CHRISTIANITY
and the struggle
for Social Justice

PRIESTS
PEACE & JUSTICE
INITIATIVE [PPJ]
Acknowledgement

A research work that is meant just for internal consumption is a product of intense work that demands a lot of rigour, hours of painstaking search for not just topical but relevant materials, time given to poring over countless pages of documents, attention to details and long and laborious and finally sifting and scrutinising the end product. Where the research is for external consumption it is doubly harder to undertake and where it involves matters of Christianity and corruption it becomes a task of enormous complexity with possibility for explosive verbal exchanges.

These are two topics for which anyone who has reached the age of knowledge believe he or she has an opinion. Both are known world over to be capable of generating intense passion during discussion. Although corruption is as old as mankind, there is hardly a definition that captures it rather there are acts that constitutes corruption and the debate is still on-going. That is one with a basis for endless argument. However, if corruption defies a readily acceptable definition, there is no doubting the consequences, for they have become part of our daily existence in the abysmal failure of service deliveries in governance, health care, education, housing and has contributed to the increase in poverty, unemployment, insecurity and underdevelopment.

On the other hand, Christianity across the world causes emotions to run high amongst the several adherents. The issues could be as mundane as the days of the week like Sabbath and Sunday, or the calendar for the celebration of Christmas. The doctrinal differences which should be a less divisive issues among people whose foundation is still setting groups against one another while at the deeper level of canons, as the denominations proliferate so the tension is escalating and the gulf between the children of Christ is getting wider.

We are eternally grateful to God for providing the knowledge, understanding and wisdom for the idea of using the Pentecostal perspective in the fight against corruption Nigeria which eventually birthed the campaign of Mobilising Christians against Corruption (MOCAC). There are so many people who contributed to what became the nationwide movement which grew out of this idea. We acknowledge the invaluable role played by Dr. Otive Igbuzor, General Overseer of Palace of Priests Assembly, Dr. Ejiro Otive-Igbuzor, Assistant General Overseer of Palace of Priests Assembly who worked behind to ensure that the mobilization campaign was successful. There are others too numerous to mention and they include Rev. Isaac Komolafe, Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, FCT Chapter, Mr. Collins Ogbu, Centre for
Democracy and Development, Pastor Obiora Ochoku, Realm of Glory, Rev and Pastor Mrs. Oluagbana, Compassion Church, Pastor Ernest Akilele, Christ Gospel Mission International, Pastor Emmanuel Alonge, Redeem Christian Church of God, Rev. Alex Baba, Charismatic Renewal Ministry, Pastor Divine Aju, Redeem Christian Church of God, Rev. Monday Aluola, Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, FCT Chapter, Dr Segun Adeoye, Redemption Ministries, Pastor Joe Ibekwe, Fled Leadership Institute, Mr Augustine Akubo, Givers Embassy and Odoh Deigo, Isu Media.

We would like to appreciate Dr. Kole Shettima and the team at the Nigeria and Chicago office of John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation for the funding and the guidance that made all these achievements possible. Finally, our thanks go to the members and of staff Palace of Priests Assembly for the work and to the publisher for their advice.
**Foreward**

Christianity is over 2,000 years and has a rich history. In the first three centuries, church growth was accelerated by the persecution of the church. In the fourth century, Christianity became the official Roman religion. In the seventh century, Islam was founded. By the tenth century, 50 percent of former Christian areas were under Islam. By the 14th century, John Wycliffe translated the Bible into English and emphasized the sole authority of the scriptures and the priesthood of all believers. In the 16th century, the years of reformation promoted by Martin Luther King and others emphasized justification by faith and priesthood of all believers. The protