploitation.”¹⁰⁴ The importance of the institutions cannot be overemphasized.

Reflecting back on how colonialism has interacted with the traditional African culture, thereby creating a problem, the African sociologist Peter Ekeh, in his seminal work, argues that the lack of proper integration between what he called the “two publics” is the culprit.¹⁰⁵ Instead of blaming traditional African society for the modern horrors and chaos that we see today in African countries, Fukuyama proposes that the brutality of the colonial powers when gaining control in Africa is to blame for the seed of brutality.¹⁰⁶ In his book he convincingly asserts that the process of colonizing and the impact of indirect rule without the desire to improve the lives of the average Nigerian is a major contributor

¹⁰³ “Nigeria Lacks Institutions, Systems, to Prevent Corruption-Okonjo-Iweala,” *Premium Times*, Feb. 17, 2015.

¹⁰⁴ Francis Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy*, 2014 ed. (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014), 287.

¹⁰⁵ Peter Ekeh, “Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement,” *Comparative Journal of Society and History* 17, no 1 (1975): 91–112.

¹⁰⁶Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay*, 299–302.

to the attitude of cruelty. For example, Fukuyama opines that on the eve of the Nigerian independence, the literacy rate in English was only 2 percent in the North, and there were only one thousand university-educated Nigerians in the whole country.¹⁰⁷

While some have argued that people could fight corruption if they are properly paid, some scholars have disagreed with this point. Ray Fisman and Miriam Golden declare that an increase in salary does not necessarily reduce corruption. Citing a few studies, they assert, “Officials kept taking bribes at the same rate after receiving their pay increase.”¹⁰⁸ They insist that, rather than curb corruption, these officials who would have kept quiet or hide their lavish lifestyle are now able to express the extravagant lifestyle openly and so are inclined to engage in more corruption.¹⁰⁹

This is why Sunday Akanle and J. O. Adesina propose that we cannot fight corruption properly if we do not have good institutions are the key to finding lasting solutions to the problem of corruption. Rulers, governors, pastors, and directors come and go, but the institution and systems remain. President Obama during his visit to Africa encouraged that Africa does not need to build strong men but to build strong institutions. When this is not available, corruption will continue to thrive.

One major agency that has regularly become the conduit for corrupt as noticed by many scholars, is the police.¹¹⁰ It has consistently ranked as the most corrupt institution

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 324.

¹⁰⁸ Ray Fisman and Miriam A. Golden, *Corruption: What Everyone Needs to Know*, 1st ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 235.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 236.

¹¹⁰ Hope, *Corruption and Governance in Africa*, 139. See also Daniel E. Agbiboa, “‘Policing Is Not Work: It Is Stealing by Force’: Corrupt Policing and Related Abuses in Everyday Nigeria,” *Africa Today* 62, no. 2 (2015): 13.

from the perspective of Nigerians. A very relevant article in this regard is entitled, “Policing Is Not Work: It Is Stealing by Force” by Daniel Agbibo. He assessed policing in Africa from a theoretical and ethnographic dimension. He analyzed corruption from an empirical perspective with an eight-month ethnographic research project on the streets of Lagos. He looked into the life and interaction of police officers and the ordinary Nigerian.

He critically explored the Nigerian police force from what he called “a culture of predation.” From the colonial legacy, the police protected British economic and political interests by brutal subjugation of the indigenous communities.¹¹¹ During the over thirty years of military intervention, the police force became more politicized and marginalized, functioning with reduced funding. There was also the lack of effective checks on the police force.

The result of the above assertions is that the police became a problematic agency. The lower rank officers became the people who were more abusive to people while the senior rank officers from the commanding officers to the top in the force were more involved with massive embezzlement and diversion of funds.¹¹² We hear of different levels of corruption, tribalism, injustice and Nepotism, which became the order of the day in the police force. According to Agbibo, many people in Nigeria see the Nigerian police as a group of people who constantly use their uniform as an instrument of generating additional income and take advantage over the innocent. Oliver De Sardan adds that one serious issue about corruption in Africa is that “the real borderline between

¹¹¹ Agbibo, “Policing Is Not Work” 102.

¹¹² Ibid., 100–8.

what is corrupt and what is not fluctuates, and depends on the context and on the position of the actors involved.”¹¹³ This issue has been one major challenge when dealing with resolving the problems around corruption in Nigeria.

This idea of deciphering between what is corrupt and what is not is critical as the importance of a context-specific understanding of, and approach to, corruption is evident when we consider the disparity that characterizes corrupt policing and related abuses in both developing and developed countries. Actions seen as corrupt in the United States for example, may be viewed as social obligations or simply good manners in other cultures.¹¹⁴

The need to people to fully understand how these actions should be judged could become a challenging issue.

Interestingly while a lot has been written on corruption in recent times in the fields of political science, management, sociology, economics, and development studies, a search on Proquest dissertations and theses, which presents doctoral work done in major universities all over the world, produced a result of 456 theses within the past two years that have some kind of relationship with corruption and religion in Nigeria. Regrettably, only two dissertations had any relationship with religion.

Religion and Corruption

If one reflects on the role of religion in Nigeria and how everything among Africans in general are connected to religion, one will wonder why scholars have not

¹¹³ Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan, “A Moral Economy of Corruption in Africa?” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 37, no. 1 (1999): 34.

¹¹⁴ Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan, “A Moral Economy of Corruption in Africa?” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 37, no. 1 (1999): 34.

done much in reflecting on this important subject. One reason that could be projected is the fact that religion is still a very sensitive discussion in many parts of Nigeria.¹¹⁵

The first of the two dissertations that involved corruption and religion is written by Olusola Karimu and is titled, “University Perception and Attitude of Corruption in Nigeria.” Karimu surveyed a total of 2,125 university students in Nigerian universities and concluded that “leadership position; gender and age were not significantly related to corruption perception.” He, however, showed that “Christian students had lower corruption perception scores than Muslim students”¹¹⁶This result is an interesting one. While this is an attempt to check the perception of students, the instruments used for the survey do not give enough detailed factors that could help a researcher come to the conclusion that Karimu made.

The second work, by Emmanuel Oluyitan, is titled, “Combating Corruption at the Grass-Root Level: The Case of Individual Oath Takers.” The author concludes that among other things, the practice of oath-taking, which is common in many African societies, should be incorporated into the fight against corruption. He opines that the fear of the repercussion of breaking an oath will be a strong force in making government officials live lives of integrity.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ People in Nigeria are always very careful about analyzing religious activities. The last time I responded to a preacher online for preaching heresy, his church fans and members began to attack me, and rain down curse words on me. I applied for a grant towards this research, and I was told the organization could not give me the grant because they do not want to be involved in anything that may lead to the criticism of the church.

¹¹⁶ Karimu Olusola, “University Students’ Perception and Attitudes of Corruption in Nigeria.” (PhD diss., Capella University, 2014).

¹¹⁷ Emmanuel Oluyitan, “Combating Corruption at the Grass-Roots Level: The Case of Individual Oath Takers” (PhD diss., Antioch University, 2015).

One good and exhaustive work written on corruption in Africa is David Mbugua's doctoral dissertation written for the Department of Moral Theology at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa. Mbugua approached his work from the perspective of moral theology and examined how moral theological principles can become a guide in the fight against corruption in Kenya. He argues that the church as light and salt on the earth has the moral duty to respond to societal ills such as corruption. He also advocates that the church should use its social doctrine. Mbugua begins by discussing the concept of corruption and the various challenges in bringing out comprehensive insurance. He then discusses corruption in Kenya and proceeds to do a moral theological analysis of corruption using Scripture from the perspective of Catholic social teaching. He looks at the church's response to corruption in Kenya, by examining the theological principles of ethical responsibility, integrity, and justice.¹¹⁸ Mbugua's work concludes that moral formation, education, social teaching of the church, and African values should be combined to promote virtuous behavior and personal moral integrity as effective Christian moral responses to eliminating corruption.¹¹⁹

While this work is good for discussing what the church could do in Kenya in an attempt to fight corruption, it does not see the church as a contributor to corruption. This position may be very correct within the context of Kenya. However, in Nigeria, the church has been identified as a major contributor to corruption. Hence, there is the need to explore how this is happening and what could be done about it. This work, therefore, attempts to address this issue in subsequent chapters.

¹¹⁸ Mbugua, "Christian Moral Response," 9.

¹¹⁹ Mbugua, "Christian Moral Response," 220.

Two recent books, one by Ray Fisman and Miriam Golden, examine corruption as a major problem of many societies in the twenty-first century. The fact that corruption has been damaging politically, socially, and economically in the various countries that has accepted it.¹²⁰ They also delve into some of the challenges in different cultures all around the world. This book is a good introduction for studying the subject of corruption, but it does not provide any clear-cut solution for a country such as Nigeria. The second book by Kempe R. Hope examines the problem of corruption with a special focus on Swaziland, Kenya, and Nigeria.¹²¹ As a former senior official with the United Nations, he has worked with many officials in these countries in Africa. His treatment of the Nigerian case is very exhaustive and practical. The gap in most of the work appears in the religious dimension. We do have growth in the number churches they are started in Nigeria, with millions attending. At the same time, the rate of corruption has continued to increase.

Corruption and the Church in Nigeria

In recent times, several have written about corruption in Nigeria. Bernardin Mfumbusa, in a recent paper, asserts that although the church in sub-Saharan Africa has grown tremendously, it has not reduced the growth and impact of corruption in the region. Christian “values and moral discourses have become part of African culture,”¹²² but they have not been fully rooted in the psyche of Africans. Corruption is seen both within and outside the church.

¹²⁰ Fisman and Golden, *Corruption*.

¹²¹ Hope, *Corruption and Governance in Africa*.

¹²² Mfumbusa, “Church Is Growing.”

The church in Nigeria has been accused by many of proliferation. While the planting of many churches is seen as a good sign of revival, some have seen this proliferation has a catalyst for corruption. Following is a vivid reaction of some people to this growth:

There is evidence that many are just charlatans looking for means of livelihood. Many are perhaps genuinely religious but it is obvious that our society has not become upright.

Churches are noted to be springing up at an alarming and unprecedented rate in all available spaces, shops, and uncompleted buildings. Worship took place in warehouses, hotels, abandoned cinema building, studios and other public places. It is a common thing to see a minimum of 50 different churches on a street or few kilometres away from each other....

Nigeria is asserted as “a country with the largest number of churches per capital [sic] in the world[“] and as “a fertile soil for the growth of independent churches.”¹²³

While some continue to score the church high, others believe that the springing up of churches without any control and monitoring could eventually create a lot of problems for Nigeria, if it has not already done so. Several factors have contributed to the proliferation of churches like leadership tussle, financial hardship, desire for growth among believers and church denominational challenges. Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka expresses his concern about the number of religious organizations on the Lagos-Ibadan road. He talks about the havoc and disruption as well as destruction these organizations are causing on these major roads.¹²⁴

Corruption has become endemic because the structures within the society encourage it and make it profitable. Mfumbusa certainly does not propose a causal

¹²³ Olufemi Adegbola, “Opinion: Proliferation of Churches,” *The Hope Newspapers*, Mar. 3, 2016, <http://thehopenewspapers.com/2016/03/9331>.

¹²⁴ Adegbola, “Opinion: Proliferation of Churches.”

relationship, at least from an empirical validation. However, he raises a concerning observation: “The fact Christian institutions and personalities have been a dominant aspect of the post-colonial African landscape, notwithstanding, corruption has remained a corrosive influence and the factor in the underdevelopment matrix.”¹²⁵ The leaders and players in the public sector in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa profess to be Christians. This scenario is even more obvious in a country such as Nigeria. Corruption is obviously a major problem confronting sustainable development in Nigeria. Public office holders are frequently reported as embezzling public funds without remorse.

About three years ago, the banking sector was exposed as having various levels of corruption. Unfortunately, many of the CEOs involved in the fraud were close friends of many of the key Pentecostal leaders in the country. In the midst of this crisis, some of the pastors were busy organizing midnight prayer vigils for these bank CEOs. The situation almost became a religious crisis at that time.

Today, observation has shown that despite the rate of religiosity seen in a country such as Nigeria, the religious sphere has not escaped the invasion of corruption. Nigeria is the sixth largest producer of oil, yet the profits from this vast deposit of crude oil has not resulted into a good living experience among the majority of the populace. When reviewing the way corruption has affected the environment, Oluwakayode Faleye observes that the cooperation between the elite and corrupt domestic or foreign

¹²⁵ Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay*.

corporations undermines inspection policies and leads to rigged regimes, making a mockery of the sustainable environmental management.¹²⁶

One book that gives a theological background to some of the corruption and leadership problems in Africa is work by Emmanuel Katongole. He writes that politics, violence, and the challenge that Christianity faces are interconnected.¹²⁷ To him, the post-independence leaders of Africa were just another form of colonial leaders who were brutal to the people of Africa. They continue to emphasize the civilization and humanitarian history, thereby misleading the people. Katongole explains this situation by positing that what is practiced in Africa today is the politics of greed and plunder. He opines that the real story that drives modern Africa is one of personal ambition and greed. He also talks about the fact that Christianity has been very invisible and, therefore, not related or interested in the challenges faced in Africa. These include treating Christianity as a religion whose area of competency is pastoral and spiritual. This attitude has rendered Christianity incapacitated in challenging social, material, and political realities in Africa. He says the real problem is not lack of food, infrastructure, healthcare, and so on; it is the “destruction or downgrading of Africa’s own institution and cultures.”¹²⁸

Katongole examines the various evidence of corruption in Africa, including bribery and leadership manipulation. He says, “Corruption in the form of abuse of power

¹²⁶ Oluwakayode Faleye, “Religious Corruption: A Dilemma of the Nigeria State,” *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* 15, no. 1 (2013): 172.

¹²⁷ Emmanuel Katongole, *The Sacrifice of Africa: A Political Theology for Africa* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010).

¹²⁸ Katangole, *Sacrifice of Africa*, 82.

is a recurrent problem in the African church,¹²⁹ citing Zambia, which was regarded as a Christian nation in the 1990s. He asks the pertinent question of whether corruption would be less of an issue without Christianity in Africa.

A study in 2010 carried out by Heather Marquette of the International development department of the University of Birmingham opines that religion has not been very effective in facing corruption. She shows that many of the most corrupt countries as presented in the Corruption Perception Index of Transparency International are ranked high in terms of religiosity in the Pew Global Attitudes project.¹³⁰ This disparity creates a strong doubt about what most people consider the role of religion in fighting corruption.

In most cases, scholars and everyday people try to avoid comments about corruption, but that seems to be changing as a few scholars have started to challenge religion. One such scholar is Yahya Wijaya who reveals that “in many countries, corruption even infiltrates religious institutions including churches.” Some Christians even consider corruption in churches as normal as seen also in public life. For example, a report of corruption in Indonesia shows that among government institutions, the most corrupt is the ministry of religious affairs.¹³¹ Yahyah argues that though Christianity and Islamic religions both emphasize good doctrines and moral character, the practice of many adherents of both religions seems to be very different from the morality they

¹²⁹ Mfumbusa, “Church Is Growing.”

¹³⁰ Heather Marquette, *Corruption, Religion and Moral Development*, working paper 42-2010 (Birmingham, England: Department of International Development, University of Birmingham, 2010).

¹³¹ Wijaya, “Constructing an Anticorruption Theology,” *EXCHANGE* 43 (2014): 223.

teach.¹³² If religion is to have the needed impact, it has to develop the tools to transform lives. This change does not come without good leadership.

Worthy of mention here is the book by Daniel Smith who did an ethnographic study on how the Nigerian goes through an unending day by day of corruption. He looked at the various sectors and government, and the various types of corruption within the Nigeria society while he briefly mentioned how the church leaders collect bags of money without asking the person how he got the money. Smith's work gives a good description of the phenomenon but did not explain how this has come to be or what the church could do to curb this menace.¹³³ He however narrated how the average Nigerian on the street is not contented about the situation.

A few important works on Africa by some Africanists in the last few years is worthy of mention before this review is concluded. Africanists such as Paul Gifford, Patrick Chabal, and Jean-Pascal Daloz, reflected on the challenges within the culture in relationship to Christianity in Africa. Although they are not all directly reflecting on corruption, they are worthy of review because some of the issues with which they deal link to the concept of corruption.

Gifford looks at the context of African Christianity and observes that after the colonial era, the African society entered into a system of *neo-patrimonialism*.¹³⁴ This system manifested in two ways as noted by Gifford: *corruption* and *clientelism*. He

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Daniel Smith, *A culture of corruption: Everyday Deception and popular discontent* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

¹³⁴ Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role* (London: Hurst, 1998), 4–5.

defines corruption as “the use of public office to achieve private goals.”¹³⁵ Further he raises the point that in a patrimonial system, “the idea of corruption makes no sense because there is no distinction between the public and the private.”¹³⁶ This point is very important when thinking about the issues of corruption in the African context.¹³⁷

A follow-up to this book by Gifford focuses on the various forms of African Christianity as exhibited in Kenya, looking at the Protestant, Catholic, African Independent churches, and Pentecostalism. Gifford asserts that the empirical study, which forms the basis of the book, was informed by what he had observed and experienced.¹³⁸ The third book of Gifford spends time reporting other empirical research in Nigeria, focusing more on Winners Chapel and Mountain of Fire. This book mimics the previous work of Kenya; however, he applies the study and eventually generalizes the findings to Africa.¹³⁹

Gifford basically dismisses the theology of Oyedepo and Olukoya as not being Christian or biblical. He points out what he calls the “enchanted imagination.”¹⁴⁰ He differentiates Catholicism from Pentecostalism as he mentions the two diverse categories of Christianity in Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 5.

¹³⁶ Gifford, *African Christianity*, 5.

¹³⁷ Another important point raised by Gifford in this book is that “in a neo-patrimonial state, support is ensured by the clientelism, a relationship of exchange in which a superior provides security for an inferior, who as a client then provides political support for his patron. This clientelism makes it difficult for Africans to form themselves into a revolutionary movement. See Gifford, *African Christianity*, 5-6

¹³⁸ Paul Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya* (London: Hurst, 2009), 5.

¹³⁹ Paul Gifford, *Christianity, Development and Modernity in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

¹⁴⁰ Gifford, *Christianity, Development*, 48.

In this book Gifford narrates multiple stories from the testimonies of those within Winners Chapel and Mountain of Fire. Concerning Winners Chapel he writes,

I think Oyedepo's Christianity is just dysfunctional, "covenant riches" resulting from tithes and offering cannot be confused with the protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism. Just as importantly, the public effects of Oyedepo's increasing emphasis on "prophetic anointing" are equally dubious. "Big man" syndrome is the curse of Africa.¹⁴¹

One instructive thing about Gifford's work in the three books is that he accepts the fact that African Christianity comes in various shapes. Even different Pentecostal and African Independent churches have various emphases—some on power and others on prosperity and success. Gifford accepts the fact that Pentecostalism in Africa has its root in North America.¹⁴² Most Nigerian scholars do not agree with this thought.¹⁴³

In another work by Patrick Chabal, he departs from the general ideal of blaming the suffering of Africa on colonialism and the West. He argues that political thinking should be understood in the context of the immediacy of everyday life and death.¹⁴⁴ His previous book, which he coauthored with Jean-Pascal Daloz, lists many cultural issues that make it difficult for Africans to get out of poverty. The basic problems include informalization of politics, retraditionalization of society, and productivity of economic failure.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Gifford, *Christianity, Development*, 67.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 136.

¹⁴³ Ogbu Kalu, *Power, Poverty and Prayer: The Power of Poverty and Pluralism in Africa, 1960–1996* (Frankfurt Peter Lang, 2000). Musa Gaiya, and Matthew Ojo are all not in support of this view.

¹⁴⁴ Patrick Chabal, *Africa: The Politics of Suffering and Smiling* (London: Zed Books, 2009).

¹⁴⁵ Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999).

Chabal explores the concept of identity: to whom the people think they belong, what they believe, and how their struggles help them survive and improve their lives. He also talks about how people are impacted by poverty and sickness. These things inform how the African is able to approach suffering with smiling. Chabal advises researchers into looking at identity by observing what matters to people politically within their settings.¹⁴⁶

John Iliffe's work on the African poor explores the historical dimension of poverty from the precolonial times. Although he does not link poverty to corruption, he rejects the idea that the Western power or colonialism is blamed for poverty in Africa. He opines that *clientelism* was a normal context for provision for the poor in many parts of Africa.¹⁴⁷ He further notes that poverty existed in precolonial states of Africa despite the "absence of land shortage or world religion";¹⁴⁸ therefore, one cannot blame poverty in Africa on land shortage.

Chabal cautions against two related mistakes into which many social scientists and Africanists may fall: oversimplification and ethnocentrism. He asserts, "Given the history of colonial encounter between the West and Africa, it is especially difficult for

¹⁴⁶ Chabal, *Africa*, 31.

¹⁴⁷ John Iliffe, *The African Poor: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 64.

¹⁴⁸ Iliffe, *African Poor*, 64; Gregg Okesson also wrote something on power and Africa. See Gregg Okesson, *Re-Imaging Modernity: A Contextual Study of Power and Humanity within the Akamba Christianity in Kenya* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publishing, 2012). He notes that spiritual language occupies a central role in these churches. Images of power appear prominent through singing, healing, or casting out demons and often corresponds with primal African needs for control and protection against ambiguous forces within an integrative cosmos.

Okesson shows in his work on power in the African context that "Western forms of modernity are not determinative for Africans, but where actors (faith communities) retain sufficient space or freedom in which to reimage modernity within their specific contexts and in ways that express the generative nature of the divine power." In this way power is viewed in African differently from how it is viewed in other parts of the world.

Western scholars to escape charges of imperial scholarship.”¹⁴⁹ The various works of Africanists have been very helpful in providing background on the issues of corruption in Nigeria. However, they show insufficient consistency between how they connect cultural attitudes to the discourse on corruption. For example, Gifford mentions how seductive shallow preaching from the churches in Africa is but shows no correlational study to connect the preaching and its effects on the life of Africans.

Finally, most Africanists reviewed here are still approaching their study from the ethic point of view, especially when they talk about the issue of corruption. The emic view helps to complement the ethic if put in dialogue with each other. The voices of those who have become trapped in the culture of corruption need to be heard. This work looks at the way the church has responded to the corruption in Nigeria and listens to the voices of pastors and Christians in order to hear how they interpret their experiences, hence the need for this phenomenological study.

Leadership Challenge

The need for church agency will be viewed within the contexts of leadership and transformation. In order for the church to become what is designed to be, a light and agent of change, leadership becomes an important aspect of its work. The difference between what happens in Nigeria and many other parts of the world is said to be leadership.

¹⁴⁹ Chabal, *Africa*, 182.

One of the great books on organization is the anthology edited by Henry Tosi¹⁵⁰ where different authors write on different theories. Some attention on closed-system and open-system approaches were discussed. Another major book is by Gareth Morgan.¹⁵¹ In this international bestseller, Morgan uses various images to describe how organizations function; they include *as machines* in which the bureaucracy is the main channel of operation.¹⁵²

Next is as an *organism* in which the environmental health of the organization is the key.¹⁵³ The organization as a *brain* is such that the processing of information is very important.¹⁵⁴ Organizations could also be seen as culture, political systems, psychic prison, flux and transformation, and as instrument of domination. He explains the strength and limitations of each of the images. In this book one is able to examine his or her own organization and find out what may be working well and what may not.

A major book in the field of leadership studies that goes through the history of leadership theories is the classic by Bass. He reviews over one hundred years of history and then closes his book with a description of transformational leadership. This book has continued to be read by all students of leadership studies today.¹⁵⁵ Whereas these theories are very insightful in many parts of the world, a major challenge is that they are not

¹⁵⁰ Henry L. Tosi, *Theories of Organization* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2008).

¹⁵¹ Gareth Morgan, *Images of Organization: The Executive Edition*, abr. ed. (San Francisco, CA : Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1998).

¹⁵² Morgan, *Images of Organization*, 17–31.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 35–63.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 69–107.

¹⁵⁵ Bernard M. Bass and Ruth Bass, *The Bass Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research, and Managerial Applications*, 4th ed. (New York: Free Press, 2008).

written with the context of many parts of Africa that have a high level of corruption and cultural barriers that make it difficult for leaders to flourish freely in these organizations. Many definitions have been given for leadership. Robert Greenleaf defines leadership as “the act of showing the way for others, stating the good and thereby giving certainty and purpose to others who may have difficulty in achieving it for themselves.”¹⁵⁶ S. Kpena opines that when we are involved in directing for the purpose of accomplishing an objective, we are leading them.¹⁵⁷ Casey Treat adds that leadership is the “process of guiding, directing, and commanding others to achieve a desired goal or vision”¹⁵⁸ Anthony D’Souza adds the elements of enthusiasm and competence in order for the goal to be achieved.¹⁵⁹ And of course John Maxwell’s popular definition of influence, adding the proverb: “He who thinketh he leadeth and hath no one following him is only taking a walk.”¹⁶⁰ The proverb emphasizes the importance of being able to command the followership of many people as a leader.

Sociologists have argued that every person who is an introvert will have influence on at least, ten thousand people in his lifetime, not to talk about those who are outspoken. This fact means, we all have the ability to influence and be influenced by others in our

¹⁵⁶ Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), 15.

¹⁵⁷ S. Kpena, *How to Be a Wise Leader* (Nairobi, Kenya: Pauline Press, 2000), 13.

¹⁵⁸ Casey Treat, *Church Management* (Washington, DC: Casey Treat Ministry, 1989), 2.

¹⁵⁹ Anthony A. D’Souza, *Leadership: A Trilogy on Leadership and Effective Management* (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1994), 528.

¹⁶⁰ John C. Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You: How to Help Others Reach Their Full Potential* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 1.

environment.¹⁶¹ From the foregoing, one can infer that everyone leads in some areas while in other areas everyone is being led. This position declares, “No one is excluded from being a leader or a follower. Realizing your potential as a leader is your responsibility.”¹⁶² The potential can be appropriately developed for the high performance.

Leadership in biblical terms is expressed through our spiritual gifts.¹⁶³

According to Lee Beach, “Leadership is the art of producing appropriate change in an organization’s external environment, its functions and structure, its culture, and its practices in pursuit of survival and prosperity.”¹⁶⁴ According to this definition, six important responsibilities are required by any leader who wants to bring about change in any organization:

(1) to understand the organization’s internal and external environments, (2) to understand the organization’s culture, (3) to create visions of a desirable future and obtain buy-in, (4) to design a plan that moves the organization toward the envisioned future, (5) to integrate the various units in implementation of the plan and to monitor progress, and (6) to institutionalize achieved changes and make continuous change an integral part of the organization’s culture.¹⁶⁵

John Kotter distinguished between management and leadership; Leadership is very adaptive and looks towards the future.¹⁶⁶ Another team of scholars asserts that

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 1.

¹⁶² Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders*, 1.

¹⁶³ Don Cousins, *Experiencing LeaderShift: Letting Go of Leadership Heresies*, 1st ed. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2008), 32.

¹⁶⁴ Lee Roy Beach, *Leadership and the Art of Change: A Practical Guide to Organizational Transformation* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2006), ix.

¹⁶⁵ Beach, *Leadership and the Art of Change*, ix.

¹⁶⁶ John Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business School, 1996), 25.

“leadership is the process of influencing others towards achieving group goals.”¹⁶⁷ In this case, the group factor is important, since the leader does not work in isolation. George Barna, follows up the statement above by asserting that, leaders think differently and they are to know when to agree and when to disagree with others.¹⁶⁸

Beach insists that good leadership produces transformation,¹⁶⁹ this assertion implies that, one major way to take care issues in a place like Nigeria is through good leadership skills. Henry and Richard Blackaby affirm, “The greatness of an organization will be directly proportional to the greatness of its leaders.”¹⁷⁰ What Nigeria is experiencing could be said to be a reflection of its leadership capacity.

For long time, many believed in leadership by inheritance but after the Renaissance, people began to develop new concepts and now believed that training and development¹⁷¹ As a result emphasis “was shifted to a personality and skills which might be latent, waiting for development.”¹⁷² This shift implies that, if people are properly trained and exposed to the required skills, they could become good leaders.

¹⁶⁷ Richard L. Hughes, Robert C. Ginnett, and Gordon J. Curphy, *Leadership: Enhancing the Lessons of Experience*, 6th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill Irwin, 2009), 704.

¹⁶⁸ George Barna, *Leaders on Leadership: Wisdom, Advice, and Encouragement on the Art of Leading God's People* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1997), 11.

¹⁶⁹ Beach, *Leadership and the Art of Change*, ix.

¹⁷⁰ Henry T. Blackaby and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on to God's Agenda* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 306.

¹⁷¹ Ted W. Engstrom and Norman B. Rohrer, *The Fine Art of Mentoring: Passing on to Others What God Has Given You*, 1st ed. (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1989), 61.

¹⁷² Engstrom and Rohrer, *Fine Art of Mentoring*, 61.

Many people today who occupy positions of authority without proper skills of leadership have turned out to create problems in such organizations.¹⁷³ It follows therefore that leadership is a complex activity which involves the led, the leaders and the particular situation.¹⁷⁴ Obviously, leaders cannot act alone if they want to succeed. They need to learn how to mobilize, motivate, and energize people. Leadership has to affect different areas of people's existence: self-transcendence leadership, supervisory leadership, societal leadership, and strategic leadership.¹⁷⁵ It is good thing to raise healthy themes teams in order for a leader to bring transformation into any system. According to Hickman, there is a need for empowerment of the members of the team in developing a strategic team, which requires authority, resources, information, and accountability. To combat corruption, various organizations should have healthy cultures with good ethical standards. The values, which are the basic concepts and beliefs of the organizations, should be properly ordered.

Organizations need people who will be able to personify the culture's values, who are able to provide the tangible role models for employees to follow.¹⁷⁶ Developing a strong culture for a country, church, or business provides an easier path for coming out of corruption. As Hickman further observes, "A strong culture is a system of informal rules that spells out how people are to behave most of the time. A strong culture enables people

¹⁷³ Barna, *Leaders on Leadership*, 27.

¹⁷⁴ Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy, *Leadership*, 704.

¹⁷⁵ Russell West, "Leadership Emergence" (lecture, Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY, Apr. 3, 2014).

¹⁷⁶ Gill R. Hickman, *Leading Organizations: Perspectives for a New Era*, 2nd ed. (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, 2009), 333.

to feel better about what they do, so they are more likely to work harder.”¹⁷⁷ That type of attitude is key in leading in many parts of Africa.

The leader also has responsibility to initiate change in different areas of the organization. John Kotter gives the following suggestions:

- Establish a sense of urgency,
- Create a sense of urgency,
- Develop a vision and strategy,
- Communicate the change vision,
- Empower broad-based action,
- Generate short-term wins,
- Consolidate gains and produce more change, and
- Anchor new approaches in the culture.¹⁷⁸

Apart from this list, the theory of authentic leadership as proposed by Peter Northouse has some of the following components:

- Self-awareness,
- Internalized moral perspective,
- Balanced processing, and
- Relational transparency.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Kotter, *Leading Change*, 27.

¹⁷⁹ Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 6th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2012), 263–64.

This theory is a fairly recent that attempts to encourage the leader to lead from his inner strength and reflecting it in his leadership capacity. According to Luthans and Avolio, leaders should have certain positive psychological capacities in order to be considered authentic: confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience.¹⁸⁰

Learned Helplessness

When people have failed at tasks and conclude that they are not capable of improving their performance, they develop learned helplessness. A student with learned helplessness will stop practicing and working on academics, being less motivated. Another example is the social life of those who may be lonely or shy. According to this theory, those who show helplessness in their social life may be viewed poorly, which will eventually reinforce their feelings of helplessness. Social scientists and psychologists have continued this attitude has been studied and affected human behavior over the last fifty years or so.

Learned helplessness consists of three essential components: contingency, cognition, and behavior. *Contingency* means “the objective relationship between the person’s action and the outcomes that he then experiences.”¹⁸¹ According to Petersen, Maier, and Seligman, the most important contingency is uncontrollability.¹⁸² *Cognition* refers to the “way a person perceives, explains, and extrapolates the contingency”¹⁸³. The

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 265.

¹⁸¹ Christopher Peterson, Steven Maier, and Martin Seligman, *Learned Helplessness: A Theory for the Age of Personal Control*, Rep. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 8.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

person tries to explain why the thing that happened to him happened. In Nigeria for example, it is not uncommon to hear that “things don’t work normally in Nigeria.” There is the *Nigerian factor* or the belief by some people that God has cursed Nigeria; therefore, there is nothing anyone can do about it. Finally, *behavior*, which is the last component, refers to “observable consequences of (non) contingency and the person’s cognitions about it.”¹⁸⁴

Summary

This chapter has looked at literature in regard to corruption, the church and corruption, leadership challenges, and the concept of learned helplessness. The research examined the realities of these topics in the fieldwork and compared the findings to what the literature says on these issues.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

Theoretical Framework

Corruption in Nigeria has become a struggle in the past years. With all the efforts of the international community and well-meaning Nigerians trying to fight against corruption, the country should have had major success. However, the various efforts have not really yielded any major breakthroughs. Several theories help put this research in perspective.

Elite Theory

The first theory is the *elite theory*, which holds that public policies reflect the values and preferences of the elites in a given society. They are always few in number and do not represent the majority of the people. They also do not have the interest of the masses in mind but their own business, political, and social interests. These elite individuals influence government policies, which then are transmitted down through the bureaucratic process.¹⁸⁵

The elites see the masses as incompetent both politically and economically, so they should not be allowed to decide their own fate. They, therefore, produce a pressure system. Theorists such as Elmer E. Schattschneider state, “That pressure system is biased in favor of the most educated and highest-income members of the society.”¹⁸⁶ Others are

¹⁸⁵ F. E. Iyoha, *Local Government and Rural Development: Bottom-Up Perspective* (Benin City, Nigeria: Sylva, 1999), 44.

¹⁸⁶ David Rothkopf, *Superclass: The Global Power Elite and the World They Are Making* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009), 19.

C. Wright Mills and Franz Leopold Neumann. For example, Mills argues that the elites are ordinary human beings who are more than ordinary in the sense that they occupy positions that empower them to look down on others and make decisions that affect other men and women. They are able to escape responsibilities and accountability: “They are a different class and they portray that in all they do.... Their positions enable them to transcend the ordinary environment of men and women; they are in positions to make decisions having major consequences.”¹⁸⁷ They are certainly a different group and they are aware of their influence.

The elite theory is a subset of conflict theory in sociology that seeks to explain how conflict and competition work in a society. The following are some of the basic premises about which most scholars agree: (1) Only a small number can have authority in any group, (2) those in authority are always opposed to those with no authority, (3) elites share a common culture, and (4) elites are organized and act together in order to defend their positions.

This work will use Robert Michels’s Iron Law of Oligarchy. The model of the elite theory from the German sociologist has its source in Karl Marx and Max Weber. For Michels, in the strictest form of bureaucracy and democracy, those at the top seek to hold on to power and control. They, therefore, begin to create a clique at the top, and then their goals become the national goals as they continue to attempt to limit the possibility of those who may come into power, mainly their family, friends, and associates (see Figure

¹⁸⁷ C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3–4.

3.1).¹⁸⁸ The questions being asked through this theory are as follows: Is there an elite leadership group in the church controlling and influencing corruption in Nigeria, especially in the church? If there is an elite group, how do they operate and what effect do they have in the fight against corruption?

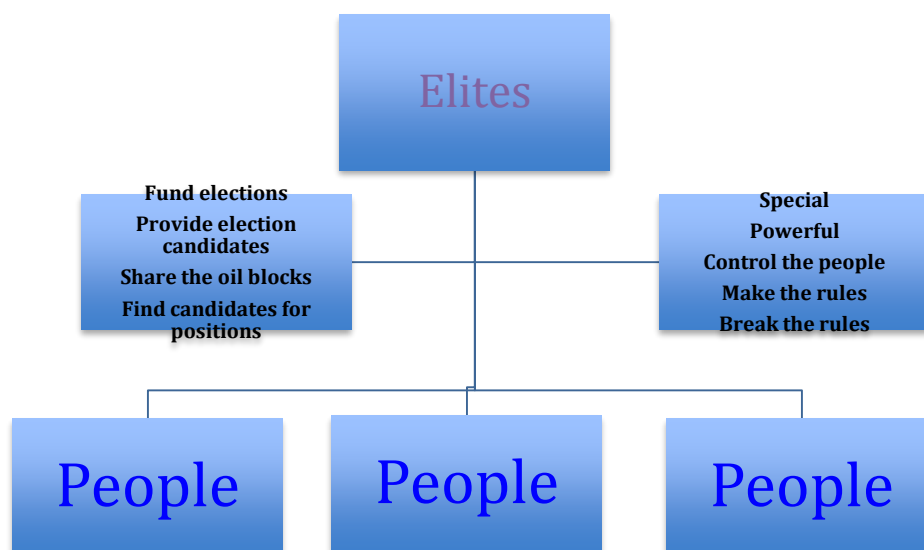


Figure 3.1. A diagram of the elite theory.

Using this theory, I want to see to what extent corruption as a phenomenon moves from the elite to the masses. If the elite are influencing the flourishing of corruption, then a venture to begin anticorruption with the elites in these organizations may be the best plan of action.

¹⁸⁸ Robert Michels and Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*, trans. Eden Paul and Cedar Paul (New York: Free Press, 1966). See also Rothkopf, *Superclass*; Mills, *Power Elite*.

Authentic Leadership Theory

Authentic leadership is one of the newest theories in leadership research. It is still in its formative phase of development. This work sought to see if some of the leadership practices that will come out of the fieldwork will provide a strong articulation for the theory within the context of Nigerian society. Whereas authors such as Bass, Burns, and Howell and Avolio have mentioned it previously, it was not fully explored. Authentic leadership includes different approaches, such as the practical approach and the theoretical approach, with various definitions. For example, the approach of Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, and Peterson suggests that “authentic leadership is comprised of four components: self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency.”¹⁸⁹ These components work together in creating a leader who is real, authentic and impactful in his leadership, bringing desirable changes in any organization.

¹⁸⁹ Fred Walumbwa et al., “Authentic Leadership: Development and Validation of a Theory-Based Measure.” *Journal of Management* 34, no. 1 (2008): 89–126.



Figure 3.2. Authentic leadership.

The basic belief of this theory in any of its form is that leadership action is more effective when generated from the innermost character of the leader. Leadership in this context is not about just the actions but about the congruence between the basic values and attitude of the leader. Luther and Avolio define authentic leadership as “a process that combines the positive psychological abilities of leaders with functioning organization.”¹⁹⁰ For the study, I used the theory propounded by Wamlumbwa et al. I examined the basic components in the light of the practices that were suggested by the respondents for the purpose of leading an organization from corruption to fidelity. The first is self-awareness in which the leader is actively conscious of his or her individual

¹⁹⁰ F. Luthans and B. J. Avolio, “Authentic Leadership: A Positive Developmental Approach,” in *Positive Organizational Scholarship*, ed. K. S. Cameron, J. E. Dutton, and R. E. Quinn (San Francisco: Barrett-Koehler, 2003), 241–61.

characteristics, including value, strength, weaknesses motivations, and other traits, and how those traits impact other people. The next is relational transparency, which means that the leader is engaged in openly seeking suggestions and ideas on how to improve. The next attribute is internalized morality perspective, which implies that the leader is making decisions based on high ethical standards rather than just doing things under pressure. The final one is balanced processing, which conveys the idea of how a leader demonstrates that he or she impartially analyzes important data before making decisions.¹⁹¹

Analytic Framework

The first thing is to find out the perception of people about the presence of corruption in Nigeria and how a Nigerian defines corruption. Next is to find out the effects of corruption in the church Nigeria. The study will attempt to discover if the Nigerian people agree with the general assessment as given by Transparency International and other similar organizations dealing with corruption.

The elite theory explains the fact that elites in different spheres of Nigerian society will normally have a strong influence over policies and directions in those spheres. The task will be to know how many people believe this fact in Nigeria. Elites are in the public, private, and religious spheres. They are actually in all the churches as the political elites or religious elites. Both political and religious elites do have everything in common. One wonders to the extent they have the same influence in the church as their counterparts in the general society. The various responses will be used to determine how

¹⁹¹ Walumbwa et al., "Authentic Leadership."

power, position, popularity, and relationship affect the shape of corruption in the church in Nigeria.

The authentic leadership theory will be used to analyze the collation of responses from the various interviews during the fieldwork. This analysis will create an opportunity to put the theory side-by side what the respondents are saying are important to create a church and society of high fidelity.

Table 3.1. Authentic Leadership Analytic Model

Practices	Self-Awareness	Internalized Moral Perspective	Balanced Processing	Relational Transparency
Rank 1				
Rank 2				
Rank 3				
Rank 4				
Rank 5				

The fourth research question deals with identifying the practices for leaders of organizations that have moved from corruption to fidelity. The responses were analyzed to see how these practices align with the core components of the authentic leadership theory and, if they do not, to discover which theory or theories will be more applicable. These results may lead to the confirmation of some theories or the propounding of a new theory developed out of the research.

Methodology

This research was an exploratory phenomenological study that sought to explain why things are the way they presently are in a particular context. I began with secondary sources: books, journals, newspapers, magazines, and reliable online sources. I used

materials from Asbury Theological Seminary, the University of Kentucky, the University of Ibadan, and Harvard University libraries.

I used qualitative research methodology. John Creswell asserts that qualitative research is inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social problem.¹⁹² This method allowed for the in-depth study of how Nigerians, in general, and Christians, in particular, perceive corruption, theologize about it, and find evidence of the church as a change agent on the issue of corruption in Nigerian society. A qualitative method is also appropriate because the information was gathered in a natural setting, allowing for emerging patterns and themes to evolve based on the research questions. The participants contributed to the meaning of the problem.¹⁹³ Linda Bloomberg and Marie Volpe note, “It is suited to promoting a deep understanding of a social setting or activity as viewed from the perspective of the research participants.”¹⁹⁴ This method is in line with what Clifford Geertz calls the “thick description.”¹⁹⁵ The deep understanding of perception, behavior, and interpretation could only be properly analyzed when the respondents are allowed to express their thoughts and intentions about a particular course of action. More importantly, qualitative research allows for collecting data from different

¹⁹² John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2006), 37.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁹⁴ Linda Bloomberg and Marie Volpe, *Completing Your Qualitative Dissertation: A Road Map From Beginning to End*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2015), 27.

¹⁹⁵ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

groups of people, as seen in Nigeria, and generalizing the findings to a larger population. In qualitative research, the researcher is opened to different ways of seeing the world.¹⁹⁶

Qualitative phenomenology is in two major designs: empirical and hermeneutical phenomenology. In hermeneutical, the research is oriented “towards lived experience and interpreting the texts of life.”¹⁹⁷ The researchers work will then continue as he reflects on the various themes and how they relate to the experiences of the people she is studying. Karen O’Reilly asserts that the qualitative is very flexible and fluid but does not mean there is no research design.¹⁹⁸

Conversely, empirical phenomenology “focuses less on the interpretations of the research and more on description of the experience of the participants.”¹⁹⁹ It also includes the concept of “bracketing” in which the researcher sets aside his or her experience as much as possible in order to gain a fresh perspective towards the phenomenon being examined.²⁰⁰

Summarily this type of phenomenological research “consist[s] of identifying a phenomenon to study, bracketing out one’s experiences, [and] collecting data from several persons who have experienced the phenomenon.”²⁰¹ The researcher’s work is to reduce the various statements to quotes and general themes, which will then be analyzed

¹⁹⁶ Bloomberg and Volpe, *Completing Your Qualitative Dissertation*, 172.

¹⁹⁷ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 59.

¹⁹⁸ Karen O’Reilly, *Ethnographic Methods* (NewYork, NY: Routledge, 2005), 30

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 60.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 78.

in the context of available theories to come out with the overall essence of the lived experience.²⁰²

A semi-structured interview protocol was used in conducting the interview, which was very appropriate for use with Nigerians because many times people in such oral cultures find speaking out easier than being asked to fill out a questionnaire or any other writing exercise. They are also skeptical about focus groups because of the fear of others reporting them to the appropriate authorities on a sensitive issue such as corruption.

While it is good to interview people in the various churches that have been identified, it is not possible to interview all the people. I therefore made the important decision to pick informants who would give answers that are in congruence with the real situation of things. McCurdy, Spardley, and Shandy introduce four attributes of a good informant for a particular culture: knowing the culture well, currently living in the culture; being socially verbal, and being nearby and having time for the research.²⁰³

Population

The population for this study included Christians in Nigeria who are either pastors in churches or laypeople involved in the church and who are also actively involved in the private or public spheres in Nigeria. Nigeria's population is 45 percent Christian out of the 180 million people.²⁰⁴ There are also thirty-six states in Nigeria and over four

²⁰² Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 60.

²⁰³ David W. McCurdy, James P. Spardley, and Dianna J. Shandy, *The Cultural Experience: Ethnography in Complex Society*, 2nd ed. (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 2005).

²⁰⁴ The Christian/Muslim population ration is a very political one. Books such as Johnstone, Mandryk, and Johnstone, *Operation World*, which puts the figure at 51.26% for Christians and 45% for Muslims. The CIA Factbook website numbers Christins as low as 40%, while Muslims are 50% and indigenous religion is 10%. See Central Intelligence Agency, "People and Society."

hundred major church denominations. Most of the denominations are registered under the religious body that is recognized by the government—the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN).

The Christian Association of Nigeria is divided into five major groups. The first is the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), which is basically the Roman Catholic Church and its various subgroups. The second, the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN), is made up of Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, , Presbyterian, Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim, Church of the Lord Aladura, and other orthodox churches.²⁰⁵ The third group is the Christian Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (CPFN)/Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria. This group consists of Pentecostal churches such as the Assemblies of God and others.

The fourth group is the Organization of African Instituted Churches founded by Nigerians in Nigeria. These churches have their origins in Nigeria. One such is the Christ Apostolic Church.²⁰⁶ The fifth group, ECWA/TEKAN, are churches with their roots in Northern Nigeria. Some are from the former Sudan Interior Mission. They include COCIN, NKST, and Lutheran Church.

²⁰⁵ <http://www.canng.org>.

²⁰⁶ One problem with this group and the categorization generally is the fact that some churches group themselves into two groups. One such example is the Foursquare Church that is grouped with the Anglicans and Methodist in the second group still fit themselves as a major leading church in the Pentecostal fellowship of Nigeria. Another problem with this grouping is that many members of these churches do not even know the group they belong to. Furthermore, some of the churches like the Aladura that have always been grouped as African Initiated churches in the literature on African Christianity are categorized here with the Anglican and Methodist churches. The Baptist church considers itself fundamentally different from the Anglicans and Methodists theologically, yet they are placed in the same group. As a Nigerian clergyman, I am only discovering some of the classifications on the official website of the Christian Association of Nigeria, which is different from what we see in reality in many cases.

However, for the purpose of this study, I have categorized into four different group based on their theological identity and pragmatic operations. This categorization is the natural way most Nigerian Christians group the churches. The old traditional mission churches, which include the Roman Catholic Church and Anglican, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches. The next group is the Mission Evangelical Churches, including Evangelical Churches Winning All (ECWA), Baptist Church, and TEKAN churches such as the Lutheran Church and the Church of Christ in Nigeria (the nations). The third group is Pentecostal churches comprised of the Foursquare, Assemblies of God, and the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG). The final group in my categorization is the African Independent churches such as Cherubim and Seraphim Church (C&S), the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), and the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC).²⁰⁷

In order to the get views and inputs from the various traditions, I selected a church denomination through the simple purposeful sampling method. The church chosen from each block was used to represent the different blocks. The Roman Catholic churches represented the first group. The church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion, represented the second block. One reason for this is because the Anglican Church's oldest denomination in Nigeria, established in 1867, presently has over 18 million registered members. They also have a very wide coverage in Nigeria.

²⁰⁷ Most Neo-Pentecostal churches, called New Generation churches, are a combination of Pentecostalism and other elements of African Independent churches' peculiarities of prayers and use of physical contacts. At other times, they emphasize using the flashy informational technology of the twenty-first century.

The ECWA represents the old Evangelical Mission based churches. The ECWA is also very widespread in Nigeria. The Redeemed Christian church represents the Pentecostal churches since it is one of the largest and fastest growing churches in Nigeria.

The Celestial Church of God represents the African Initiated churches, since they seem to have more Afro-centric views on many issues in the Bible and in the contemporary times in Nigeria. With these criteria, the nonprobability snowball sampling was done:

- a. The person to be interviewed should be a member of any of the five churches mentioned.
- b. The person to be interviewed should be a clergy member or a layperson who is involved in the church at a leadership level. The person to be interviewed should be able to communicate in English.
- c. The person to be interviewed should be willing to undertake the interview without the influence of his or her pastor or boss.

I also attempted to include a clergy minimum of 64 percent of my total interview participants and 36 percent laity. Among the pastors, I interviewed church leaders especially and then people who are members of these churches and who lead organizations within and outside the church.

Sampling Technique

I used a semi- structured interview protocol with a nonprobability snowball sampling data collection strategy. The snowball sampling method is a nonprobability sample that selects a small group and then the group members identify additional members to be included in the sample. The snowball strategy is very appropriate when

the researcher is dealing with a group that is difficult to access due to stigma or some sensitivity of the subject to be discussed. They will, therefore, naturally not be willing to respond to the researcher. Those who take drugs, are HIV positive, or engage in extramarital sex will fall into this category. Some cultures will be reluctant to talk about the information within their groups' inner circle because of the fear of being discriminated against or because of political persecution.²⁰⁸ The snowball sampling method finds an individual (the source/seed) who has the desired characteristics and then utilizes the person as a point of contact in "using his social networks to recruit similar participants in a multistage process."²⁰⁹ After the initial respondent recruits others, the others also recruit others. Researching a subject such as corruption in organizations, especially in the church, is a very sensitive issue that people within the Nigerian culture will find difficult to discuss openly because of the "sacralization" of religious leaders and institutions in the African sociocultural milieu.²¹⁰ Hence, a snowball strategy was appropriate.

I interviewed a total of 125 participants with a minimum of 30 participants from each of the Christian denominations and 35 participants from the Anglican Church as the largest and oldest church in Nigeria. In order to select the core initial group, I chose five

²⁰⁸ See also W. C. Tung, D. H. Nguyen, and D. N. Tran, "Applying the Transtheoretical Model to Cervical Cancer Screening in Vietnamese–American Women," *Int. Nurs Rev.* 55 (2008): 73–80.

²⁰⁹ Georgia R Sadler; Hau-Chen Lee; Rod Seung-Hwan Lim; Judith Fullerton, "Recruitment of Hard-to-Reach Population Subgroups via Adaptations of the Snowball Sampling Strategy," *Nursing Health Science* 12 (2010): 370.

²¹⁰ This word has been coined by Paul Gifford, when he writes about how Africans tend to elevate preachers and church leaders within their society, so much so, that it is seen as sacrilegious to confront or question a religious leader on any issue. Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998).

respondents from each church who occupied some official roles in the church and who were able to compare the church with Nigerian society. They were also people who have been members of the church denomination for at least ten years because in order to compare what the church in Nigeria is with what it was in the past, the study had to include people who have been Christians for over a decade. I decided on placing two decades as the limit because in the past twenty years, Nigeria has transitioned from a military dictatorship to a democracy. It is therefore important to have people who have been in the church for at least twenty years to compare the church health and corruption issues in particular.

Administration of Instrument

In order to get the necessary information to the questions on the interview protocol, I traveled to different parts of Nigeria for the period of four months. I had already made a pre-research trip to Nigeria between September and November 2015 to enable me to have contact with some people in the various denominations and to create a cultural acceptability for my return visit for the field research. The need for connecting with such gatekeepers cannot be overemphasized. According to M. K. Saunders, it does not matter how many friends the researchers know who will be help with the research, without the permission of the person who controls access to the research group, carrying out any meaningful research work would be difficult.²¹¹ I hired three research assistants who were willing to travel with me for the space of three months to the different parts of

²¹¹ M. N. K. Saunders, "Gatekeeper," in *Sage Dictionary of Social Research Methods*, 2006, <http://srmo.sagepub.com/view/the-sage-dictionary-of-social-research-methods/n85.xml>.

Nigeria. They were selected from different parts of the country in order to bridge some cultural gaps and create a peaceful environment during the interview sessions.

The research assistants underwent some training in how to administer interviews to different respondents. Although, the three of them possess graduate degrees in the humanities and theology, I gave them recent materials to read on interviews and conducted discussions with them two months before I traveled to Nigeria. They also went through the official training on how to protect human subjects in research, an online training requirement by the IRB for researchers in the United States and they received certification before we began the research. Between May 9 and July 28, 2015, I traveled to Nigeria. I was in Lagos, Abeokuta, Abuja, Jos, Port Harcourt, and Birnin-Kebbi. I visited Nigeria again in 2016 between August 9 and December 7, 2016. I made a final visit between March 2 and 31, 2017. I finally followed up with some telephone interviews for three more respondents in order to complete some additional questions in April 2017.

I visited people in churches, offices, coffee shops, and some homes, interviewing people on a one-on-one basis in secrecy, and after I explained to them that I needed to record the interview in order to help me capture their points. All participants, apart from two who did not want to be recorded because of their job security concerns, agreed to the recording. I used my iPhone 6 and my Sony 1C recorder for back up, which I eventually uploaded into my MacBook Pro laptop. The Sony IC recorder, with the flash drive containing the digital copy of the data, was kept securely locked in my briefcase and will eventually be reformatted once the two years of the defense of my dissertation is over, according to the IRB rules.

The research assistants were involved in helping with the transcription of the manuscripts before I returned to the United States to begin the necessary analysis. I then listened to all the recordings in order to ascertain the veracity and consistency of the transcriptions with the recordings.

Data Analysis

I used the HyperResearch computer software, which I purchased for my qualitative data analysis. I recorded all the responses from the interviews and then coded them to find themes and patterns from the comments in order to find answers to the four research questions for this study. I looked at these themes in line with the various theories they may suggest. I explored the present condition of things and perception about corruption in Nigeria and the underlying theologizing of this perception and behavior. I also collated the best practices of leaders through the interview in order to bring out the most mentioned ones for discussion.

The various interviews were transcribed word-for-word. Afterward, each interview was analyzed and then the various concepts, terms, and themes that recurred throughout provided the narratives for the Chapter 5 discussion.

Chapter 4

The Church in Nigeria and Corruption—Data Presentation

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter presents the results of the study, representing the research questions. The demographical information was first presented and then the data was organized under themes, and subthemes. These themes were used for proper organization of the results. They include: corruption; corruption and the church; church agency and change; and lastly, leadership challenges.

Research Results

The research selected participants through a non-probability sampling called the snowball sampling. The snowball sampling method as explained in chapter three, allows the researcher to seek for initial respondents who fit the specific target population. They are then asked to recommend others in their contact and relationship with the same characteristics as themselves. Between May 9 and July 28, 2015, I traveled to Nigeria. I was in Lagos, Abeokuta, Abuja, Jos, Port Harcourt, and Birinin-Kebbi. I visited Nigeria again in 2016 between August 9 and December 7, 2016. I made a final visit between March 2 and 31, 2017. I finally followed up with some telephone interviews for three more respondents in order to complete some additional questions in April 2017.

All interviews were recorded with the permission of the respondents, transcribed word-for-word and then coded with HyperResearch software. Codes were developed based on the responses and refined based on the emerging themes that showed up.

The research questions were very helpful in the design and construction of the semi-structured Interview protocols. However, in analyzing the data, I paid attention to

the various themes that emerged and also arranged subthemes under the large major themes. In reporting, I included both descriptive summaries of participant responses and I also made direct quotations from the transcribed interviews. Where the sentence begins with quotation marks or in block formats, the quotations are the interviewees' words, verbatim as recorded and transcribed.

The quotations reflect the language, diction and exact vocabulary of the respondents with as little editing as possible in order to have a smooth language and grammatical construction. Many times, most spoken communication, and answers do not adhere to strict grammatical construction especially in a place like Nigeria where English language could be influenced by the mother tongue and other educational factors. The participants were from different parts of Nigeria, and some of the demographic information will be presented in Tables 4.1–4.4.

As seen in Table 4.1, one hundred of the participants were male, while twenty-five were female. The men comprised 80 percent of the participant group and women 25 percent.

Table 4.1. Participant Gender

Gender	N	%
Male	100	80
Female	25	20
Total	125	100

As seen in Table 4.2, the Anglican Church, as the largest of the churches by membership in Nigeria, had the highest respondents at thirty-five, making 28 percent of the entire group. The RCCG, ECWA, and the CCC each had thirty respondents, which together totaled 24 percent of the study.

Table 4.2. Church Affiliation of Participants

Church Affiliation	N	%
Anglican Church	35	28
RCCG	30	24
ECWA	30	24
CCC	30	24
Total	125	100

According to Table 4.3, twenty of the participants do not have a college degree, while thirty-five participants have a bachelor's degree. Furthermore, thirty of the participants have master's degrees while another 40 of the participants have a doctorate degree.

Table 4.3. Educational Qualification of Participants

Education	N	%
No college degree	20	16
Bachelor's degree	35	28
Master's degree	30	24
Doctorate degree	40	32
Total	125	100

Table 4.4 presents the ministerial status of the participants. All the participants are active members of their churches; however, eighty of the participants (64 percent) are pastors while forty-five respondents (36 percent) are laity. This demographical information is important as the reports of the research are presented.

Table 4.4. Ministerial Status of Participants

Status	N	%
Pastors	80	64
Laypeople	45	36
Total	125	100

In the following sections, I provide the findings I collected over a period of two years within the various church traditions and different parts of Nigerian society. These pieces of information are grouped under some overriding themes. In some cases, subthemes helped in the explanations of the dominant themes.

Four research questions guided this research. Various interview questions were then used to illicit information to provide data for the research questions. These questions are itemized with their corresponding interview questions in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5. Interview Questions Corresponding to Research Questions

Research Questions	Interview Questions
5. How do Christian perceptions of corruption in Nigerian society compare to evidence-gathering corruption indexes?	How will you define corruption? Will you agree with the general assertion that Nigeria is a very corrupt country? (Q1)
	How can you describe the phenomenon of corruption in Nigeria in comparison to the international agencies such as Transparency International and World Bank? (Q2)
	Will you say that there is evidence of corrupt practices in the church in Nigeria, and how may that be different from the larger society? (Q3)
	In what ways do you think the leadership in your place of work encourages or discourages corruption? (Q7)

Table 4.5. Interview Questions Corresponding to Research Questions, cont.

Research Questions	Interview Questions
6. How does Christian discourse on corruption reflect local theologizing in Nigerian society?	<p>How has the church responded theologically to issues of corruption in Nigeria? (Q8)</p> <p>Can you describe how you or someone you know has dealt with the challenge of corruption in real-life situations? Do you think the Bible gives a guide on how to handle corruption in Nigeria today? (Q9)</p>
7. Can evidence be found that demonstrates church-initiated change agency in Nigerian society? If not, why?	<p>What are some of the causes of corruption in the Nigerian church? (Q4)</p> <p>Can you recall a time in the history of the Nigerian church, and in your church specifically, when the ethical standard of Christians was better than today? Why do you think things are like this today? (Q5)</p> <p>Do you think that a person who has greater authority over you or relationship to you could have great influence in affecting your decision negatively? Could you give an example of such an encounter and what you think a person could do? (Q6)</p> <p>Can you describe how you or someone you know has dealt with the challenge of corruption in a real-life situation? Do you think the Bible gives guidance on how to handle corruption in Nigeria today? (Q9)</p>
8. If change agency could be found, what leadership practices account for measurable changes in organizations progressing from corruption to fidelity?	<p>In what ways do you think the church can influence Nigerian society in the fight against corruption? Do you have examples to show how Christians in Nigeria are successfully fighting the corruption war in moving from corruption to fidelity? (Q10)</p> <p>In what ways will you say that the church has prepared you adequately in your fight against corruption in your work place? (Q 11)</p> <p>What are some of the leadership practices that can account for measurable changes in the organizations that are progressing from corruption to fidelity? (Q12)</p>

Corruption Perception and Definition

The first theme reflected in the data is corruption. I examined what respondents had to say about their own definition and perception around corruption in the nation of Nigeria. I will finally collate what the people interviewed say about corruption.

Corruption Defined

Gaining insight into how people define concepts is critical because different people may have various ways they understand words and different phenomena. I asked the respondents how they define corruption, and their definitions fall into four basic categories: moral perversion, public office for personal gain, broken rules, and religious dimensions (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6. Categorization for the Definition of Corruption

Categories	n	%
Moral definition	25	20.0
Public office for private gain	71	56.8
Breaking of rule	20	16.0
Religious/Spiritual dimension	9	7.2
Total	125	100.0

Moral Perversion

Twenty-five of the respondents gave definition from a moral perspective. They saw it as something related to the morality of people and how people interpret behavior by using principles. IP004 stated, “Corruption is or can be seen as a moral perversion. A situation whereby things of the church are diverted for personal use is corruption. A situation where by government property is diverted for personal benefit that’s equally

corruption.”²¹² IP007 added, “Corruption is when value is reduced, people taking bribes and when something is decaying.”²¹³ IP011, IP040, and IP091 noted that any acts against accepted norms and belief should be seen as corruption.²¹⁴ IP015 buttressed this fact when he affirmed, “Corruption is a crafty way of getting something you don’t deserve. [An] example is when I don’t deserve to get a job because I am not qualified for it and I make payment to ensure that I get the job. Also, when you don’t deserve some favors but you bribe someone to get it.”²¹⁵ Some say moral pervasion is the inability to discipline one’s appetite, thereby doing what is not right.

Public Office for Personal Gain

Seeking public office for personal gain is the most prominent among the various definitions given by the respondents. Seventy-one of the respondents used this definition.²¹⁶ IP004 said, “A situation whereby things of the church are diverted for personal use is corruption. A situation whereby government property is diverted for personal benefit is equally corruption.”²¹⁷ IP013 added to this idea: “Corruption is using

²¹² Interview with IP004, May 10, 2015.

²¹³ Interview with IP007, May 11, 2015.

²¹⁴ Interview with IP011, May 11, 2015; Interview with IP040, August 10, 2015; Interview with IP091, December 3, 2017.

²¹⁵ Interview with IP015, May 12, 2015.

²¹⁶ Some respondents gave more than one definition. These definitions covered different paradigms

²¹⁷ Interview with IP004, May 10, 2015.

your office to subdue a process in order to benefit you.”²¹⁸ This idea presupposes that the person is in a position of authority.

Table 4.7. Responses of Whether People Will Hire Family over Others

Response	N	%
Yes	90	72
No	35	28
Total	125	100

A major issue raised in the Nigerian context was the cultural challenge of helping those who are related to you. Table 4.8 shows ninety respondents (72 percent) who gave their answers in the affirmative. A total of thirty-five respondents (28 percent) answered negatively.

Table 4.8. Decision Influence Based on Family’s/Superior’s Pressure to Be Corrupt

Responses	N	%
Yes	80	64
No	25	20
Not sure	20	16
Total	125	100

Another question that confirms this was to find out if they have had experiences where they were influenced to do something corrupt based on the influence of a family member or a superior. Eighty respondents (64 percent) said yes while twenty-five persons (20 percent) said no. Another twenty participants, representing 16 percent, said they are not sure.

²¹⁸ Interview with IP013, May 12 2015.

To this point IP015, IP018, and IP040 gave an interesting response, that if there is a need for a job and they have relatives who qualify for the job, they will certainly employ those related to them before others. They also insist that this approach is not a corrupt one. IP015 adds, “it is a scriptural decision to provide for those that I know before looking at people I do not know.”²¹⁹ Similar stories of how family members and friends are employed before outsiders were reported by IP045, IP076, IP080, and IP089.²²⁰ Almost all the people interviewed did not agree that one has to avoid family members and friends in order to avoid corruption. They mostly accepted the fact that when they are between family members and others, they should consider family and people living around then because when they retire, they will return to those they helped.

Broken Rules (Legal Dimension)

When known laws are broken, the result is corruption. IP007, IP021, IP066, and IP084 are of the following view.²²¹ IP007 said, “When you don’t report in the office at the time you should, that is corrupt.”²²² This argument continues as IP015 said, “Corruption is any painful act; it’s also lawlessness.”²²³ This thought is followed by the assertion of IP014: “Corruption is an aspect of doing things that are negative or against

²¹⁹ Interview with IP015, May 12, 2015.

²²⁰ Interview with IP045, August 10, 2016; Interview with IP076, November 30, 2016; Interview with IP080, November 30, 2016; Interview with IP089, December 1, 2016.

²²¹ Interview with IP007, May 10, 2015; Interview with IP021, May 15 2015; Interview with IP066, September 20, 2016; Interview with IP084, December 1, 2016.

²²² Interview with IP007, May 11, 2015.

²²³ Interview with IP015, May 12, 2015.

the law like crime.”²²⁴ The breaking of known laws has become a normal activity in Nigerian society. Twenty respondents named this category in one way or another. They believe that if people obey simple rules, the Nigerian society would have been delivered from most of its problems. IP053, IP067, IP090, and IP101 discussed the fact that the same problem of breaking rules is seen in the church.²²⁵ One might think that pastors and leaders in the church would be good examples for Nigerian society. However, these leaders are seen breaking the laws of the country and their own church rules. They keep rewriting the rules, depending on the people with whom they are dealing. If they are dealing with rich people or influential politicians, then they change the rule. IP101 talked about how the church changed the rule about marrying pregnant people when the cousin of a rich politician in their local government area was involved.²²⁶

Religious Dimensions

Nine of the respondents defined corruption from the perspective of religion or spirituality. For example, IP009 said that corruption is unfaithfulness.²²⁷ While some see it as unfaithfulness to God, others see it as unfaithfulness to themselves and/or others. According to IP072, “corruption is as a result of evil conscience,” that a person can be corrupt even if he or she is not in public office.²²⁸ IP045 corroborated this fact when he

²²⁴ Interview with IP014, May 12, 2015.

²²⁵ Interview with IP053, August 12, 2016; Interview with IP067, September 20, 2016; Interview with IP090, March 3, 2017; Interview with IP101, May 2, 2017.

²²⁶ Interview with IP001, May 9, 2015.

²²⁷ Interview with IP009, May 11, 2015

²²⁸ Interview with IP072, November 29, 2016.

pointed out that “selfishness is a product of an evil heart.”²²⁹ The actions of people in Nigeria are seen as a result of evil inclinations. The question that comes to mind is whether people in other parts of the world do not have the same evil inclinations. IP009 mentioned a priest in Abuja who collected money for church projects and embezzled the money, and when complaint was made, nothing happened. IP009 concluded that the major problem with corruption is that their hearts have not yet been regenerated and they have not had genuine encounters with the Lord Jesus Christ.²³⁰

Christian Perception on Corruption

A few of the respondents interviewed are of the view that Nigeria cannot be called one of the most corrupt countries in the world. According to IP062, Nigeria is no more corrupt than any other country. Countries such as Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States are the most corrupt, but because they are “marking their own scripts, it is easy to give themselves pass marks.”²³¹ IP057 supported this position: “You call a dog a bad name so you could hang it.”²³² Others, such as IP085, IP098, and IP115, also supported this view by insisting that Western countries are always interested in running down the largest country in Africa as a way of practicing psychological slavery. Westerners do not talk about their own corruption, but they are aware of the massive

²²⁹ Interview with IP045, August 10, 2016

²³⁰ Interview with IP009, May 11, 2015

²³¹ Interview with IP062, September 1, 2016.

²³² Interview with IP057, August 12, 2016.

corruption in other countries.²³³ IP85 asserted, “How do you explain the pharmaceutical companies sending drugs that cannot be used in their countries. They come and test drugs, thereby killing our own people. If this act is not the height of corruption, what is it?”²³⁴ Some also raised the issue of all the stolen monies in Nigeria kept in banks in Western countries. They are the ones enabling all these corrupt leaders. If someone buys a stolen good, he or she is an accomplice in the theft.

IP115, who is a Christian politician and pastor, views the international agencies on corruption as people who want to run down Nigeria and continue to “create brain drain and psychological belief that Nigeria is not a good place to have a future, and then gifted and promising people will begin to leave the country.”²³⁵ To these Nigerians, saying that Nigeria is one of the most corrupt countries in the world is a grand way to discredit the country.

Evidence of Corruption in Nigeria

When I asked respondents if they believe the evidence that Nigeria is corrupt, eighty respondents (64 percent) said yes; twenty respondents (16 percent) said it depends on how one looks at it. A total of twenty-five (20 percent) said Nigeria is not alone.

Table 4.9. Evidence of Corruption in Nigeria

Reponses	n	%
Yes	80	64
It depends	20	16

²³³ Interview with IP085, December 1, 2016; Interview with IP096, December 3, 2016; Interview with IP115, March 4, 2017.

²³⁴ Interview with IP085, March 2, 2017.

²³⁵ Interview with IP015, May 12, 2015.

Nigeria, not alone	25	20
Total	124	100

When the participants were asked for evidence that Nigeria is corrupt, 80 persons (64 percent) said that they believe that Nigeria is corrupt with enough evidence. Another 20 persons (16 percent) said it depends on how one look at the situation, and one cannot really conclude that Nigeria is corrupt. Finally, 25 persons (20 percent) say that Nigeria is not alone and should, therefore, not be condemned as a corrupt country.

For example, IP013 asserted,

Remember there was a time that Nigeria was the number one, and after that, the then Nigeria president came with corruption bully and EFCC.... Nigeria is not the most corrupt country, but our attitude and the way we have been represented in the world circle makes them feel we are the most corrupt country. There are other countries that are more corrupt than Nigeria, but our representatives and officials act with corruption.²³⁶

IP008 opined that no one could be sure of the objectivity of the instrument for the measurement of corruption, so he does not agree with international agencies.²³⁷ IP007 said, “Even the West that is calling us corrupt are the people importing corruption. I know that the UK may call us corrupt; they are the people who have been encouraging corruption, immorality. The World Bank is entitled to their own opinion.”²³⁸

According to IP038, “corruption has eaten up into the Nigerian nation.... How can a senator in Nigeria be earning more than the American President? The international

²³⁶ Interview with IP013, May 12, 2015.

²³⁷ Interview with IP008, May 11, 2015.

²³⁸ Interview with IP007, May 11, 2015.

agencies see an average Nigerian as a corrupt person.”²³⁹ Many of the respondents who refuse to agree that Nigeria is corrupt are well educated. Of the 20 percent, most have doctorate degrees. They have raised the fact that corruption is defined from the perspective of the Western person who has no commitment to his extended family and who does not face the challenges of social capital and good will, which are very important in the African context.

Corruption and the Church

Corruption and the church as a theme has to do with the perception, evidence, and causes. The questions around this theme helped elicit information about how Christians in Nigeria believe the church is interacting with corruption in Nigeria (see Table 4.10).

Table 4.10. Corruption and the Church in Nigeria

Response	n	%
Yes	100	80
No	25	20
Total	125	100

I asked the respondents if they think that the Nigerian church is corrupt. Out of the 125 respondents, 100 of them (80 percent) found evidence that the Nigerian church is as corrupt as the Nigerian society itself. Since the church is made up of people from the society, they believe that as the country goes so goes the church. According to IP075, “it is unfortunate that the church that is supposed to be the light of the world has also continued to live in darkness.”²⁴⁰ Many of those interviewed expressed this concern.

²³⁹ Interview with IP038, August 9, 2016.

²⁴⁰ Interview with IP075, November 30, 2016.

However, the remaining twenty-five respondents (20 percent) observed that the church in Nigeria is not corrupt. IP083 said, “The church is being wrongly judged by the enemies of the church who are trying to undermine the revival that is happening in the Nigerian church.”²⁴¹ IP061, IP092, and IP105 believed that although a few people give the church a bad name, the church in Nigeria is not corrupt.²⁴² They asserted that the church in Nigeria is far healthier than many places in the Western part of the world: “There are many elements of corruption in many churches all over the world, go and read of the Jim Bakker, Jimmy Swaggart, Oral Roberts, Bob Tilton and Kenneth Copeland.”²⁴³ The church in Nigeria having some corrupt individuals among the preachers does not mean that the church itself is corrupt.

Those who believe that the church in Nigeria is corrupt strongly affirmed that, without argument, there are strong signs of corruption in the churches. Even children in the church will agree that the Nigerian church is corrupt.

Some factors have caused corruption in the Nigerian church. IP008 believed that “it starts from the messages being preached in the church. Rather than the word of God, they preach money.”²⁴⁴ Many of the preachers in Nigeria are not called by God but have been called by their stomachs. The rate of unemployment in Nigeria is very high, and some churches just appoint people to be made pastors without serious theological training. The rate of poverty has encouraged corruption. Many people are looking for

²⁴¹ Interview with IP083, March 1, 2017.

²⁴² Interview with IP061, September 1, 2016; Interview with IP092, December 3, 2016; Interview with IP105, December 7, 2016.

²⁴³ Interview with IP061, September 1, 2016.

²⁴⁴ Interview with IP008, May 11, 2015.

survival in the midst of the economic hardship. The church does not provide proper compensation for pastors and church workers; therefore, one cannot expect such pastors to support a family without looking for ways to gain extra cash.

IP018, IP020, and IP021 talked about the different churches. A graduate pastor in RCCG is paid less than 100,000 naira monthly (approximately \$277 US) in one of the largest churches in Nigeria. From this amount, he must pay for his children's school fees in a country where public schools are not reliable for educating children.²⁴⁵ IP007 said the average pastor in most Pentecostal churches cannot use his or her salary to feed his or her family, so he has to look for others ways to survive with his family.²⁴⁶ Meanwhile most of them see their senior pastor with various exotic cars. Many of the senior pastors do not take economy class when they travel abroad, while others fly in private jets. "This is one of the major reasons for the proliferation of churches in Nigeria and many African countries"²⁴⁷ But as noted by IP038 who is from an African Independent church feels that, that was not the way the church started. IP038 affirmed,

In my church up till the 1980s, we have people who were anointed by God; the likes of prophet Moses Orimolade, Bilewu Oshoffa, Ayo Babalola and many more were people who were called by God, some resigned from the businesses to concentrated on what God called them for. They dedicated their lives to preaching the Gospel, and reached out to Millions of lives.²⁴⁸

The earlier leaders of the African independent churches were men who made sacrifice for the ministry into which they believed God called them. They were fully dedicated.

²⁴⁵ Interview with IP018, May 15, 2015; Interview with IP020, May 15, 2015; Interview with IP021, May 15, 2015.

²⁴⁶ Interview with IP007, May 11, 2015.

²⁴⁷ Interview with IP020, May 15, 2015.

²⁴⁸ Interview with IP038, August 9, 2016.

One of the most important piece of information that this research was interested in eliciting was to find out if the people see any evidence that the Nigerian Church is corrupt.

Proliferation of Churches

The first evidence raised by those interviewed is the rate at which churches are founded in Nigeria. On a single street are many churches; the culprits for this behavior are basically the Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal churches. They do not own most of the buildings they use. While interviewing IP086, he pointed at the building across the road and said,

The tall building opposite us is a three-story building. It contains at least two churches on each floor, making it a total of six churches. They are all Pentecostal churches. The pastors are not trained, and they all claim to have the call from God. But if you get in there and see the way they fight to get membership and disturb one another with sound system, it is crazy.²⁴⁹

To this point IP040 submitted that one should not forget that Nigeria has the highest number of churches per person in the world. Many new churches are being registered every day: “They even use uncompleted buildings, and abandon building. Restaurants and Cinema hall had been converted to churches.”²⁵⁰ In the big cities such as Lagos, Port Harcourt, Jos, or Benin-City, flats are converted in churches, causing difficulty for people who seek housing because of the exorbitant rent due to high demands by churches.

²⁴⁹ Interview with IP086, December 1, 2016.

²⁵⁰ Interview with IP030, July 28, 2015.

While some have mentioned that the proliferation of churches is a way of helping to reach many people with the gospel, others see a connection between corruption and the proliferation of churches in Nigeria²⁵¹

Financial Misappropriation

Financial misappropriation is another major evidence of corruption in the Nigerian church. IP042, IP080, IP103, and IP121 all spoke about the practice in their churches where pastors connive with treasurers of the churches to change figures.²⁵² IP018 said, “In my previous church, we do not count the offerings and tithes. We just wrap it up, put in a bag and send it to the pastor’s wife who takes the money to the car. They then go home to count. Whatever they say it is, that’s what it is.”²⁵³ Many of the Pentecostal and new churches in Nigeria do not give an account to anyone or any board.

IP020 says that in the old churches, such as Anglican and Baptist, although the pastor does not keep the money, in some cases, they look for their loyalists to keep the money, and they are able to access it anytime. “The day I raised a point about an account of the money I helped to raise for a project, the pastor said that it was not my business.

²⁵¹ Some papers and articles have been written that link proliferation of churches with corruption in Nigeria. Recently the Archbishop Emeritus of the Catholic Church in Lagos said that the many churches by the Redeemed Christian church of God in Nigeria are nothing but business centers where people are being robbed of their money. See Chijioke Jannah, “Cardinal Okojie Blasts Adebayo over Decision to Increase RCCG Branches,” October 8, 2017, <http://dailypost.ng/2017/10/08/cardinal-okojie-blasts-adeboye-decision-increase-rccg-branches/>.

²⁵² Interview with IP042, August 10, 2016; Interview with IP080, November 30, 2016; Interview with IP103, December 7, 2016; Interview with IP121, March 12, 2017.

²⁵³ Interview with IP018, May 15, 2015.

He threatened to curse me if I asked again.”²⁵⁴ This means the pastor does want any question asked.

IP061 says in his own church, some of the pastors were charging fees to visit members. Those who are not able to pay the money do not get the pastor to visit them even when they are very sick. The pastor claimed that part of the money would be used to buy olive oil for anointing and fuel for the car.²⁵⁵ IP073 adds that he attends a church where the pastor only visits the rich members. He takes the list of the financial supporters from the financial secretary and then visits the top givers: “When I confronted him, he said Jesus only visited those who could afford to entertain him like tax collectors and rich people of his time, including Joseph of Arimathea who eventually buried him in a new grave.”²⁵⁶ By this response, the pastor shuts down any questions that may arise.

IP051, a bishop with the Anglican Church, said he had priests who charged unapproved fees: “They charged for baptism, confirmation, churching, dedication, and some even asked those to be married to sew cloths for the priest and his wife. This has never been approved, yet they do this.”²⁵⁷ Many of those interviewed mentioned the issue of financial exploitation of the members by the pastors and the church authorities. IP042 said, “If the leaders of the church did not approve the exploitation, why is it that the erring pastors are never punished in most of the cases?”²⁵⁸ This question is relevant

²⁵⁴ Interview with IP020, May 15, 2015.

²⁵⁵ Interview with IP061, September 1, 2016.

²⁵⁶ Interview with IP073, November 30, 2016.

²⁵⁷ Interview with IP051, August 12, 2016.

²⁵⁸ Interview with IP042, August 10, 2016.

because the church has no records of church discipline of pastors in recent times as it used to have in Nigerian Christianity some decades ago. The following case studies provide some explanation.

Various respondents told the case of one church member who stole money to give to the lord. According to IP023, IP025, IP058, and IP101 a man was stealing from the Sheraton Hotel in Lagos. He was the accountant of the hotel, and after a few years, he had stolen over 42 million naira from the hotel. After he was arrested, he was asked what he did with the money, but to the shock of everyone, he said he gave the money to the Lord through a special offering and bought a big generator for the church. The senior pastor of the church was contacted and they inform him that the money given to the church project was stolen, but the pastor refused to refund the money, claiming it had been given to the Lord. In this case, the refusal of the pastor to rebuke the member publicly and refund the money encouraged other members to steal as long as they bring part of the stolen money to the Lord through the church.²⁵⁹

The story of misappropriation of mission fund is told, According to IP059, he knows of a diocese with links to the UK and USA. The bishop went there to raise money but began to spend it for his own personal project. One person took money from the United Kingdom with the promise that he was going to build a school with it. He spent all the money on himself, and when the people in the United Kingdom asked for a report, he went and took a picture of someone else's school. When people visited unannounced

²⁵⁹ Interview with IP023, May 15, 2015; Interview with IP025, May 15, 2015; Interview with IP058, September 1, 2016; Interview with IP101, December 7, 2016. See also the news report N Nicholas, "Sinners in Christ Embassy," April 10, 2010, <http://www.nairaland.com/428448/sinners-christ-embassy#5868748>.

from the UK, they discovered that he had not done anything about building any schools.²⁶⁰ I heard numerous other similar stories from various respondents.

Sexual Corruption

Today the record shows that some Nigerian pastors have used their pastoral offices to influence people into affairs and sexual perversion. IP022, IP040, and IP068 mentioned the story of one Pentecostal pastor who has affairs. A recent example is Apostle Suleiman who allegedly had a sexual encounter with a Canada-based prostitute and used his influence to call on the police in Nigeria to put her in jail when she challenged him about his attempt to poison her. This case took months before it died down. Nobody in the church body has asked Suleiman to come and explain himself to exonerate himself. He continued to preach and respond to others by just speaking from the pulpit, intimidating anyone who raised any questions or reservations.²⁶¹

Another popular preacher who writes a morning devotional in Nigeria was heard on tape speaking in a very sexually explicit way, but his church has continued to hold. He is still a pastor, and not a single Christian group or church leader has called this man into question.²⁶² An experience is retold by one of the respondents; IP125 said,

I served under a Venerable in the Anglican Church. He took over from a very dynamic Venerable who was a child of God and brought revival to the church and the whole Archdeacon. When this new Venerable came, he became very interested in money; he claimed the bishop sent him to our church so he could enjoy himself. He will forge receipts in order to get additional money from the

²⁶⁰ Interview with IP059, September 1, 2016.

²⁶¹ This case has never fully been resolved. Interview with IP022, May 15, 2015; Interview with IP040, August 10, 2016; Interview with IP068, November 29, 2016.

²⁶² Interview with IP119, March 12, 2017; See also The Cable Lifestyle, “Author of ‘Daily Manna’ Bishop Chris Kwakpovwe, in ‘Sex Tape Scandal,’” May 30, 2017, <https://lifestyle.thecable.ng/sex-chris-kwakpovwe-our-daily-manna/>.

church treasury. He was always asking me for a relationship, even though he knew I was a married woman. He told me it does not matter and that many people are doing it. I told him I was not interested and that I am a child of God. He will touch me and use dirty words around me each time I come to his office. At some point, he will ask me to go make a reservation for him at the hotel and he will invite different girls from the University campus to spend weekends with him while he will claim to be having meetings and night prayers. He even went further to get secondary school girls to come to the hotel with him. He slept with a young girl who is a daughter of one of our leaders in the church. When report was made to the Bishop's office, nothing was done. He later boasted that has extra powers that he received from India. After much complaints and nothing was done, I was advised by people to resign from my work as a secretary before he sent people to come and eliminate me. I am free from him today, but I still wonder how the church allows this kind of a leader to remain in the church.

The respondent told this story with tears in her eyes and with a strong voice of disdain and disappointment

Different Areas of Corruption in the Church

Corruption has appeared in different areas within the church in Nigeria. Through the interviews, many were highlighted and the most prominent are itemized and discussed.

Ordination

Ordination is an important process in many religious organizations because it is the process by which people are selected and assigned ministerial roles in their churches. Respondents IP002, IP045, IP062, and IP083 specifically mentioned the fact that although the church claims to ordain people into the ministry based on clear and specific criteria set up by God in Scripture and in their churches. However, “we have seen evidence that both in assessment of the workers and ordination, it is all about how influential or the rich the person is. When they check the tithe you are paying, they will begin to calculate that if you are given a church, you will use your personal money to

fund the church and you are able to bring your friends also.”²⁶³ This strategy is said to have worked over time in some churches in Nigeria.

IP045 said that senior pastors in the Pentecostal church must go through three important assessments. First is how long the person has been a member with good character. Second is the tithes of the member:

Are you faithful in your tithes by the records of the church? Whatever a person believes in, he or she will actually put money into it. There is a popular saying that says that you put your money where your mouth is. One of the ways the church knows faithfulness is through the payment of your tithes. We want to be sure this person if he becomes a pastor, he will not begin to take church money for his own personal use. The third way we assess a person is his ability to lead and grow people, therefore if a person is able to increase the number of workers under him, or grow a house fellowship in his care, we know he will be able to grow a church. In many cases, people are given when they are able to raise the church towards sustainable growth, then we then recommend them for ordination.²⁶⁴

IP065 vehemently protested that one of the greatest ways of seeing corruption in ordination in the Pentecostal church is the fact that the consideration is money: “Money, money, money, that is the bottom line. If this is not the case, why is it that we don’t have the young people who are gifted but not rich as the pastor in our parishes. If they consider biblical criteria, how do you find these people with questionable characters as ordained pastors in our church?”²⁶⁵ An important question that some of the respondents asked.

Ten respondents among those interviewed mentioned the story of a senior pastor in the denomination who had stolen government money as a government worker in the electoral office. He was also married to two wives. These were not discovered until he

²⁶³ Interview with IP119, March 4, 2017.

²⁶⁴ Interview with IP045, August 10, 2016.

²⁶⁵ Interview with IP065, September 20, 2016.

was involved in a plane crash. When the time came to pay the accident insurance benefits, the two wives surfaced.²⁶⁶

IP052, IP067, and IP070 who came from the evangelical arm of the church in Nigeria said they are facing the same problem as most other denominations. “While we have great seminaries, and do not ordain people until they have completed a minimum of a four-year theological training, there are many people who just came into the ministry because they can’t find a job, the church is a place where people know they will be able to feed themselves.”²⁶⁷ IP070 opined. IP067 in speaking about the abuse in the ordination process asserted, “Many in our denomination just get ordained because they know someone in the church hierarchy or they have an uncle as a district chairman. In some cases, we have politicians recommending some of their relations who may not be good in politics, military, and other profession.”²⁶⁸ Respondents feel this is increasing in Nigeria.

IP004, IP016, and P101, who are from African Independent churches, say in their case people do not need to go to any seminary to be ordained in their church. In most cases, people go and study under a prophet, and from there, they go and start their own churches. They could be recognized by the parent church or could organize their own ordination. Sometimes they have prophets receiving power from the magicians and

²⁶⁶ Interview with IP032, July 28, 2016; Interview with IP067, September 20, 2016; Interview with IP089, December 1, 2016. Interview with IP062, September 1, 2016; Interview with IP068, November 29, 2016; Interview with IP101, December 7, 2016; Interview with IP109, December 7, 2016.

²⁶⁷ Interview with IP070, November 29, 2016.

²⁶⁸ Interview with IP067, September 20, 2016.

demonic powers so that they can predict the future and perform some miracles and healings on people.²⁶⁹

IP039 affirms that the Holy Spirit moved the earlier prophets such as Moses Orimolade, Ayo Babalola and Oshoffa, and they answered the calling of God. “They dedicated their lives to the lord and left whatever they were doing. They did not expect to be financially richer” In those days when people decide to become full time preachers, their families knew that they would never be able to of help to them financially like other people who are working in other jobs.

From interviewing the respondents from the different church tradition, there seem not to be a difference. The recruiting of ministers for ministry have largely affected by corruption.

Transfer of Minister

Corruption is seen in the church in the way ministers are transferred. For example, IP026, IP042, and IP051 who are from the Pentecostal block say that in their denomination, pastors are moved from church to church after a few years based on performance, experience, and the leading of the Holy Spirit. However, from their own experience, many people get good offers of churches by giving gifts to their senior pastors and by having someone speak on their behalf in the national office. In some cases, they know of friends who had to pay bribes.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁹ Interview with IP081, December 1, 2016; Interview with IP042, August 10, 2016; Interview with IP051, August 12, 2016.

²⁷⁰ Interview with IP026, July 26, 2015; Interview with IP042, August 10, 2016; Interview with IP051, August 12, 2016.

IP081, IP083, IP090, and IP105, who are from old established churches, mentioned that the transfer of priests is basically based on the good will of the bishop: “We have seen people who had to send their wives to go and ‘entertain’ the bishop, buy something special for some senior priests so that they can get a posting to a large church.”²⁷¹ In addition, IP025 relayed the story that his bishop once told him that he was not loyal, so he would be moved from his present church. By the time he went to enquire from other priests what that meant and why they have stayed longer in their big churches, he was told that “loyalty in this case is about sending special gifts during birthdays, Christmas, and Easter.”²⁷² He was then informed that his predecessor gave about 500,000 naira monthly to the bishop’s office for the bishop’s personal upkeep, even though there is no physical development in the church.

IP026 furthermore asked why many of the family members or children of leaders in her church have never been posted to the northeastern part of Nigeria where there is terrorism, but others are sent there because they do not have connection to the influential people in the church.²⁷³ IP031 says that in his denomination, a committee makes transfers in a confidential manner. However, this participant is disappointed when he saw that the information has been allowed to filter into the ears of some people: “Someone actually brought me a big chicken and some money, asking me to give it to my wife to cook it for me for the Christmas period, and then he brought a complaint that the transfer he had was

²⁷¹ Interview with IP105, December 7, 2016. This is a soft way of talking about pastors who had sexual relationships with the bishop as a means of finding favor.

²⁷² Interview with IP025, July 26, 2015.

²⁷³ Interview with IP026, July 26, 2015.

not favorable to him.”²⁷⁴ IP097 followed up: “In our denomination, once the general convention is over, you will see people going up and down to retain their positions in their churches or look for better churches that will give more opportunities.”²⁷⁵ Not only do the full-time pastors follow this practice, but part-time pastors also fight to get into big churches with large income as IP012 reflected.²⁷⁶

A few others think that the problem is not with the leaders but with the people who come with bad intentions. IP082 said, “Our culture does not allow us to reject gifts when they are given to you. It is your duty to not allow the gift to blind your eyes.”²⁷⁷ IP107 affirmed this position when he said that the leader is supposed to be willing to receive whatever he is given as a gift: “We are not God, and we do not know the intentions of people. We are just trusting that people are doing things out of love and we are not to keep suspecting people here and there.”²⁷⁸ These stories provide the evidence of corruption in the Nigerian church. The question becomes what causes the corruption.

Causes of Corruption in the Nigerian Church

A question was asked of the participants that encouraged them to express the causes of corruption from their own experience. Various issues were raised, and they were ranked based on the frequency at which they occurred. Table 4.11 represents the ranking.

²⁷⁴ Interview with IP031, July 28, 2015.

²⁷⁵ Interview with IP097, December 3, 2016.

²⁷⁶ Interview with IP012, May 12, 2015

²⁷⁷ Interview with IP082, December 1, 2016.

²⁷⁸ Interview with IP107, December 7, 2016.

Table 4.11. Ranking of the Causes of Corruption

Causes of Corruption	N	Rank
Compelling/manipulating people to make exorbitant pledges	90	1
Worship of money	82	2
Decline in discipleship	75	3
Unhealthy competition	52	4
Poverty rate in Nigeria	50	5
Poor pastor's welfare	50	5
Lack of transparency and accountability.	49	7
Lack of clear call	30	8

I will briefly discuss the highest in rank to the least in rank below. The first cause of corruption in the church is the *issue of compelling or manipulating people in their churches to make pledges or donations* that their financial capacity could not meet. IP005 affirmed that corruption is encouraged in the church when pastors use testimonies, Scriptures, or the leading of the Holy Spirit to coerce people into making huge donations that they are not able to redeem: “We have these church leaders living big while there are people hungry in the church. Others take money in order to pray for them.”²⁷⁹ IP0032 said, “how do we justify a situation where a church takes money from the people who could not have normally afforded that type of money?”²⁸⁰ Whereas, others raised the objection that the church does not force anyone to give money²⁸¹, but as some of the

²⁷⁹ Interview with IP005, May 10, 2015.

²⁸⁰ Interview with IP0032, July 28, 2015

²⁸¹ Interview with IP073, November 30, 2016; Interview with IP012, May 12, 2015.

respondents noted, spiritual manipulation is a powerful force.²⁸²

The second is the *worship of money*. The discussion on money has taken preeminence over God in many churches in Nigeria. IP028, IP049, and IP083 talk about the fact that taking the offering in their churches consumes more than half of the total time of the worship service. IP049 said he had to give seven different offerings at different times within the service he attended the previous Sunday. Many others take these donations from the various groups within the church, so the more the ministry groups to which they belong, the more money they are asked to pay. Meanwhile, when a member brings one billion naira to the church and the pastor does not even ask where he gets the money. This type of attitude encourages people to take money that does not belong to them²⁸³

The next point is the *decline in discipleship*. Many respondents talked about the neglect of biblical discipleship while different pastors build their own empires. IP062 said that pastors do not even preach about some portions of the Bible. The emphasis has been placed more on motivational speaking and self-centered prayer meetings.²⁸⁴ This decline in discipleship was also discussed by IP071, IP075, IP082, IP090, IP095, IP099, IP101 and IP0107.²⁸⁵

²⁸² Interview with IP032, July 28, 2016; Interview with IP067, September, 20, 2016; Interview with IP089, December 1, 2016.

²⁸³ Interview with IP028, July 28, 2015; Interview with IP049, August 12, 2016; Interview with IP083, December 1, 2016.

²⁸⁴ Interview with IP062, September 1, 2016.

²⁸⁵ Interview with IP071, November 29, 2016; Interview with IP075, November 30, 2016; Interview with IP082, December 1, 2016; Interview with IP090, December 1, 2016; Interview with IP095, December 3, 2016; Interview with IP099, December 3, 2016; Interview with IP101, December 7, 2016 and IP0107, December 7, 2016.

Another point is the *unhealthy competition* among pastors, churches, and members. IP067, IP091, IP120 speak about the constant competition among church leaders about the type of cars they drive and those who use first class on every flight and those who are able to buy private jets. They also have members who have been made to think that the material blessings they have are the yardstick for measuring the favor of God and their spiritual lives. Many pastors have continued to fan this flame of vanity among their members. *Poverty in the country* is another challenge. IP034 said that when they have a country where more than 70 percent of the population is not gainfully employed, the desire to survive becomes a major reason why people do different kinds of thing. IP015, IP019, IP020, and IP052 mentioned that they know individuals who decided to start churches after they could not get job or after they were sacked from their Jobs.²⁸⁶ IP062 said, “I actually encouraged my cousin to see if he could a job with one of these new generation churches as a n office worker, but eventually they made him a pastor. He initially refused, but he knew he could not get another job”²⁸⁷ IP064, IP068, IP073, IP075 and IP082 attest to the fact that they know pastors who mentioned that they could never get any other job in Nigerian economy apart from the church business they are into.²⁸⁸

Another cause of corruption is poor pastor’s welfare IP080 says some people still believe that the pastor’s reward is in heaven.²⁸⁹ IP093, IP098 and IP103 affirm that

²⁸⁶ Interview with IP015, May 12, 2015; Interview IP019, May 15, 2015; Interview with IP020, May 15, 2015; Interview with IP052, August 12, 2016.

²⁸⁷ Interview with IP062, September 1, 2016.

²⁸⁸ Interview with IP082, December 1, 2016.

²⁸⁹ Interview with IP080, November 30, 2016.

pastors' welfare across all denominations in Nigeria is very poor²⁹⁰ IP122 adds that, only the very senior leaders in this denomination who have lots of additional allowance that are comfortable. Most others have look for additional funds and this is why many of the pastors want to get to the top of leadership in church, not for services but for comfort²⁹¹

The last is the *lack of transparency and accountability*. When people are not open to any type of transparency and accountability, they create room for corruption. IP033 talked about many independent churches in Nigeria where the pastor's wife is the treasurer and their son is the church secretary with other family members as officers of the church. IP060 spoke of a lady pastor who was appointed to a public office to train youth. She misused the money budgeted for her program, and when she was challenged about it, she responded that she is accountable only to God and not to anybody else.²⁹² This attitude of lack of accountability has eaten deep to many pastors, so much so that sometimes they exhibit this attitude in all areas of their lives. IP066 submitted, "If God says in the Bible that he accounts for the hair of our head, I don't understand why many of our religious leaders get offended once you ask them to give account of money given to them."²⁹³ This lack of accountability and transparency has affected so many people in the church in Nigeria today.

²⁹⁰ Interview with IP093, December 3, 2016; Interview with IP098, December 3, 2016; Interview with IP103, December 7, 2016.

²⁹¹ Interviewed with IP122, March 4, 2017.

²⁹² Interview with IP007, May 10, 2015.

²⁹³ Interview with IP060, September 1, 2016.

Church Agency and Change

The need to find out what the church has been doing in the Nigerian society to create change is important to this study. In achieving this goal, I asked people if they remember any time in the history of the Nigerian church when the church was very effective in dealing with corruption and was ethically sound. I also asked them what they think the church is presently doing in handling corruption from a biblical-theological perspective and how the church had prepared them for public life.

Historical Perspective

One question raised with most of the respondents was to find out if the condition of the church in Nigeria has always been the way it is today. Most people believe that things were far better in the past. According to IP015, at one time in Nigeria people needed a person to trust and put in charge of important tasks, and they looked for Christians. He further told stories of when employers would call on churches and Christian fellowship groups on campus to recommend people for them for different job placements before things started getting bad. Family members wanted to make sure the source of their children's wealth was legitimate/honorable before they would support their children and associate with them. The African traditional belief that everybody was his or her brother's keeper was a major attitude in community relationship. Ethics and morality was key.²⁹⁴

²⁹⁴ Interview with IP015, May 12, 2015.

In the view of IP041, the decadence started as early as the late 1970s, but it did not materialize until the late 80s and early 1990s.²⁹⁵ IP062, IP068, IP101, and IP109 all believe that the advent of the faith movement from the United States created a shift in the culture of the church. Gradually leaders and members began to focus on wealth, fortunes, and extravagant living.²⁹⁶ Another perspective was presented by respondent IP050, who has been a Christian for over four decades. He had been in business until he became a clergyman ten years ago. He believes corruption became more prominent during the oil boom and FESTAC, when the government said that Nigeria's problem was not money but how to spend it. The Jumbo Udoji award gave people huge salaries for civil servants. It created a sense of affluence that could not be sustained. It produced a group of super rich people who cannot maintain their new status. Of course, they had to start cutting corners. In Nigeria, people do not lobby as seen in other places, but here in Nigeria, personal gratification has individuals looking for ways to edge out others so that their interests are gratified. In the church today, people are cajoled to part with their money. Fake prophecies instill fear in the people. The word of God is frequently misrepresented. Pastors take things that belong to the commonwealth.²⁹⁷

According to IP007, from a historical perspective, the invasion of the books and tapes of faith preachers such as Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, Robert Schuller, John Avazini, Morris Cerrullo, Robert Tilton, and others began to shape the mind-set of university students and young Christians who eventually became the leaders of the

²⁹⁵ Interview with IP041, August 10, 2016.

²⁹⁶ Interview with IP062, September 1, 2016; Interview with IP068, November 29, 2016; Interview with IP101, December 7, 2016; Interview with IP109, December 7, 2016.

²⁹⁷ Interview with IP050, August 12, 2016.

church.²⁹⁸ Apart from this external factor was the growing influence of indigenous preachers such as the Archbishop Benson Idahosa who was the self-acclaimed apostle of the prosperity gospel. He was the one that started inviting various American faith preachers to Nigeria. He started using police escorts and flamboyant dress and exotic cars.²⁹⁹

As noted by IP101, Benson Idahosa said at one time, “Anointing without money is annoyance. He also said people should dress the way they will like to be addressed.”³⁰⁰ Following him are Bishop David Oyedepo, Dr. Tunde Joda, pop-singer-turned-preacher Rev. Chris Okotie, and recently Rev. Chris Oyakilome. Of course, today in Nigeria, hundreds of preachers have their versions of prosperity theology.³⁰¹

Theology and Biblical Response

The way people respond to corruption in Nigeria is imbedded in their theology. Hence, to grasp how people think theologically and biblically on the subject of corruption is important, especially when dealing with a country that is known as a nation with various religions.

When respondents were asked how Christian discourse on corruption reflects local theologizing in Nigeria society, their responses were very fascinating. They were asked if the Bible provides a guide on how to handle corruption, almost all of the people

²⁹⁸ Interview with IP007, May 10, 2015

²⁹⁹ Interview with IP007, May 10, 2015

³⁰⁰ Interview with IP101, December 7, 2016.

³⁰¹ Interview with IP041, August 10, 2016. These responses seem to be very simplistic, but this is the way some of those interviewed perceived the historical antecedents to the issue of prosperity theology and corruption in Nigeria.

interviewed believed that the Bible provides a guide. Some of those that were interviewed think that Christians always look to the Scriptures in answering so many challenges they face. They see the role of the children of Israel to the neighboring nations in the Old Testament as guide³⁰². IP108 said, “The Bible is the book of ethics. The Decalogue and most of the Leviticus were provided by God as a way of helping God’s people navigate their lives as a holy people.”³⁰³ However, two of the 125 participants think that the Bible does not directly have a guide, but one can deduce that God expects people to live ethical rules, so people should obey the law of their lands and organizations.

Fifty participants representing 40 percent out of the 125 participants believe that the church in Nigeria preaches against corruption from the pulpit and other various church activities. The remaining seventy-five participants (60 percent) think that the church does not do anything to preach against corruption. Even among those who believe that the church is preaching against corruption, 120 of the 125 participants in this research assert that the church has encouraged corruption in Nigerian society. They narrated stories from their own experiences. The response of the church has reflected some theological issues. The church’s theology is revealed in various ways.

Music

Music has been seen by many as an instrument for shaping cultures and creating the story of a people. Respondents mentioned songs such as, “Wonder so so, wonder so

³⁰²Interview with IP022, May 15, 2015; Interview with IP040, August 10, 2016; Interview with IP068, November 29, 2016; Interview with IP093, December 3, 2016; Interview with IP098, December 3, 2016; Interview with IP103, December 7, 2016.

³⁰³ Interview with IP108, December 7, 2016.

so, wonder wey Jesus dey do for me.... He butter my bread, he sugar my tea....”³⁰⁴ This song is in broken English, which is the most common form of communication in Nigeria and most of West Africa. This song communicates the wonders of God, with the emphasis on his goodness and specifically as the one who gives all the good things of life.

Another song mentioned states, “Me I no go suffer, I no go beg for bread, God of miracles, na my papa o....”³⁰⁵ This sentiment means that the believer will not suffer, will not beg for bread. The God of miracles is the father.

IP021, IP035, and IP043 wonder why many of the music that the Nigerian churches sing are devoid of biblical depth or even theological soundness. Whereas, nobody is angry at the repetition and shortness in music, in recent times, the music is mostly designed to make the listeners dance and forget their sorrow. “Sometimes I wonder if the people singing those songs understand the song they were singing,” said IP043.³⁰⁶

Music is important in the spiritual formation of God’s people, but if all the music is about getting things from God, claiming things that one does not have nor can afford, it will all amount to greed and covetousness. IP090, however, insisted that the songs about God’s provision are very important in the culture where poverty is prevalent. The singing of positive songs is, therefore, an expression of faith and should be encouraged.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁴ This song was popular in some quarters from the mid-1980s. It is a common song in Nigerian churches to date in all denominations.

³⁰⁵ This is another common song that is used across various denominations.

³⁰⁶ Interview with IP043, August 10, 2016.

³⁰⁷ Interview with IP090, December 1, 2016.

Preaching/Sermons

The preaching and sermons of their leaders determine the theology of most of the churches in Nigeria. Even in churches where they have a set theological articulation in their book of doctrines, the regular sermons of the pastors form the basis for their theological understanding. The sermons coming out of the pulpit are a major way that theologizing takes place. According to IP015, many of the sermons from the Nigerian pulpit have been imported from the hyper-capitalist tendencies of America, which is always interested in getting and getting, even to the detriment of others. This capitalist tendency has been sandwiched into the Christian faith with the idea that God wants his followers to ask for anything desired, and he will give it them. This people have forgotten the Scripture that says, “Delight yourself in the LORD.”³⁰⁸

IP062 talked about when he had to walk out of a church. The preacher preached about how God wants his followers to be rich and take over all the prosperity of all the riches of the people in Nigeria. He concluded his sermon after misappropriating Scripture by asking the congregation to come and sow a seed in different categories: 100,000, 50,000, or 20,000 naira. Then he said that God gave him an instruction to give some special anointed perfumes: “I was so angry when I discovered these are very inferior perfumes which cost N50 [50 naira]. To my amazement, people were coming out to get the perfume. Some of them were told to go and borrow money to come to give the next week. I was so annoyed and I had to leave the service.”³⁰⁹ Many of the messages are on money and blessings.

³⁰⁸ Ps. 37:4, ESV.

³⁰⁹ Interview with IP062, September 1, 2016.

In most of the churches, the respondents assert that the undue emphasis on money in messages has become alarming. IP022 says he cannot remember a Sunday message that is not linked to money:

Even on Christmas, they said I should bring a gift for the baby Jesus. During Easter, they ask for resurrection seed. On Good Friday they said I should bring a seed so that all the bad luck and problems will die with Jesus. We have a guest speaker who is our pastor's friend. Once he comes, he will tell us God said we should empty our pockets. In such case, those who obey will go home or buy gas for their car. When they do not obey, they are told that God will curse them for disobedience.³¹⁰

This type of words put the people under the pressure of attempting to obey the instruction of God.

IP007 spoke about the strong emphasis placed on money by his church leaders who continue to say, "Poverty is a curse," and, "I have been sent to deliver you from poverty. Now, when you are faced with financial challenges and you hear the story of someone who gave last week and now has over 200 percent reward, you are enticed to do the same."³¹¹ IP022 says some testimonies and teachings are designed to create or activate greed in the human soul.³¹²

IP014 mentioned that one of the Scriptures some pastors use during the sermons is that Jesus became poor so that his followers may be rich. They then insist that every child of God who has given his or her life to Christ has to be rich.³¹³ IP068 who is from the ECWA church says that he was surprised when some pastors in the church started

³¹⁰ Interview with IP022, May 15, 2015.

³¹¹ Interview with IP007, May 10, 2015.

³¹² Interview with IP022, May 15, 2015.

³¹³ Interview with IP014, May 12, 2015.

talking about the idea that poverty is a curse. This thought was pushed further when IP072 says that the problem with theologizing around corruption is that it has always been based on wrong scriptural exegesis, which eventually leads to wrong action. In his words he affirms,

This idea that Jesus was financially rich is very strange to historic Christian understanding. They claim he had a treasurer who was stealing, yet he was still very rich (I wonder how they interpret why Peter had to go catch fish to pay taxes for himself and Jesus) They also say he has a ship. If you read guys like David Oyedepo or listen to his teaching you will hear that Jesus rode on a donkey, which is like private Jet of his time. This is what you get when people are bent on twisting and manipulating the word of God.³¹⁴

While one may not categorically say that these pastors and church leaders intentionally want to manipulate the word of God, the problem is *eisegesis*, which is reading one's meaning into God's word instead of allowing the interpretation that comes out of the text, which is *exegesis*. The serious issue of biblical interpretation and application hunts Nigerian pastors as they do their discourse around corruption.

Practices

Apart from music and sermons, more importantly, a major way to access people's theology is by observing their practices. The interviewees mentioned quite a number of practices, and in some cases, they told stories about such practices.

The first is the church's excessive focus on the physical building. Various respondents talk about how this practice and attitude has affected the church in Nigeria in a more negative light. For example, IP018, IP020, IP090, and IP101 raised an issue that happened about four years back. One of the largest Pentecostal churches that had a large

³¹⁴ Interview with IP072, November 29, 2016.

gathering place in Nigeria wanted to build a 3km by 3km auditorium to create more space for those to whom they are reaching out. Many people were dumbfounded when the man of God asked to get ten people who would give one billion naira each with others giving 100 million. People who heard this statement were amazed that the pastor, who is well respected for his humble disposition over a long time, would ask for such large amounts of money. Most people in Nigeria know that to get one billion naira, they have to inherit it or steal it. No business owner in Nigeria can give one billion naira without affecting his or her business. In other words, the pastors do not care how people get the money, which is why they are stealing from the government and from their various organizations.

Historically in Nigeria, the old churches, such as the Anglican, Catholic, and Methodist, were the people who never bordered about how people made the money they brought to the church and they were always asked rich members for money. But the new churches have taken over that attitude. The scenario has made generality of churches become disrespected by the people given them the money they use in the running of the church.³¹⁵

The next point is the unnecessary pressure from church leadership. IP051 insisted that as a pastor, he could strongly prove that the leadership of the church had encouraged corruption. He was asked to go to a church that has a 40,000 naira as church income for budget per month He was told that for him to get his next ordination, the finance of the church should not be less than 100,000 naira every month for four months as the new income before he could be recommended for ordination. He was then put under pressure. In responding to this demand, he had to invite a few of his friends from other churches to

³¹⁵ Interview with IP044, August 10, 2016

come to his aide. They then decided to move their membership to his church and began to pay their offerings and tithes for the next four months, after which they moved back to their previous churches.³¹⁶

He also mentioned the fact that the denominations have given their pastors a target to double their membership within six months. Any pastor who does not do that will either be sacked or have his or her salary slashed. With this threat from the leadership, pastors prepared meals and had different people come and eat so that they could count them as their own members.³¹⁷

All these are deceptive ways by which pastors try to cope with pressure that the leaders in the denomination have created for them. IP054 puts it vividly, “ we have got to the time when pastors are just interested in meeting the target like bankers in Nigeria do, and nobody is asking how these things are done.”³¹⁸ This attempt of making pastors meet target is increasingly become popular in many of the large churches in Nigeria in recent times³¹⁹.

IP051 talked about a report from Professor Yemi Osinbajo about three years ago. He said the greater challenge he had as a Commissioner for Justice and as an Attorney General of Lagos is pressure from pastors and church leaders: “They will ask you to do what is against the law, and when you refuse, they will begin to use the church hierarchy

³¹⁶ Interview with IP051, August 12, 2016.

³¹⁷ Interview with IP051, August 12, 2016.

³¹⁸ Interview with, IP054, August 12, 2016.

³¹⁹ Interview with, IP035, August 9, 2016; For example, respondent IP035 mentioned that his senior pastor’s salary was reduced by 50% because he did not meet the yearly church growth target. He in turn reduced the salaries of the pastors working with him also.

to put pressure on you. They send your superior in the church and that creates problems for you. Of course, Osinbajo did not say how many corrupt practices with which he was involved under this pressure, but the fact that he raises this issue indicates again the negative influence of the church over Christians in authority and political office in Nigeria.³²⁰

The third practice is the church cover-up of corruption. IP072 told the story that the previous treasurer at his church was shot outside of the church and almost died. It was reported that the reason for this attempted murder was because he did not allowed the pastor to get all the money he wanted from the church treasury. Although the police investigation pointed to the pastor, the leadership of the church said they did not want to embarrass the name of Lord, so they shut down the case. The church has in many instances covered up the actions of corrupt pastors and leaders.³²¹ IP025 talked about reports of some pastors in the church who had affairs and even helped the ladies get abortions. When the report came to the church, the pastors were just transferred to other parishes of the church and never disciplined. In later months, news came that the organization went to settle the issues financially. If a church using money to cover up evil, then the church has no right to confront Nigerian society.³²² IP073 and IP082 spoke of many of their pastors who have stolen church money and nothing happened.³²³

IP091, IP0111, and IP0124 noted that, not too long ago, they heard of a general in

³²⁰ Interview with IP051, August 12, 2016.

³²¹ Interview with IP072, November 29, 2016.

³²² Interview with IP025, May 15, 2015.

³²³ Interview with IP073, November 30, 2016; Interview with IP082, December 1, 2016.

the Nigerian military that sent a tithe to one of the big churches. The amount he sent was more than he could have earned in five years on his officer's salary. When the alarm was raised, the church did not do anything about it.³²⁴ They regrettably opine, "we have heard of the church praying against those who wanted to investigate their corrupt members."³²⁵ IP030 affirmed that he worked in a church where drug barons and financial scammers came to receive special prayers so that they can do their businesses without getting caught: "It is so out outrageous and unfortunate that the church in Nigeria has encouraged corruption more than any other organization in Nigeria. We have given the church a bad name."³²⁶

Learned Helplessness

Another issue that came up is that some of the narratives and messages in the churches project the idea that not much can be done to change the story of corruption in Nigeria. IP053 said that the only thing people are told from the pulpit is to pray for the country and the leaders.³²⁷ Furthering this idea, IP101 asserted that the pastors are telling them to wait for the rapture of the saints when the problem of corruption and evil will be gone. IP033 asserts he was surprised when his pastor gave a story about how he gave some government officials a "brown envelope"³²⁸ to get his application for land. He

³²⁴ Interview with IP091, December 3, 2016; Interview with IP111, March 4, 2017; Interview with IP124, March 12, 2017.

³²⁵ Interview with IP091, December 3, 2016; Interview with IP111, March 4, 2017; Interview with IP124, March 12, 2017

³²⁶ Interview with IP030, July 28, 2015.

³²⁷ Interview with IP053, August 12, 2016

³²⁸ This is another way that people refer to bribes within the government office, so as to dignify this act.

pontificated, “After they saw that ‘the Lord is good,’ they started saying nice things about him and in two days, the papers for the land came out. He spent about N200,000 as ‘gifts’ in the envelope to the key people.” IP033 opined when he asked the pastor why he had bribed the official, the pastor argued “This Nigeria. It is the Nigeria factor: I must be willing to become all things to all men, so I may win some.” This pastor is quoting a verse from the Pauline epistles on making changes to win souls for Christ to justify why he gave a bribe. While a pastor is supposed to be an example of morality in a corrupt world, it becomes troubling for a pastor to brag about bribing a government official in Nigeria. This is what could be called learned helplessness: the idea that since one has tried and was unable to get the desired results. The following two stories paint the picture more vividly.

IP008, who is graduate and midlevel pastor in one of the churches, said,

I have been a pastor in our church for a while. I live in south-south Nigeria with a wife and three children. My salary is 82,923 naira. Then the church takes out tithes, tax, pension, health insurance, and a housing loan. When all is removed, I am left with 44,050 naira. My children have to go to an average standard school, so I have to keep out 20,000 naira every month so as to have money to pay their school fees. I am now left with N24,050. I am required to pay pastor’s dues and support the building project in our headquarters. I will then be left with 22,050 to pay for power, gas for the car, and feeding for the whole month.³²⁹

I asked him the least amount he would need for his family upkeep. He said it would be a minimum of 100,000 naira, which is about \$277, but his take-home pay is about \$61.

When asked how he is able to meet his monthly demands, he said he has to pray to get gifts from members of the church and his friends. On one occasion he had to take money from the church treasury. When the treasurer asked him what the money was for, he

³²⁹ Interview with IP008, May 11, 2015.

responded that it was his honorarium. Two years ago, his family had no food to eat on Christmas day all through the day until evening.³³⁰

He also mentioned his friend who holds the same rank and was transferred to Lagos. Within two years, someone had given him land, and he has now built a good house through gifts from members of the church.³³¹ The problem here is that this gift-given policy is exactly what happens within the government system. As noted by IP 008 and IP081, People are underpaid and resort to asking for gifts from people and giving them special favors: contracts, titles, and waivers. The more problematic thing is that the way churches operate in Nigeria.

In speaking about lack of welfare for fulltime pastors, IP081, who is from another Pentecostal denomination, says his salary is 50, 000 naira. He has a wife and two children in the city of Port Harcourt, one of the most expensive cities in Nigeria. When I asked him how he is able to maintain his family, he said he had to hope that his friends would send support for him. He also has to borrow a lot of money. He told the story of needing to get a physical checkup because he suspected he may be having some problems with his heart. When he asked the senior pastor for financial support from the church, the pastor told him to go and pray to God to provide. Meanwhile, the same senior pastor traveled via first class to the United States for his own medical treatment.³³² When I asked the two respondents in these stories what they could do in order to change the situation, they both

³³⁰ Interview with IP008, May 11, 2015.

³³¹ Interview with IP008, May 11, 2015

³³² Interview with IP081, December 1, 2016

responded that they just have to continue to pray and wait for their own turn, when they will qualify for such special treatment.³³³

Discipleship Deficit

A few other issues that came up with the research are put under what I have called discipleship deficit. Many of those interviewed raised the issue that the church has not been fully involved in their discipleship efforts. IP093, IP122, and IP125 all asserted that the deliberate focus on raising young Christians to become mature children of God interested in pleasing God and living a life consistent with God's Word has been jettisoned over the last few decades. Today, people are not ready to deny themselves or suffer for the purpose of living for God and obeying the Word of God. The general desire by new believers to live as examples in society is no longer in view. One of the respondents mentioned that his church has made an intentional decision to disciple people who can begin to live with the Word of God view.³³⁴ IP045 said, "Though we have been intentionally doing our best to help people to become genuine disciples, but the culture of the church in Nigeria has become very worldly. When people are disciplined and rebuked for not loving well, they move to another church where they are immediately made leaders in the new church."³³⁵ Most churches do not want the young people seeing them as not having enough love and grace.

³³³ Interview with IP081, December 1, 2016; Interview with IP008, May 11, 2015.

³³⁴ Interview with IP093, December 3, 2016; Interview with IP122, March 12, 2017; Interview with IP025, May 15, 2015.

³³⁵ Interview with IP045, August 10, 2016.

IP023 mentioned that he recently interviewed a person to be ordained in their church but discovered that the person did not even know all the books of the Bible. He did not know the basic doctrines of the Christian faith and was not familiar with some basic ethical positions that young Christians used to know about. Those who have not been properly disciple cannot have any major impact on the Nigerian society³³⁶

Some of the respondents insisted that the major problem of Nigeria is the inability of the church to raise genuine disciples of the Lord. IP015 noted that people have become so busy that they do not have time to give to other people in order to mentor them. He declared, “In the early part of the 1980s, when people visit the church, there are people who will follow you up and make sure they preach the message of the gospel, after which they will assign people to come to mentor you and help you on how to live your new life on your job and they are there to provide the necessary support.”³³⁷ Unfortunately, people do not have much time for such practices today in Nigeria. Hence, most people just come to church during services and then leave.

Finally, one respondent IP054 believed that one does not need to look far away. Today, no one hears about an Easter retreat or a Christmas retreat. These periods used to be the time when people learned about how to become more committed to Christ, but today, most churches are involved in miracle services, prosperity prayer, and deliverance meetings.³³⁸

³³⁶ Interview with IP023, May 15, 2015.

³³⁷ Interview with IP015, May 12, 2015.

³³⁸ Interview with IP054, August 12, 2016.

Faith-Work Bifurcation

When the respondents were asked how much their church prepared them to face corruption in their public lives, the two people who answered in the affirmative made mention of the prayers that the church organizes every month in which they pray for them concerning the new month. The rest of the people answered in the negative. Many respondents were taught that what happens during the week is carnal or secular while the things that happen in the church during the weekly services and Sunday morning are the spiritual things. IP040 said, “Our approach is that of Jesus’ when he said, give unto Caesar what is Caesar’s and give unto God what is God’s.”³³⁹ This practice causes a complete bifurcation of Christians’ lives into the spiritual and the secular. IP072 does not advise the church to mix things up. If people want to learn about how to face challenges in their office, they should go and learn it from their professional colleagues and training.³⁴⁰

IP056, IP118, and IP119 mentioned the challenge that many of the faith preachers continue to encourage the people not need to work hard. One bishop said, “Hard work does not bring prosperity.” While God’s blessing is very important to success and prosperity, the way these words are painted by many of the faith preachers portrays an idea that people do not need to work. All they need to do is wait for is the miracle coming their way.³⁴¹

³³⁹ Interview with IP040, August 10, 2016

³⁴⁰ Interview with IP072, November 29, 2016

³⁴¹ Interview with IP056, August 12, 2016; Interview with IP018, May 15, 2015; Interview with IP019, May 15, 2015.

According to IP038, an Engineer, who is who was a lay leader and now a priest, “One of the churches I served will have the secretary and the chairman of the biggest group spend the money in the treasury for drunkenness and food. They began to see the church as their income source. They are, therefore, ready to kill anybody who does not support their continuous ambition to remain on staff there.”³⁴² A similar experience was also reported by IP046, IP075 and IP078 and they insist that it is dangerous to confront corruption in the church today³⁴³

Preachers today in Nigeria have promoted greed in different dimensions and forms. The titles of church special programs indicate they are based on greed, revenge, and fear. IP057 said that when he oversaw the treasury in his church, the pastors in the denomination kept talking about him as the person who did not allow them to make all the money they should or could have made. He asserts, “some pastors took my name to native doctors and magicians to harm me. We had a case where one of the pastors negotiated a land and asked the sellers to add a percentage to the cost, so he can have it.”³⁴⁴ This story does not seem to be unusual as IP055 said that the church justifies corruption by following the principle that says the end justifies the means.

When we put rich people in positions of leadership without finding out if they possess the necessary ethical and moral prerequisite, we are sending a wrong signal... It is a common practice in most churches in Nigeria that once a person gives a large amount of tithe, the pastor/priest begins to look for more ways to tie the person to the church or find the best ways to get them to give more to the church. The church begins to make more demands on the tither.³⁴⁵

³⁴² Interview with IP038, August 9, 2015.

³⁴³ Interview with IP046, August 10, 2016; Interview with IP075, November 30, 2016; Interview with IP078, November 30, 2016.

³⁴⁴ Interview with IP057, August 12, 2016.

³⁴⁵ Interview with IP055, August 12, 2016

The struggle for rich members is encouraged through this means of connecting them to the church. IP056 followed this argument by saying that “the church has encouraged corruption by highly regarding corrupt people who are wealthy. If all the churches would speak against corrupt people, fighting corruption would be effective.”³⁴⁶ They are not able to do this because it will affect their pockets. A number of respondents; IP006; IP020; IP027; IP076 and IP079 mentioned the devastating effect of the prosperity gospel being preached in some churches.³⁴⁷

Following up on this discussion, IP081 said he knows of pastors who were using the materials for building the church and diverting half to their own property so that as the church was being completed, they were completing their own building project, too. This practice cost the church double in materials. He also noted, “In some of our churches the wardens, which is a volunteer position, are paid allowances. This allowance is even more than the pastor’s salary. I am presently facing this type of challenge in my church.”³⁴⁸ When this type of thing happens in the church, the pastor is under intense pressure to break the rules of the church in order to avoid crises.

Evidence of Church-Initiated Agency in Nigerian Society

The church in Nigeria is known globally for its growth and influence. For example, the Anglican Church in Nigeria was the first in the Anglican Communion to

³⁴⁶ Interview with IP056, August 12, 2016

³⁴⁷ Interview with IP006, May 10, 2015; Interview with IP020, May 15, 2015; Interview with IP027, July 26, 2015; Interview with IP076, November 30, 2016; Interview with IP079 November 30, 2016.

³⁴⁸ Interview with IP081, December 1, 2016.

rebel and challenge the revisionist tendencies of the Anglican churches in the Western world: the Church of England and the Episcopal Church in the United States. They presently claim 18 million members in Nigeria, which is larger than the whole of Europe and America put together. They have also been involved in the indigenization process of Christianity in Africa as virtually no part of Nigeria is without an Anglican church. The same could be said of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) has over 10,000 churches in over 200 countries of the world. In Lagos, the commercial city of Nigeria, the RCCG can boast of having a church within five minutes walking distance from each other in Lagos. On one street are multiple churches; every hall, cinema places, and eateries house an RCCG church. The same is true in the Baptist church and many other churches in Nigeria. One might expect that they would have a great impact on the spirituality, morality, and ethical standards in Nigeria.

The Nigerian church is seen worldwide as a highly revived church and has sent a lot of missionaries to different parts of the world.³⁴⁹ Nigerian pastors lead two of the largest churches in Europe. Many visitors have come to see the various camp meetings and huge gatherings on the Nigerian religious landscape. One, therefore, might think that such will have a great impact on the country as the church did in countries such as South Korea where for a while many decisions in the government were influenced by the church. All 125 respondents interviewed believed that, generally, the church has not been an agent of change when it has to do with corruption one exception is a priest who heads

³⁴⁹ Although some time ago, the largest human gathering in one place was said to be the Holy Ghost congress of the RCCG with over 6 million people. The largest choir is in Calabar with 9,999 choristers.

a school in the Anglican church in the Northern part of Nigeria with a few exceptions here and there.

IP041 asserted that after the war, people in Nigeria saw a lot of death and bloodshed and they became heartless and lawless. This experience of the civil war on the people also affected the church. Christianity began to move into “feel good, name it and claim it” philosophy, which has continued since then³⁵⁰

Prosperity theology became the order of the day. IP121 repeated one of Oyedepo’s popular sayings: “If it is not good, it is not God,” meaning that anything that does not make one feel good or anything that one dislikes is not from God. He asserts that the Roman Catholic Church may be the only block that has not been fully engulfed in prosperity gospel issues, although a few priests already teach them, such as Fr. Mbaka in Enugu.³⁵¹

In the midst of all these issues, one still hears a few stories that may present a ray of hope. IP099 talked about a church where the pastor called on a member who had paid tithe of about 1 million dollars. The member was called to come and explain where he got the money. The church member mentioned how he sold a parcel of land that he inherited from his father to a multinational company.³⁵² The story below illustrates the point as narrated by IP046:

We operate a secondary school in our Diocese, and the bishop had told us that we never bribe officials of the examination council. Many of the church-owned schools bribe the officials to look the other way and allow the teachers to come

³⁵⁰ Interview with IP041, August 9, 2016.

³⁵¹ Interview with IP021, May 15, 2015

³⁵² Interview with IP099, December 3, 2016.

and provide answers for the students during the exam. This is how many private owned schools secure good results for their students.

When they came to our school, they expected brown envelopes, and we told them we do not give any gifts to officials during inspection visit because that is bribery. They angrily went to inspect the examinations, and one of the officials told the students that they are free to cheat and look at each other's papers. One of the female students stood up and said, "Jesus did not teach us so." The officials were shocked in the examination hall. They eventually went to tell their other colleagues that the church's school is a strange one. When the federal examination body released the results of the examination, the entire students of the school passed all their examinations.³⁵³

Many students in Nigeria could fail an examination because they did not pay extra money to bribe the teachers supervising the examination.

Power Factor

One thing that came out very strong is the way in which the religious leaders, like the political leaders, have extreme power over the people they lead. Pastors are revered in the Nigerian culture. IP042 said he has a cousin who was told by his pastor during counseling that she needs to come for deliverance in order to have a baby since she and her husband have been married for five years without having one: "The pastor he instructed her come to meet him somewhere and that God gave him a revelation to have sex with her in order to 'purify' her womb in preparation for a baby." It took a few friends and a long time to convince the lady that such a message could not be a message from God.³⁵⁴ The authority of the pastor has become so intimidating to many in the pews as confirmed by IP050 who said that in his church, a church worker could not travel out of the state without getting permission from the senior pastor. In his own statement he

³⁵³ Interview with IP046, August 10, 2016.

³⁵⁴ Interview with IP042, August 9, 2016.

affirmed, “I could not attend my younger brother’s engagement ceremony a day before his wedding because the senior pastor did not grant my family the permission to go. I was only allowed to attend the wedding proper. I was told that I should not miss the Bible study and the Friday night prayer.”³⁵⁵ Though this practice is more prevalent among the Pentecostal churches, many are also seeing this tendency growing even among the old churches. IP085 talked about how an Anglican priest was insisting that people should get permission to travel during Christmas time.³⁵⁶

When these pastors are challenged, one of the things they say is that they are the spiritual head of the church and they have authority over everyone they say believe in the Lord. Believers shall be established, believe his prophets, and shall prosper. When some of the pastors are confronted over having too much authority, they begin to quote, “Touch not my anointed, and do my prophets no harm.”³⁵⁷ The misappropriation of Scriptures for the benefit of the person or the persons quoting them is one of the hallmarks of the recent Nigerian religious equation. The lack of contentment among pastors has impacted many of their parishioners to the extent that greed has been encouraged as a sign of looking forward to financial breakthrough, according to IP062 and IP095.³⁵⁸ IP023 noted, “Greed has become the basis for some of the reasons for the leaders in the church to resort to control and manipulation of God’s people in Nigeria.”³⁵⁹ IP062 opines, “some years back

³⁵⁵ Interview with IP050, August 12, 2016.

³⁵⁶ Interview with IP085, December 1, 2016.

³⁵⁷ Ps. 105: 5, KJV.

³⁵⁸ Interview with IP062, September 1, 2016; Interview with IP095, December 3, 2016.

³⁵⁹ Interview with IP023, May 15, 2015.

we heard of a church leader who actually set some of his members of fire for committing sin and one of them died, which led to his arrest and prosecution.”³⁶⁰ The pastor was delivering judgment as the spiritual and legal leader of the church.

As noted by many of the respondents, many people are afraid of their pastors more than they are afraid of God. IP005 said that religious leaders are spiritual fathers who should be honored and obeyed. He told stories of how he was rescued from accidents just by obeying his pastor.³⁶¹

When interviewees were asked if people who had authority over them could affect their fidelity to God in the face of corruption, most of the respondents said they would certainly change their decision if their parents, uncles, or pastors intervene. IP074 told a story of how he had to change the company receiving a contract in his office some time ago because his spiritual father called to ask him to give it to a church member. While many may think that his action was not just, he insisted that he had always received divine blessings for obeying his pastor.³⁶²

The story of below explains the influence the church has, yet without support of those faced with corruption challenges. IP053 told of the problem of not even receiving support from the church when members stood against corruption. A young lady was involved as an election officer; she did not agree to manipulate results. They eventually asked her to come to the judicial tribunal to support the ruling party to confirm falsified results. They provided her with a large sum of money, which she refused. They then went

³⁶⁰ Interview with IP062, September 1, 2016.

³⁶¹ Interview with IP005, May 9, 2015.

³⁶² Interview with IP074, November 30, 2015.

to her through her church leader to change her mind and also threatened her. When she went to talk to her pastor, seeking refuge in case of any attack, the pastor advised her to go and do what the political party wants. The told her to go and do what they asked her to do and get the money and that the church would not be willing to support her if anything goes wrong. She was so discouraged that even when she ran to the church family who taught her to live a holy life, they were unable to support her. This is the height of hypocrisy.³⁶³

Leadership Practices That Can Account for Measurable Changes

This study began with the assumption that many organizations in Nigerian society have been able to move from corruption to fidelity due to some good leadership practices by their Christian leaders. Unfortunately, after moving around for three years, I could not find any such organization. I found numerous individuals who are standing for the truth, but they have not been able to transform or change their organizations. After asking the questions as to why this transformation has been impossible, the respondents were asked to provide practices they considered very important in creating a measurable change. Table 4.12 provides the ranking of the various suggestions.

³⁶³ Interview with IP053, August 12, 2016.

Table 4.12. Ranking of Suggested Leadership Practices

Practices	n	Rank
Trust	117	1
Transformational Relationship	100	2
Transparency and Openness	97	3
Accountability	96	4
Humility & Simplicity	94	5
Integrity	90	6
Leading by Example	80	7
Empowerment (Pay people)	70	8
Fear of God	30	9

Summary of Findings

The Research questions were very helpful in the design and construction of the semi-structured Interview protocols. However, in analyzing the data, I paid attention to the various themes that emerged and also arranged subthemes under the large major themes. The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do Christian perceptions of corruption in Nigerian society compare to evidence gathering corruption indexes?
2. How does Christian discourse on corruption reflect local theologizing in Nigerian society?
3. Can evidence be found that demonstrates church-initiated agency in Nigerian society? and if not, why?
4. If change agency could be found, what leadership practices account for measurable changes in organizations progressing from corruption to fidelity?

From these research questions, I designed a semi-structured interview protocol and interviewed a total 125 respondents. After transcribing, coding, and analyzing, the following themes emerged and I grouped my finding under these themes and the summary is given below:

Themes for Discussion

Corruption—Perception, Definition, and Evidence

In discussing the Perception of Nigeria how they perceive the issue of corruption, how they define Nigeria, and whether there is the evidence of corruption in Nigeria, the following answers came forward.

- There is no cohesion on how Christians in Nigeria understand and perceive corruption in Nigeria.
- The perception of corruption in Nigeria is different among different educational groups.
- The data showed the most accepted definition from international agencies that do not provide cultural sensitivity in the Nigerian context.
- The data reveals that the evidence provided has also been overblown and exaggerated by agencies studying corruption in Nigeria.

Corruption and the Church in Nigeria

The data showed that the church is not only caught in the web of corruption but has encouraged it in Nigeria. The data also presents the evidence, areas, and causes of corruption in the Nigerian church.

Church Agency and Change

The church's theological response, attitudes, and practices have made it marginally ineffective in its attempt to effect change from corruption to fidelity. These attitudes and practices include

- Songs, sermons from bad exegesis, and practices that do not enhance change in the right direction;
- Attitude towards learned helplessness;
- Discipleship deficit;
- Faith–work bifurcation; and,
- Power factor (elite theory).

Leadership Challenges towards Fidelity

While leadership in the church has not been fully poised to make adequate changes, some leadership practices can improve church leaders and bring about desired change from corruption to fidelity. Authentic leadership theory could be a good lens, if properly applied, to encapsulate these practices.

Chapter 5: Discussion of the Findings

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter discusses the findings in relation to corruption in Nigeria. After revisiting the research questions, the chapter explores four themes that emerged from the data collection and analysis section of the study. The chapter reflects on key missiological implications of the findings, namely incongruous expectations of Nigerians about the church's role as an agent of change from corruption to fidelity. I conclude the chapter expressing the respondents' lament: that the Nigerian Church will become contextually faithful to its Christian values and become the light it was destined to be for Nigeria's transformation.

Research Questions Revisited

This work began with an initial assumption that the church is effectively transforming the Nigerian society. With this in mind, I went to Nigeria seeking organizations where Christians are using biblical principles to transform their places of work. I posed four natural questions in the phenomenological method of inquiry. I asked the following research questions that helped frame the study:

1. How do Christian perceptions of corruption in Nigerian society compare to evidence gathering corruption indexes?
2. How does Christian discourse on corruption reflect local theologizing in Nigerian society?
3. Can evidence be found that demonstrates church-initiated agency in Nigerian society? If not, why?

4. If change agency could be found, what leadership practices account for measurable changes in organizations progressing from corruption to fidelity?

From these research questions, I designed a semi-structured interview protocol and interviewed a total of 125 respondents. After transcribing, coding, and analyzing the data, the following themes emerged, and I grouped my findings under these themes and summarized them.

Themes for Discussion

Fundamental to my research design was the following belief: I would find ample conversation partners within my sample who would enlighten me on these incongruities in the rampant practice of corruption in society and in the church, and I would uncover admirable exceptions that would suggest the church would be ethically immune to these unprincipled practices. Surprisingly, as the summary of the data shows, at least in the sample I constructed and investigated, the data did not return *any* Christian individual self-identified as “leading an organization” and who had transformed a faith community from corruption to fidelity. This disappointment led me to asking how this was not possible. The data showed that although Christians are living for the principles of their faith as individuals, individual piety, in and of itself, did not and does not translate into palpable organizational movement from corruption to fidelity. It would be easy to conclude that the church itself is corrupt or that the structure of its gospel influence is yet to be critically contextual in the manner of organizational faithfulness. In the section that follows, I explore the four dominant themes that emerged and support this conclusion. These themes:

1. *Corruption: perception, definition, and evidence.* First, Christians in Nigeria do not have a cohesive understanding and perception of corruption in Nigeria. Second, the perception of corruption in Nigeria is different among different educational groups. Third, the data showed that the most accepted definition from international agencies does not provide cultural sensitivity in the Nigerian context. Fourth, the data revealed that the evidence provided has been overblown and exaggerated by agencies studying corruption in Nigeria.
2. *Corruption and the church in Nigeria.* First, the data showed that the church is not only caught in the web of corruption but has encouraged it in Nigeria. Second, the data shows the evidence, areas, and causes of corruption in the Nigerian church.
3. *Church agency and change.* The church's theological response, attitudes, and practices have made it marginally ineffective in its attempt to cause change from corruption to fidelity. These attitudes and practices include (a) *songs, sermons from bad exegesis, and practices that do not enhance change in the right direction*; (b) *learned helplessness*; (c) *discipleship deficits*; (d) *faith-work bifurcation*; and, (e) *power factors*.
4. *Leadership challenges toward fidelity.* While leadership in the church has not been fully poised to make adequate changes, some leadership practices can improve the church leaders and bring about desired change from corruption to fidelity. These include (a) *trust*, (b) *transformation*, (c) *transparency and openness*, (d) *humility and simplicity*, (e) *integrity*, (f) *leading by example*, (g)

empowerment, and (h) fear of God. Authentic leadership theory shows itself to be a generative lens, if properly applied, to encapsulate these practices.

Corruption: Its Perception, Definition, and Evidence

The first thing to be discussed is corruption. The Christian perception is important in the understanding of corruption in Nigeria. In the first section of the analysis, the definition of corruption was categorized into four parts: morality, legality, public office for personal gain, and the religious dimension. It is not a disputable fact that corruption involves top-level officials who can create lots of distortions in the operation of government. Public officers who are corrupt generate money for themselves, which affects the choices the public could have. As the Nigerian case has proven, it produces inefficient public policies. Rose-Ackerman affirms, “Firms that retain monopoly power through bribery and favoritism undermine the efficiency benefits of turning over state firms to private owners.”³⁶⁴ In order to reduce corruption, Rose-Ackerman says there is a need to reduce incentives and increase the cost of corruption. This reduction is a result of eliminating corrupt-laden programs, privatization, reform of public programs, administrative reform, the deterrent effect of anticorruption laws, and procurement systems.³⁶⁵

From the data, there is no cohesion on how Christians in Nigeria understand and perceive corruption. The interesting fact seen is that the different people are persuaded about the paradigm through which they are making their definitions. According to Table

³⁶⁴ Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption and Government*, 91.

³⁶⁵ Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption and Government*, 91.

4.6, 20 percent of those interviewed emphasized the moral dimension of corruption such as moral perversion and decay in character. This definition is consistent with Edward Banfield when he says that corruption is the result of a lack of moral behavior,³⁶⁶ with an aspect of Harold Lasswell and Arnold Rogow's definition that corrupt acts violate responsibility toward system of the civic order,³⁶⁷ and consistent with David Mbuga's view that it is a kind of deterioration of moral standards and the perversion of integrity.³⁶⁸ This perspective is much more applicable to Nigerians as some may not think that they are hurting any other person when they are involved in corrupt practices. As long as they are able to provide for their families, they may conclude that all is well.

About 16 percent of the people saw corruption as the breaking of rules as seen in Table 4.6. These individuals see the breaking of traffic laws, not following due process or existing rules and protocol as the expression of corruption. The next definition is the perspective of the religious/spiritual dimension. As explained in Chapter 4, unfaithfulness to God, selfishness, and evil inclinations are factors that show corruption. There seems to be a correlation between the factors that cause corruption and its expression.

As explained in Chapter 2, these respondents believe in the bad apples theory as posited by De Graaf, that the root cause of corruption is the defective character and dispositions of people.³⁶⁹ One may not argue against this perspective because the

³⁶⁶ Banfield, *Moral Basis*, 85–86.

³⁶⁷ Lasswell and Rogow, *Power, Corruption, and Rectitude*, 132.

³⁶⁸ Mbuga, "Christian Moral Response," 27.

³⁶⁹ De Graaf, *Causes of Corruption*.

respondents are all Christian, who may hold some understanding of the concept of human depravity and sinful nature.

The definition that has the highest rank is the use of public office for private gain. The definition involved 56.8 percent of the total respondents and is consistent with the definition provided by many authors: Klitgaard, Aborah, and Parris.³⁷⁰ Other authors also accepted this definition: Floristeanu and Huntington who see corruption as behaviors that deviate from the accepted norm for the purpose of private gain.³⁷¹ This definition and responses of those interviewed as presented in Chapter 4 under this particular problem present a lot of challenges. How do people who live in the culture where social capital is very important to their survival navigate this challenge? Authors such as Francis Fukuyama and Paul Gifford see the attempt of Africans to provide for their families and relatives as being patrimonial. Patrimonialism is a system similar to the kind of authority a father has over his children. Gifford affirms, “Here, those lower in the hierarchy are not subordinate officials with defined power and functions of their own but retainers whose position depends on a leader to whom they owe allegiance. The system is held together by loyalty or kinship ties rather than by a hierarchy of administrative grades and functions.”³⁷² Fukuyama borrowed Max Weber’s term *patrimonial* to refer to governments staffed by the family and friends of the ruler and run for their benefit. Modern governments, by contrast, are supposed to be staffed with officials chosen on the

³⁷⁰ Klitgaard, Parris, and Hawkins, *Corrupt Cities*, 2.

³⁷¹ Floristeanu, “Causes and Consequences of Corruption”; Huntington. “Modenization and Corruption,” 377–88.

³⁷² Gifford, *African Christianity*, 5.

basis of merit and expertise and run for the sake of a broad public interest.³⁷³ Many Nigerians do not seem to agree with this type of categorization, nor do they believe that it is wrong. The challenge raised for those who do not find anything wrong with this type of corruption is whether it is possible not to have an either/or approach to this issue.

I asked respondents if they were in charge of hiring people to fill jobs, and family members were seeking jobs alongside other people, possibly more qualified, if they would hire their family members before others. Ninety respondents (72 percent) said they would pick their family members first, before others. Thirty-five respondents (28 percent) said no. When using the generally accepted definition of corruption, Paul Gifford and other Africanists say that one needs to remember that the private-public dichotomy should be taken into consideration when reflecting on Africa. Chabal and Daloz affirm, “The boundaries between individual and communal in Africa are porous or at least not as firm as the West in ways which are politically significant”³⁷⁴ This assertion is important, although not necessarily taken in an absolute sense.³⁷⁵

The question that comes to mind is the difference between private and public in the African contexts. For instance, would it be wrong to consider a family member or relative if he or she is as qualified as others for the job? Most Nigerians as revealed in the data say that of course there is nothing wrong in giving the job to a family member if he or she qualifies (see Table 4.7), but people from the Western countries of Europe and

³⁷³ Fukuyama, *Political Order*, 287.

³⁷⁴ Chabal and Daloz, 53.

³⁷⁵ For example, the Igbo in Nigeria are more egalitarian in society and could be very individualistic as they progress in their desire to reach their goals. Also stereotypes may be very counter-productive when dealing with a group of people, especially Africans who are seen as very diverse in culture and attitude.

North America generally call this practice nepotism. Conversely, most Africans, and especially Nigerians, would say that it is part of the responsibility of taking care of their own. According to a 2010 *Forbes* article, 41 percent of people find jobs through networking, another 25 percent through Internet job boards, and 11 percent through search firms.³⁷⁶ If people get jobs through networking, then for Nigerians, a major means of networking comes through family, friends, and village relationships. The more pertinent question to these Nigerians would be, where is the line between taking care of one's family and being corrupt? Chabal affirms that identity is very important in analyzing the challenges faced in describing the private-public dichotomy. In writing about this identity, Chabal opines, "The idea of a single concept of identity is misleading and why it is more useful to conceive of notion in terms of overlapping circles of identity."³⁷⁷ He rejects the idea of broad categorizations based on sociological factors such as ethnicity, religion, and occupation. He then argues that this approach is too generalized and limiting. Gifford falls into this generalization when he categorizes Christianity in Africa with religious divisions such as Catholic, Protestant, AIC, and Pentecostal.

This conclusion makes one wonder to what extent people are responsible for friends and relatives. Saying the hiring of friends and family is wrong may cause people difficulty in clarifying and maintaining their family ties in spite of the demands. I,

³⁷⁶ Susan Adams, "Networking Is Still the Best Way to Find a Job, Survey Says," June 7, 2011, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/susanadams/2011/06/07/networking-is-still-the-best-way-to-find-a-job-survey-says/#36bd61504366>.

³⁷⁷ Chabal, *Africa*, 31

therefore, argue that a definition of corruption that takes the peculiarities of Africa into consideration is needed in order to understand corruption fully and fight against it.

The next issue that comes out in this discussion is the evidence of corruption. While the World Bank, Transparency International, and other scholars affirm that there is enough evidence to indicate a high level of corruption in Nigeria, the findings are not consistent with this idea. While 64 percent of the people believe that there is enough evidence of corruption in Nigeria, 16 percent say it depends on how one sees corruption. The rest (20 percent) say that Nigeria is not alone and that corruption is everywhere.

From the interview, I noted that all of the people with the ideal that Nigeria is not alone were respondents with doctorate degrees (see Table 4.3).³⁷⁸ Apparently, educated Nigerians are suspicious of the international agencies and anticorruption accusations. The data reveals that educated Nigerians believe that evidence has been overblown and exaggerated (see Table 4.9). The data in Chapter 4 clearly shows that those Nigerians who have been exposed to Western education at the highest level have seen the amount of corruption in the West as they listen to news across the world, yet this truth does not excuse Nigeria from what Nigerians have seen all over the literature, Internet, and in personal experience as people come close to the Nigerian society³⁷⁹

³⁷⁸ Interview with IP022, May 15, 2015; Interview with IP040, August 10, 2016; Interview with IP068, November 29, 2016.

³⁷⁹<https://www.business-anti-corruption.com/country-profiles/nigeria/> ; see <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/20/business/energy-environment/shell-eni-italy-nigeria.html> ;See also Daniel Smith, *A culture of corruption: Everyday Deception and popular discontent* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

Corruption and the Church in Nigeria

The first thing I needed to discover was how many Christians believe that there is corruption, particularly in the church. Interestingly 100 out of the 125 of all those interviewed believed that there is enough evidence of corruption in the church in Nigeria. According to Table 4.10, 25 respondents representing 20 percent say they think so. The idea that the majority of Christians in Nigeria believe that the church is corrupt is consistent with authors from the literature review. Some have linked it with the proliferation of churches, such as Wole Soyinka.³⁸⁰ Faleye and Mfumbusa believe that the church has not done much to create any change in the area of corruption.³⁸¹ Abeboye and Allan Anderson are also of the view that the church has taken advantage of the needs and powerlessness of the people to offer them the prosperity gospel that Anderson claims is synonymous with business and exploitation.³⁸² Gifford presents the above facts in his books as presented in chapter two. He believes that the prosperity gospel and materialism has been exported from America.³⁸³ Although, Falola and Heaton are of a different view; they praised the charismatic church communities for providing for their congregations with social services, church based schools, and health clinics. They also continued to

³⁸⁰ Adegbola, "Opinion: Proliferation of Churches."

³⁸¹ Oluwakayode Faleye, "Religious Corruption," 172; Mfumbusa, "Church is Growing."

³⁸² Olufunke Adeboye, "'Arrowhead' of Nigerian Pentecostalism: The Redeemed Christian Church of God, 1952–2005," *Pneuma* 29 (2007): 24–58 (paper presented at the Africa Forum, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, Apr. 11, 2000), <http://ehis.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.asburyseminary.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=6fde8436-b6a1-4cbb-bdbb-33c0df2b0348%40sessionmgr4004&vid=1&hid=4111>; Allan Anderson, "Evangelism and the Growth of Pentecostalism in Africa."

³⁸³ Gifford, *Christianity, Development, 148-180*

preach miraculous healing and provisions.³⁸⁴ It is note-worthy that, although Gifford continuously criticizes the prosperity theology of the Pentecostal churches, yet he reveals that the African churches within the Pentecostal circles encourage their members to learn marketing and planning and encourage women in their ministry.³⁸⁵

The approach led to helping the churches to grow financially; members pay their tithe and they are able to embark on projects. Gifford also emphasizes the cultural shift brought about by Pentecostalism in Nigeria; creating a more individualistic or personal decision over extended family lifestyle.³⁸⁶

From the research data, apparently the church has not just been caught in the web of corruption, but in Nigeria, many believe that the church has actually encouraged it.³⁸⁷ The evidence of financial misappropriation of received funds, which is mainly based on lack of accountability, is enormous in some denominations in Nigeria.³⁸⁸ Those that have strict financial regulations still have other ways by which leaders can be financially reckless.³⁸⁹ Various examples of sexual corruption are very common, as seen in Chapter 4.³⁹⁰

³⁸⁴ Falola and Heaton, 221.

³⁸⁵ Gifford, *Christianity , Development*, 148

³⁸⁶ Gifford, *African Christianity*, 346.

³⁸⁷ Interview with IP022, May 15, 2015; Interview with IP040, August 10, 2016; Interview with IP068, November 29, 2016.

³⁸⁸ Interview with IP040, August 10, 2016; Interview with IP068, November 29, 2016.

³⁸⁹ Interview with IP022, May 15, 2015; Interview with IP040, August 10, 2016; Interview with IP068, November 29, 2016.

³⁹⁰ Interview with IP022, May 15, 2015; Interview with IP040, August 10, 2016; Interview with IP068, November 29, 2016.

The data also revealed some very strong internal corruption with Nigeria churches in the ordination of those who are not ethically sound or even those not qualified in training or character.³⁹¹ The issue of transferring ministers has also been abused in many quarters. These areas of church corruption are revealed in the interviews in Chapter 4, but nothing has been written about this area within the Nigerian context.

The causes of corruption in the Nigerian church were explored. As presented in Table 4.1, causes listed are peculiar to Nigeria. One is the issue of manipulation of the members to make pledges and financial commitments that are beyond their capacity.³⁹² There are different types of giving done especially within the Pentecostal churches in Nigeria. First, of course, is the statutory tithes and offerings. Many consider another very important way to receive financial blessing is by giving money to the God's person (e.g., the pastor). Since the person of God is his representative, giving to these individuals brings a higher blessing. This practice has been named *prophet's offering* and *special seed*, among others.³⁹³ This idea is founded on the principles of sowing and reaping through which contemporary Pentecostals articulate their understanding of giving. The bigger the seed is, the bigger the harvest. Matthew Ashimolowo, the Nigerian-born pastor of the Kingsway International Center, teaches that "giving increases our credit account

³⁹¹ Interview with IP119, March 4, 2017.

³⁹² Interview with IP018, May 15, 2015.

³⁹³ Interview with IP018, May 15, 2015.

with God.”³⁹⁴ The argument is not much about how true or not this teaching is, but as noted by IP006, IP020, IP027 2015, and IP076, it is done in a very manipulative way.³⁹⁵

Giving among Nigerian Pentecostals as with other parts of the world is seen from the transactional dimension. Christians are always taught to expect appropriate results as they give to God. Asamaoh-Gyadu observes that although transactional giving occurs on the basis of scriptural interpretation, it takes on added significance within the African context because giving is an important negotiation in traditional shrines. The ancestors and deities are fed periodically in order to sustain benefits of health, abundance, longevity, and success.³⁹⁶ This belief is very common among the Yoruba and Igbo people of Southern Nigeria. Therefore, many in Nigeria give to God not because they see it as an expression of worship but as an invitation to feed their greed and desire for taking advantage of people. When many modern-day pastors want to collect their financial donations, they whip up the emotional sentiment of the transactional African relationship. People pledge more than they can afford, and some pastors even encourage such people to go and borrow money.³⁹⁷

One thing noticeable in recent times among many Nigerian prosperity gospel preachers, which was also mentioned by Gifford in his analysis presented in Chapter 2, is

³⁹⁴ Matthew Ashimolowo, *The Coming Wealth Transfer* (London: Mattyson Media, 2006), 190.

³⁹⁵ Interview with IP006, May 10, 2015; Interview with IP020, May 15, 2015; Interview with IP027, July 26, 2015; Interview with IP076, November 30, 2016.

³⁹⁶ Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Ministry: Interpretations from an African Context* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 81.

³⁹⁷ Olugbenga Akinbola has written a dissertation on the effect of the prosperity gospel on socioeconomic lives of young people in Lagos, Nigeria.

the integration with the Holistic Mission concept.³⁹⁸ Some writers believe that the Pentecostal movement's involvement with engaging their societies for transformation was emphasized by Donald Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori.³⁹⁹ The strongly pushed assertion is that the Pentecostals have been involved in the social, political, and economic spheres in Nigeria. However, as the data has shown in several interviews presented in Chapter 4, these individuals do not think that this social effect is impactful enough, especially when considering the huge sums of money that many of the leaders spend on travels, pleasure, and fame.⁴⁰⁰

The issue of money ranked next as a cause for corruption in the church is the love of money. This worship comes from different areas. For example, as noticed by some respondents and observations from many churches when I was in Nigeria for the research (IP06, and IP020)⁴⁰¹, the rate at which discussions on money were raised in all the churches I attended was alarming; all the churches took multiple offerings.⁴⁰² Another

³⁹⁸ Paul Gifford, *Christianity, Development and Modernity in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

³⁹⁹ Donald Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007); see also Stephen Offutt, *New Centers of Global Evangelicalism in Latin America and Africa* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 151.

⁴⁰⁰ Many of the Pentecostal leaders such David Oyedepo and Enoch Adeboye claim to have scholarships and charities by which they help members of their churches and the society. The problem is that people still think that the community engagement is presently not enough in Nigeria.

⁴⁰¹ Interview with IP006, May 10, 2015; Interview with IP020, May 15, 2015; Interview with IP027, July 26, 2015; Interview with IP076, November 30, 2016.

⁴⁰² In the Anglican Church where I officiated and preached, the number of offerings taken in one service was nine. The most annoying thing was that the congregation went up every time for the various offerings. When I had given all the money in my suit, I had spent the designated sum of \$70, which I intended to give. I asked the assistant pastor how many more times we would be giving. He smiled and said we would still come up three more times. He encouraged me to go to the vestry and check my bag and bring more money. After advising him on the time wasted and pressure on people, he laughed and told me

evidence of the worship of money is the unnecessary recognition of rich people when they attend church services⁴⁰³ This attitude helps exalt rich people without finding out how they made their money.

In Nigeria, Pentecostalism has continued to spread the teaching of prosperity and materialism. The Catholic Bishop of Sokoto state of Nigeria who has been a critic of the popular Nigerian Christianity said, “These Pentecostal pastors are scavenging fortunes in the name of leading souls to God through organization of endless spiritual trade fairs called revivals aimed at indoctrinating ordinary citizens away from the culture of hard work and the need to develop a truly Christian ethic of wealth.”⁴⁰⁴ The singling out of Pentecostals may be difficult to justify because the findings in Chapter 4 prove that numerous church traditions presently have this focus.

The previous point is linked with the foundational problem of a decline in discipleship, as many of the churches in Nigeria do not have time for retreats and Sunday school anymore. Some of the churches still have Sunday school programs, but most of the pastors are not involved, as they are busy doing other things. There is also the problem of unhealthy competition among pastors and members. The most common one concerns the cars the pastors are using, the houses in which they are living, and, for some few, the number of private jets they have.

the people will never give a lot unless they do it that way. Some have even fallen into false prophecy in order to get money from the members of the congregation

⁴⁰³ Interview with IP076, November 30, 2016.

⁴⁰⁴ Mathew Kukah, “Religion, Culture and the Politics of Development” (Public lecture, Lagos, Nigeria, Center for Black and Africa Arts and Civilization, 2007), in Oluwakayode Faleye, “Religious Corruption: A Dilemma of the Nigeria State” *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* 15, no. 1 (2013): 172.

The next cause according to the data is the rate of poverty in Nigeria (see Table 4.11) Many entered the pastoral ministry today because they could not find another job. Since there is no standardized requirement for assuming pastoral work, anyone can then say he or she is called into the ministry. In other places, such as the United States, most churches will require a Master's of Divinity degree before people can be ordained into ministry. After they finish college, they already have something that can give them jobs in any career of their choice. If they want to go on for pastoral work, they will then need to study for three or four years to receive a divinity degree and then have a background check that includes psychological analysis.

The next area that causes corruption as mentioned in Chapter 4 is lack of welfare for the pastor (see Table 4.11). Many pastors who are seniors or general overseers complain of poor remuneration and the lack of security in areas such as retirement benefits. When people do not have security, they have the tendency to want to survive and prepare for their children. This desperation could make people do anything that they may not naturally do. This issue is in line with what some have observed even in civil service in Nigeria.⁴⁰⁵ However, some scholars in recent times have argued against this line of thinking. They believe that paying civil servants or pastors more money will not curb corruption in Nigeria. Ray Fisman and Miriam Golden argue that an increase in salary does not necessarily reduce corruption. Citing a few studies, they assert, "Officials kept taking bribes at the same rate after receiving their pay increase."⁴⁰⁶ They insist that,

⁴⁰⁵ One of the issues raised by many people in career civil service in Nigeria concerning bribery is that the people are not secured after working for over three decades. They, therefore, decide to plan for their future by getting extra funds.

⁴⁰⁶ Fisman and Golden, *Corruption*, 235.

rather than curb corruption, some have argued that officials who would have kept quiet or hidden their lavish lifestyle are able to flaunt it openly, so they are inclined to engage in more corruption.⁴⁰⁷

The other cause includes lack of transparency and accountability (see Table 4.11) Many of the pastors and members of churches in Nigeria are not comfortable with the fact that church finances in many places are conducted in secrecy. Some of the senior pastors will always claim they were called by God and accountable to him alone.

The final cause, highlighted in Table 4.11, is the fact that some of the pastors and leaders in our churches in Nigeria do not have a clear calling for the ministry. This idea may be linked with the previous discussion on the lack of jobs and poverty, which makes people take on a job for which they may not have been prepared.

Church Agency and Change

The Nigerian church is very influential in global Christianity. This influence is a result of the church expansion that has been going on for almost two decades. As Nigerians travel all over the world, others notice a shortage of the Nigerian brand of Christianity, which takes prayers, fasting, and miracles very seriously. Many of them cannot express themselves in dancing and singing in the way they used to; hence, they need *to import* their churches to their new abodes. This endeavor has made the Nigerian church the most influential in the developing world.

Presently, Nigerians lead large churches in Europe and America. They are also able to connect with other migrant communities because they share the same immigration

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., 236

identity and challenges. Within Nigeria, the church has a strong representation among the political class. The former president, Goodluck Jonathan, was an Anglican. The present vice president of Nigeria is a senior pastor of the Redeemed Christian Church of God.

According to the data in Chapter 4 concerning the historical perspective of church agency, the church in Nigeria used to be ethically strong and dependable before the 1980s. Business organizations came to pastors for recommendations on new intakes for their companies, but this experience began to change in the late 1980s and early 1990s, so much so that today no one hears such.

The first problem is the theological and biblical response of the church to corruption. The church in Nigeria has been unable to articulate its stand on corruption by not condemning prosperity theology in its fullness and its various ramifications. Fifty participants representing 40 percent say that the church preaches against corruption from the pulpit and through other activities, but the overwhelming majority, seventy-five participants (60 percent), think that the church does not do anything to preach against corruption.

Importantly, 120 out of the 125 participants in this research assert that the church has encouraged corruption. The type of music most easily sung in many church programs is designed to make people feel good and fight against their enemies. Sermons have not fared better, as they are all about getting physical and material blessings from God. Bad theological premises such as preaching that poverty is a curse as reflected in Chapter 4 is a major problem. The twisting of Scripture for personal ends is the hallmark of theologizing in the present Nigerian religious milieu. The same is similar within Pentecostalism in Kenya as expressed by Gifford: "Pentecostal preaching is not

expository, not doctrinal,... not even ethical in the traditional sense.”⁴⁰⁸ The Bible is used in a magical way by what has been called “ declarative use of the Bible”⁴⁰⁹ without any exegesis of the text in its historical context but used for the purpose of getting something for the well-being of the individual.

Practices that focus on building big church auditoriums everywhere with hungry people all around is not godly. Pressure is put on pastors to get more members and money into the church. Giving pastors financial and numerical targets is a new problematic occurrence. These practices are seriously antithetical to the kind of transformation that good leadership is supposed to provide. The key to producing results in the church should be leadership that is focused on transformation. According to George Barna, John Kotter, and Lee Roy Beach,⁴¹⁰ good leadership is the only thing that can bring about transformation rather than just intimidating people: “It is the process of influencing others towards achieving goals.”⁴¹¹ Organizations need people who can personify the culture’s value. Developing a strong culture for a country or church provides an easier path for coming out of corruption. It is certainly time to agree with the findings in Chapter 4 that the church’s theological response, practices, and attitudes have made it ineffective in an attempt to lead change.

Another serious hindrance to change that some in the church should have been mentioned is the problem of learned helplessness. From the data in Chapter 4, many

⁴⁰⁸ Gifford, *Public Faith in Kenya*, 192.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Kotter, *Leading Change*, 25; Barna, *Leaders on Leadership*, 11; Beach, *Leadership and the Art of Change*, ix.

⁴¹¹ Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy, *Leadership*, 704.

Christians in Nigeria have already given up on the idea of achieving transformational change. They believe the church is so corrupt that no one can do much about it. This attitude is consistent with the theory of learned helplessness from Peterson, Maier, and Seligman, as seen in the literature review, and until the Nigerian church and Christians are able to take a stand against corruption, it will be very difficult to create any change.

As long as churches still pay bribes to government officials to get land documents or building plans or break the law and tip a police officer, transformation will be impossible. If pastors continue without driver's licenses and still bribe traffic police to let them go, or Christians allow their children to go to exam centers where they will be allowed to cheat during national examinations, then it is difficult to make any change.

The next major challenge to the church becoming an agent of change is the faith-word bifurcation. Most Nigerian Christians believe that there is a difference between their church activities, service to God, and their public life in their offices and on the job. The church has not really taught many Christians about this issue. From the data, most of the people I interviewed believe their faith should not be allowed to interfere and interact with their careers. To this type of believers, Kevin Lowry instructs,

Our work provides one of the greatest opportunities we have to grow closer to God.... All of us are on mission for God. Our work, whatever it is, is central to our calling as Christians. On the level of society, our work helps us to pay bills; we have an opportunity to share our talents with others thereby helping us to accomplish meaningful goals. But more than what we have stated above, our work can be used to fulfill God's plan.⁴¹²

Christians are expected to allow the faith they have to permeate every aspect of their lives. Even at their jobs, they are not serving human beings but God. David Wright adds

⁴¹² Kevin Lowry, *Faith at Work: Finding Purpose Beyond the Paycheck* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2011).

to this assertion by affirming that work is one's most important endeavor: "Our jobs may change at different times in our lives, but it will be healthier if we see it as an expression of the work to which each of us has been called."⁴¹³ Wright challenges Christians from the Wesleyan perspective to see that they change the social structure of society, but this work cannot be done without seeing their jobs as the calling that God has given them at the particular time. Doug Sherman and William Hendricks⁴¹⁴ are also of this view; it is the will of God that faith will have an expression in what Christians do throughout the week. This is not happening in Nigeria, and that is why the churches are full on Sundays, but during the week, the same people are caught in various levels of corruption. Whereas many people call for balance in the various areas of their lives in order to cope with the challenge of putting their faith and work together, Ken Eldred suggests that a full integration of their lives is the key. This integrative life allows Christians to put all their lives together as a whole.⁴¹⁵

Finally, one of the subthemes evident is the power factor. The results showed how ministers frequently receive a lot of money by just giving out instructions to their members and church officers. The Chapter 4 data indicates how ministers in the church have abused their authority over people for their own selfish gain. This issue is connected both with leadership theory and the elite theory. Pastors are the religious elite who actually behave in ways similar to the political elite. This is consistent what Alexander

⁴¹³ David Wright, *How God Makes the World a Better Place* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Library Press, 2012), xv.

⁴¹⁴ Doug Sherman and William Hendricks, *Your Work Matters to God* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1987).

⁴¹⁵ Ken Eldred, *The Integrated Life* (Montrose, CO: Manna Ventures, 2010), 30–44.

De Juan says about the religious elite: “Political elites strive for political power.... The primary aim of the religious elite is the protections of their religious communities and the expansion of their religious influence.”⁴¹⁶ Although his assertion was in relation to conflict, this fact is true in other areas. As DeJuan notes,

Political elites cooperate with accepted and influential religious leaders to achieve their political goals. They need their religious authority to persuade the believers of religious nature of the conflict and this get access to religious resources that can be used for mobilization. The religious elite cooperate with strong political actors to get access to material and immaterial resources that help them protect their religious communities, extend their religious influence and thus realize their personal religious agendas.⁴¹⁷

The religious elites and political elites do have a symbiotic relationship in which they both protect and support each other so as to keep their subjects in continued slavery. Here is the major challenge in the power equation: The religious elites continue to use Scripture and their spiritual gifts as means of validating their authority over other people in their congregations. They do not emphasize the truth that all are created in the image of God and all have access to God through the Holy Spirit as Christians. The demand to be called daddy, prophet, and other high-ranking titles is very important to the religious leaders because it helps them create a *persona* that makes them different from other people. In order to bring about the necessary change from corruption to fidelity, the data showed that, there is a major work to be done in leadership.

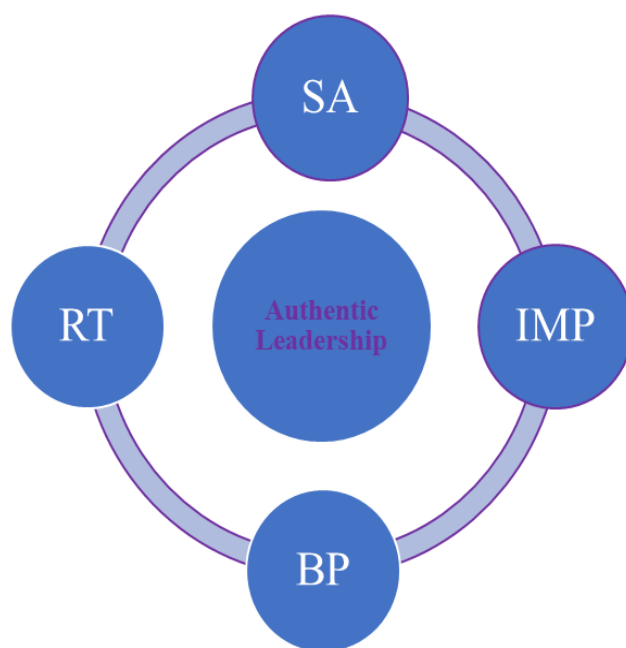
⁴¹⁶ Alexander DeJuan, “A Pact with the Devil? Elite Alliances as Bases for Violent Religious Conflicts,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 31 (2008): 1120–35.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

Leadership Challenge

The last theme for consideration as shown in Chapter 4 is the leadership challenge. Although I could not find any evidence that the church is an agent of change from corruption to fidelity, I gathered from my respondents what they considered to be best leadership practices that could bring this result. They gave a series of suggestions, which I ranked based on the frequency of occurrences as seen in Table 4.12.

Furthermore, I analyzed these practices using the theoretical framework of authentic leadership theory. Figure 5.1 shows how these components interact together to create the authentic leadership theory.



Key:
 SA: Self-awareness
 IMP: Internalized moral perspective
 RT: Relational transparency
 BP: Balanced processing

Figure 5.1. Authentic leadership theory.

The various components of this theory do work together, and they are not in any hierarchical form. As discussed in Chapter 3, Luther and Avolio define authentic leadership as “a process that combines the positive psychological abilities of leaders with functioning organization.”⁴¹⁸ It is a leadership that proceeds from the core value of a person, which results in very original and consistent acts. Nigerian Christians and the generality of the country want leaders who lead from a place of congruence and not the deceptive lifestyles that they see in their leaders today.

Self-awareness is the ability of a leader to understand consciously his or her inner value, strength, weakness, and motivation. This attribute is related to the fear of God, integrity, and a sense of worth as shown in Table 4.12. If leaders are not aware of their weaknesses and strengths, they will not know how to develop and become better. For this reason, many of the pastors in Nigeria have not been able to reach the height of their potential, and they have continued to compare themselves with each other. Such attitudes have led to unhealthy competition, which is part of the reason for corruption.

Internalized moral perspective means that the leader is able to make decisions based on high ethical standards rather just doing things under pressure.⁴¹⁹ The practices related to this perspective are integrity and leading by example. The fact shown in the data in Chapter 4 is that for many pastors in Nigeria, the issue of integrity seems to be underrated, and the accomplishment of people are rated more than their capacity for moral judgment. This is why a man who is not faithful to his wife is still allowed to

⁴¹⁸ F. Luthans and B. J. Avolio, “Authentic Leadership: A Positive Developmental Approach,” in *Positive Organizational Scholarship*, ed. K. S. Cameron, J. E. Dutton, and R. E. Quinn (San Francisco, CA: Barrett-Koehler, 2003), 241–61.

⁴¹⁹ Walumbwa et al., “Authentic Leadership.”

continue to be a leader in many churches. Trust also comes under this component; actually, trust ranked the highest. According to Table 4.12, trust had over 117 in frequency. Many people in Nigeria are interested in leaders they can trust.

The next component is *relational transparency*, which means that the leaders are engaged openly in seeking suggestions and ideas on how they can improve what they do.⁴²⁰ The practices that fit that component are accountability, transparency, and openness. According to the data, many of the respondents think the lack of accountability for church leaders is a major challenge to the fight against corruption both in the church and in the nation. If pastors are not accountable, they do not have the moral justification to speak to politicians to do the same thing. Transparency and openness imply that members are interested in ministers who will accept their vulnerability as human beings.

The final component is *balanced processing*, which conveys the idea of how leaders demonstrate that they impartially analyze important data before making decisions. Simplicity and humility are leadership practices suggested by the respondents (see Table 4.12). The next is empowerment. For these respondents, many leaders in the church in Nigeria have not paid special attention to raising younger leaders and mentoring people.⁴²¹ They have also not been able to pay their staff and pastors comparable remuneration for their work in the church.

⁴²⁰ Walumbwa et al., "Authentic Leadership."

⁴²¹ My D.Min. dissertation on mentoring addressed this issue using the Redeemed Christian Church of God as a case study.

From this theme, it is evident that Nigerians know the kind of leaders they need. If such leaders emerge, then it will become possible to begin to confront the corruption in the church and then the nation of Nigeria.

Missiological Implications

One of the most important things about mission is that; most of Leadership transformation is what mission is all about. The theology of the church has always been derived from its missiological endeavor.

The first missiological implication of this study is *the need for contextualization* in the discourse and definition of corruption. This approach is a major way to understanding the phenomenon of corruption within the context of the Nigerian society. Some of the respondents as indicated in Chapter 4 do not believe that Nigeria is corrupt (see Table 4.9). Forty-five of the participants on defining corruption said either that Nigeria is not corrupt or that they do not think it is corrupt. When the respondents were asked if they think the church is corrupt, twenty-five respondents did not believe that the Nigerian church was corrupt in spite of all the new media and international agencies were saying. It is, therefore, important to note that most of the people who disagreed with the assertion that Nigeria is corrupt do have doctoral degrees. This is why the definition of a phenomenon and concepts could have different meanings for them, which could then create a problem, hence, the need to make the definition of corruption more contextual.

The need for the contextualized definition of corruption for Africans, and especially Nigerians, cannot be overemphasized. Scholars such as Newbiggin and David Bosch opine that the Christian religion is a missionary religion because it is open to the whole of humanity. Newbiggin says, “The Gospel that Jesus preached is the good news of

God's Universal reign,"⁴²² and similarly Bosch adds, "The Christian faith ... is intrinsically missionary."⁴²³ The response to the fact is that the Christian religion should recognize people's culture in order to connect properly with it. The nature of Christian mission is rooted in the nature of God (i.e., *missio Dei*) that necessitates the reaching out as the mission of the church.⁴²⁴ The culture of the people the church is reaching is crucial. Culture is "more or less integrated system of ideas, feelings and values and their associated patterns of behavior and products shared by a group of people who organize and regulate what they think, feel and do."⁴²⁵ The ideas, feelings, and values as presented in the definition of culture is about its three dimensions, which are cognitive, being related to knowledge or wisdom shared by a group of people; affective, which is about the feelings and aesthetics; and, evaluative, which is about their values and allegiances.⁴²⁶ One major challenge Christians continue to face is thinking they know everything about culture, especially when people have read a few books or traveled to a few places outside their environment.

For this reason, special attention is needed when studying a phenomenon outside a person's cultural background. The words of Geertz are instructive as he reveals, "The

⁴²² Leslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), 66.

⁴²³ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (MaryKnoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), 66.

⁴²⁴ This concept has been explored since the Willingen Conference of the International Missionary Council in 1952, pioneered by Karl Barth and Karl Hartenstein in 1934. See Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 390.

⁴²⁵ Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1985), 30.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, 30–34.

man [humanity] is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun. I take culture to be those webs. The analysis of it is ... an interpretive one in search of meaning."⁴²⁷ The goal of anyone eager to succeed is to move from the general thin description to the very intentional thick description.

Because of the complexity of culture, and the need for an in-depth articulation of what happens at any time and how to communicate reactions to various people comes the need for understanding. Paul Hiebert says, "Missions must be far more sensitive to people and their cultures."⁴²⁸ He argues for what he calls critical contextualization, which begins with the exegesis of local culture by studying the local culture then exegeting the Scripture and finding a hermeneutical bridge. In Hiebert's words, "the leader must also have a meta cultural framework that enables him or her to translate the biblical message into cognitive, affective, and evaluative dimensions of another culture."⁴²⁹ The next exercise is what he calls critical response, which allows people corporately to evaluate their own part of the customs in the light of their biblical understanding and to make decisions regarding their response to the truth they have just discovered. Hiebert insists that this exercise is to be done by the local people because understand the intricacies of their culture more than the outsider.

When applying the principle of critical contextualization, individuals are able to think through issues when in difficult circumstances, such as a Nigerian saying no to a

⁴²⁷ Geertz, *Interpretation of Culture*, 5.

⁴²⁸ Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights*, 9.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, 89.

family member who asks for help with a job when in need.⁴³⁰ The idea of condemning gift giving as an act of corruption by Western scholars, as noted in Chapter 2, may certainly qualify for being called *ethnocentrism*.⁴³¹ This implication of contextualization is very crucial. Every attempt to define a concept for Africans has not really worked; the same is true in the situation with corruption. It is much easier for the Transparency International and World Bank sitting in their offices to pass judgment on some people who live in in Lagos Nigeria, and have societal expectations that have not been addressed and call them corrupt people. While at the same time they might see some forms of anomaly in their own culture and call it by another name: lobbying, tipping, so on.⁴³²

Kwame Bediako's warning is very important at this juncture, as he notes that “the significant transforming impact of the Gospel upon the non- Western expectation”⁴³³ He further suggested that what we need to make sure that we should be concerned about how people experience Christ within religious, social, and cultural settings of the African Christians⁴³⁴

⁴³⁰ Although, IP047 said, as seen in Chapter 4, he was able to turn his uncle away when he asked for help for admission for his nephews. The truth of the matter is that he is an exception in a place such as Nigeria. The natural tendency is for individuals to help family members within their places of work if they have the power to do it. An attitude of rejection would be seen as an abomination in many cultures.

⁴³¹ This means judging other people by one's own culture.

⁴³² There is always an explanation when corrupt practices take place in many Western nations, but when the same happens in Nigeria, it is because Nigerians are “fantastically corrupt” (to borrow the language of the former British prime minister when he was talking with the Queen of England about Nigeria).

⁴³³ Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non- Western Religion*(Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 174

⁴³⁴ Kwame Bediako, 174.

According to the data in Chapter 4,⁴³⁵ Nigerian politicians are called corrupt, but the money they steal is housed in London, New York, and Switzerland. They buy private jets and mansions. Knowing that they are Nigerian politicians, some countries take the money and never say anything about it. This is definitely an act of collusion, which has continued to encourage corruption in Nigeria and many African countries.

The thoughts of Chika Ezeanya-Esiobu, a former intern with the World Bank, in a recent TED talk captures the best way to summarize the scenario:

I am convinced that Africa's further transformation, African's advancement, rests simply in the acknowledgement, validation, and mainstreaming of Africa's own traditional, authentic, original, indigenous knowledge in education, research in policymaking and across sectors. This is not going to be easy for Africa; it is not going to be easy for a people who used to be told how to think, what to do, how to go about it. A people long subjected to intellectual guidance and direction of others; be it colonial masters, AID industry, or international news media. But it is a task that we have to do to make progress.⁴³⁶

Ezeanya-Esiobu's words capture so many issues at the same time, but it is very instructive. For example, when preachers who own private jets in Nigeria are condemned, their counterparts in the United States are not under the same attack.⁴³⁷ Scholars and practitioners need to come together so as to discuss what constitutes corruption and how

⁴³⁵ Interview with IP006, May 10, 2015; Interview with IP020, May 15, 2015; Interview with IP027, July 26, 2015; Interview with IP076, November 30, 2016.

⁴³⁶ Chika Ezeanya-Eziobi, "How Africa Can Use Its Traditional Knowledge to Make Progress," filmed August 2017 in Arusha, Tanzania, TED video, 14:09, Youtube, October 31, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=28sa2zGgmwE>.

⁴³⁷ Kenneth Copeland has about 6,000 members in his ministry. Creflo Dollar, Jr. has about 8,000 congregants. Both of these pastors own jets. Bishop Oyedepo has over 100,000 members in his Canaan Land, Ota, Ogun State. He has about four jets, fully paid for without debt, and has never had a problem with money in his church. Pastor Adeboye leads his Holy Ghost services with more than 500,000 people every month and has churches in over 200 countries of the world. He has a jet and has never raised funds to buy it, since the church could afford it at that time. The argument that there are poor people in Nigeria will certainly crumble once we remember that there are many poor people in the United States and other countries of the Western world. The question is whether or not these men are under attack because they are African and do not deserve what their colleagues in America have.

to tackle it in the context of Nigeria. The work of self-theologizing has become very necessary at this time in Nigerian Christianity; this concept is what Hiebert calls metatheology, which is the next step beyond contextualization.⁴³⁸

The next implication is the *discipleship responsibility of the church*. Missiology is more effective when new believers are not left as infants but allowed to grow up. Andrew Walls talked about the indigenizing and pilgrim principles, that Christians should feel at home in their various cultures but also should live as though they do not belong in their cultures. The tension between the two existences is where the church is expected to live.⁴³⁹ According to Hiebert, the Christian religion operates with a “centered set”; therefore, the essentials of the Christian faith remains the same while the peripheral things are for individual differences.⁴⁴⁰ This reality opens Christians as they journey in their faith to various categories of people without compromising the core of the gospel. For example, integrity of the heart, which leads to a good moral life, is core in the Christian faith. The subject of discipleship becomes very important.

In reference to the problem of discipleship Rene Padilla reveals that one major problem with the in the majority world, (in which Africa is a part of) is that we have a church without Theology⁴⁴¹ She attributes these to two factors: the divorce between

⁴³⁸ Craig Ott and Harold Netland, *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2006), 29.

⁴³⁹ See Andrew F Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996); *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002).

⁴⁴⁰ Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections*, 125.

⁴⁴¹ Rene Padilla, *Mission Between the Times* (Carlisle, Cumbria: Langham Partnership, 2013), 114.

evangelism and theology and the concentration of evangelical work on numerical growth.⁴⁴²

The result of the church's inability to do a proper theology as articulated. It has led to the lack of contextualization of the gospel in the different culture; the inability of the church to withstand the ideologies of the day and the loss of the second and third generation of Christians.⁴⁴³

The fact that there is no much church -based discipleship effort was evident in the data in chapter four in which members are systematically taught the Bible. This problem is also echoed by Gifford when he asserts that, what we have in Nigeria is "enchanted Christianity."⁴⁴⁴ This brand of Christianity has been championed by Daniel Olukoya of the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministry, A church with multiple branches all over the world. Gifford is right to explore this emerging Christian imagination from the Nigerian Christian milieu. It is however instructive to mention people like Pastor W. F. Kumuyi or Brother Gbile Akanni considered biblical evangelicals in Nigeria.⁴⁴⁵

The results in Chapter 4 showed a serious deficit in the area of discipleship in Nigeria. Many churches are full of people on Sunday, but throughout the week, the church is faced with the challenge of moving believers from being members to being disciples, which eventually shows in the way they live their lives. Christopher Wright

⁴⁴² Rene Padilla, 118–20.

⁴⁴³ Padilla, 121–23.

⁴⁴⁴ Paul Gifford, *Modernity*, 18.

⁴⁴⁵ Pastor Kumuyi started the Deeper Life Bible Church with members from all over the Nigeria; with emphasis on holy living and integrity. Also, Gbile Akanni is an independent Bible teacher who has done a lot of discipleship work among young people in Nigeria.

offers this insight: “If we are the people of God, what kind of people are we supposed to be? If we preach a gospel of transformation, we need to show some evidence of what transformation look like. So, it involves some ethical dimension. Our gospel is not just to be believed but also to be obeyed.”⁴⁴⁶ Rather than spend a lot of time teaching people how to claim other people’s good and blessings, it may be more profitable for them to learn contentment.

A major challenge to Christianity in Nigeria is what Hiebert calls split-level Christianity: a situation where people claim to be Christians but when there is a problem, they will return to their traditional religions, thereby rendering the gospel of Christ to no effect. In Chapter 4, from the data, I noted that many of the churches are more concerned about buying more seats and constructing more buildings for the church. Churches may begin to question how they will train their members for lifelong discipleship. Gerald Hiestand and Todd A. Wilson insist that the church has suffered from “theological Anemia and Ecclesia Anemia.” The native soil on which theology should be studied is the church, which has been displaced for over two hundred years. They propose that the solution to this problem is the return of the “pastor theologian.”⁴⁴⁷ Such an endeavor will help the church in Nigeria become theologically viable and poised to face the day-to-day challenges from a scriptural perspective. The focus on discipleship should be reawakened in the Nigerian church. As the research proved, there is not much difference in the way the different traditions have handled the problem of corruption from a practical sense.

⁴⁴⁶ Christopher J. Wright, *The Mission of God’s People: A Biblical Theology of the Church’s Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2010), 30.

⁴⁴⁷ Gerald Hiestand and Todd A. Wilson, *The Pastor Theologian: Resurrecting and Ancient Vision*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2015).

The problem that the American sociologist Christian Smith raises about religion among young people in the United States is still very relevant to the Nigerian church; it is a shallow, self-centered religion.⁴⁴⁸ Churches and pastors in Nigeria should begin to develop relevant discipleship materials for the context of public life and the challenges of corruption in the Nigerian society.

The next implication is the need for *public theology and a theology of work*, which prepares Nigerian pastors and Christians to overcome learned helplessness and lack of impact and advocacy for the church. In his highly successful book, John Beckett expresses that it is very possible to be in the public space and bear testimony to the name Christ. Beckett defends the fact that it is possible to have work, family, and faith in a successful balance⁴⁴⁹ because he has successfully done this and has records of various companies that have followed his example. He strongly denies the unhelpful dichotomy that was built in by the Greek dualism where they categorize anything secular as inferior to the sacred.⁴⁵⁰ Other scholars such as Kevin Lowry, David Wright, and Doug Sherman are consistently in support of the view that work has to be seen in light of our spiritual service to God.⁴⁵¹ Gibert Meilaender argues that work makes Christians become co-

⁴⁴⁸ Christian Smith calls this scenario “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism.” See Christian Smith and Patricia Snell, *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁴⁴⁹ Ken Eldred prefers the word *integrated*; see Ken Eldred, *The Integrated Life*. (Montrose, CO: Manna Ventures, 2010).

⁴⁵⁰ John Beckett, *Loving Monday: Succeeding in Business without selling your Soul* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1998).

⁴⁵¹ Kevin Lowry, *Faith at Work: Finding Purpose Beyond the Paycheck* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2011); David Wright, *How God Makes the World a Better Place* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Library Press, 2012), xv; Doug Sherman and William Hendricks, *Your Work Matters to God* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1987).

creators with God.⁴⁵² Knowing that work is actually a very spiritual and sacred endeavor, the mind-set of how believers approach things during work seriously deserves attention. For example, if Christians in Nigeria believe their work is part of their worship to God, then they will not be people on the job who read the Bible, pray, and cheat people at the same time.⁴⁵³

In discussing whether the church prepared Christians for public service in Chapter 4, IP034, who is a Christian politician, affirmed that the church never prepared him for the public service in which he was engaged. He said he asked his church to gather those aspiring to public office for some training on how a Christian should serve God in Nigeria, and he said, “All they did was to pray for us and asked us not to forget the church as we get the political office; they reminded us of paying our tithes faithfully and be willing to help whenever the church needs our help.”⁴⁵⁴ The same experience was what IP045, IP067, IP086, and IP0108 who had served in top public offices in Nigeria as Christians reported.⁴⁵⁵

A Nigerian public theologian was very unapologetic about his view when he argued that the threat to the church in Nigeria is not just Islam but, much more: “the lack

⁴⁵² Gilbert C. Meilaender, *Working: Its Meaning and Its Limits* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre dame press, 2000), 25.

⁴⁵³ I was actually in the market some years ago in Eastern Nigeria, and I was buying some cups of rice. The market was having a weekly prayer service. I observed the other fellow opposite me selling to a customer and praying at the same time. At some point, while the buyer was carried away by the singing and dancing, I saw the lady selling the rice put empty cups into the bucket of rice, still counting as though the cups were full. It was a shocking experience to see a person at the closest proximity to God be able to commit such injustice.

⁴⁵⁴ Interview with IP038, August 9, 2016.

⁴⁵⁵ Interview with IP045, August 10, 2016; Interview with IP067, September 20, 2016; Interview with IP086, December 1, 2016; and Interview with IP108, December 7, 2016.

of Christian public integrity and witness in our society.”⁴⁵⁶ If truth be told, the public image of Christians in Nigeria today is very undesirable. Agang continues, “Christians in Nigeria are dancing on the brink of moral and ethical collapse. Many Christians who hold public office have become corrupt or immoral, betraying their Public Christian testimony. They lack integrity and cannot present a strong moral ethical witness. They lack the virtue of honesty in public life.”⁴⁵⁷ Whereas this comment is painful to many Nigerians, it is very difficult to disprove, hence the need to begin to develop a robust theology of public life for the Nigerian church. Miroslav Volf reiterates that Christians should endeavor to have an engaged faith. He further argues that believers should learn to hold in tension the practice of accommodation and separation from the world.⁴⁵⁸ Lesslie Newbigin adds to this argument when he says that Christians proclaim the gospel by making people understand the gospel message while being witnesses in their deeds. The people of God then become what he calls the “hermeneutic of the gospel.”⁴⁵⁹ For the gospel to thrive, the combination of words and acts is not negotiable. The mission of reaching out, that the Nigerian church has been involved with for almost two centuries, will be more effective if people will live their lives in the public sphere as genuine disciples of Christ.

⁴⁵⁶ Sunday Bobai Agang, “The Greatest Threat to the Church Isn’t Islam—Its Us,” *Christianity Today* April 21, 2017, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2017/may/radical-islam-not-nigerian-churches-greatest-threat.html>.

⁴⁵⁷ Agang, “Greatest Threat to the Church.”

⁴⁵⁸ Miroslav Volf, *A Public Faith: How Followers of Christ Should Serve the Common Good* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2011), 85–87.

⁴⁵⁹ Leslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1989), 221–23.

If the Christians in Nigeria are expecting any major changes, the prophetic assignment of the church has to be fulfilled. The words of the prophet Amos are instructive:

Therefore, because you trample on the poor and you exact taxes of grain from him, you have built houses of hewn stone, but you shall not dwell in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink their wine. For I know how many are your transgressions and how great are your sins—you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, and turn aside the needy in the gate. Therefore, he who is prudent will keep silent in such a time, for it is an evil time. Seek good, and not evil, that you may live; and so the LORD, the God of hosts, will be with you, as you have said. Hate evil, and love good, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.⁴⁶⁰

The mission activity of the church includes the church standing as a voice of challenge to the injustice of the nation. This prophetic assignment is very crucial. The God of the Bible is not silent over injustice and corruption of the nations of Nigeria. Since he does not expect his prophets to be silent, the duty of the minister is to continue to blow the trumpet of alarm to warn people. Respondent IP074 lamented, “We are just under bondage, from the political elite and the religious elite. They have continued to keep us silent and I hope one day, we will be free.”⁴⁶¹ However, there may be no freedom until there is a prophetic encounter that will seek to challenge the status quo. Respondent IP099 said, “I do not really know what we can do. I just keep silent after all these fears, of telling us, not to touch the anointed.”⁴⁶² Many of these people have been cowed by the religious businessmen in the name of pastors and some just not sure what to do.

⁴⁶⁰ Amos 5:11–15, ESV.

⁴⁶¹ Interview with IP074, November 30, 2015.

⁴⁶² Interview with IP099, December 3, 2016.

The Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann offers some ray of hope in becoming a prophetic voice. Brueggemann provides a response that he names *prophetic imagination*. The sacralization of the religious system and their elites has been going on for a long time in Nigeria, but a prophetic imagination begins as the prophets call the people of Israel back to the consciousness of the mosaic prophetic revelation that took them out of Egypt. They continue by criticizing the numbness that has come as a result of not paying attention to God's covenant. This critique creates a place for people to grieve as "the people engage their experiences of suffering and death."⁴⁶³ The prophet, then, energizes the people about a brighter future as they repent and turn from evil. This is the time for lament and grief for anyone who needs to see a change about corruption in Nigeria.

The next important apart from the spiritual voice of the prophet is advocacy. According the Stephen Offutt, et al., if we are following the Lord, we have to speak up for those who have no voices. They affirm that to do real advocacy, Christians must begin with God. Advocacy, they claim, originates from God, and when Christians advocate, they help bring God's kingdom that Jesus came to establish in his life and ministry.⁴⁶⁴

Summary of Chapter

This chapter discussed the various themes raised in data in chapter. I examined the perception of Nigerians about corruption, the way they defined it in light of scholarly

⁴⁶³ Walter Brueggeman, *Prophetic Imagination* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 41.

⁴⁶⁴ Stephen Offutt et al., *Advocating for Justice: An Evangelical Vision for Transforming Systems and Structures* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016), 53–79.

assertions. I also discussed the evidence for the assertions given by my respondents. I further examined the phenomenon of corruption in the Nigerian church and what is evident as we look into the Nigeria church by alluding to the data in chapter and scholarly work. I enumerated the role the church has played as an agent towards encouraging corruption, looking at the leadership challenge and examining the various practices that could help in evolving a culture of fidelity by using the authentic leadership theory.

I finally examined the missiological implications, which includes the need for a contextual definition of corruption; the next is the discipleship responsibility of the church. The following one is a public theology and good theology of faith and work, finally the need for leadership development.

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol

Demographic Information

Name of denomination _____

Educational background _____

How many years have you been a member of this denomination? _____

Age 25–40 () 41–50 () 60–70 ()

Gender: Male () Female ()

Sphere of Influence/service _____

1. Will you agree with the general assertion that Nigeria is a very corrupt country? (RQ1)
2. How can you describe the phenomenon of corruption in Nigeria in comparison to what the international agencies like transparency International? (RQ1)
3. Will you say that there is evidence of corrupt practices in the church in Nigeria, and how may that be different from the larger society? (RQ1)
4. What are some of the causes of corruption in the Nigerian church?
5. Can you recall a time in the history of the Nigerian church and in your church specifically, when things were better than the way they are today? Why do you think things are like this today?
6. Do you think that a person who has greater authority/power over you or related to you could have great influence in affecting your decision negatively? Could you give an example of such encounter and what do you think one can do?
7. How has the church responded theologically to issues of corruption that may have encouraged this practice?
8. Can you describe in your own view how you or someone you know has dealt with the challenge of corruption in real life situation. Do you think the Bible gives a guide on how to handle corruption in Nigeria today? Give some examples (RQ2)
9. In what ways do you think that the church can influence the Nigeria society in the fight against corruption? Do you have examples to show how Christians in Nigeria are successfully fighting the corruption war in moving from corruption to Fidelity? (RQ3)
10. What are some of the leadership practices that can account for measurable changes in the organizations that are progressing from corruption to fidelity (RQ4)

Appendix B

Informed Consent Letter

Progressing from Corruption to Fidelity:

An Exploration of Church Agency in the Nigerian Society.

You are invited to be in a research study being done by Babatunde Oladimeji from the Asbury Theological Seminary. You are invited because:

- A. You are a clergy or lay leader in any of the following churches:
 1. The Anglican Church in Nigeria
 2. The Redeemed Christian Church of God
 3. Evangelical Church Winning All
 4. Christ Apostolic Church/ Celestial Church of Christ.
- B. You are between the age of 30-70 years Old and have been a Christian for not less than 20 years
- C. Presently residing in Nigeria
- D. You have faced the challenge of Corruption one time or the other as you serve in the church and the society

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to be prepared to meet with me or my Research Assistant at an agree time in your house/church or any other convenient place of your choice

Your family will know that you are in the study. If anyone else is given information about you, they will not know your name. A number or initials will be used instead of your name.

If something makes you feel bad while you are in the study, please tell Rev. Dr. Tunde Oladimeji If you decide at any time you do not want to finish the study, you may stop whenever you want.

You can ask Rev. Dr. Tunde Oladimeji questions any time about anything in this study. You can also ask your Pastor any questions you might have about this study.

Signing this paper means that you have read this or had it read to you, and that you want to be in the study. If you do not want to be in the study, do not sign the paper. Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be mad if you do not sign this paper or even if you change your mind later. You agree that you have been told about this study and why it is being done and what to do.

Signature of the person agreeing to be in the Study

Date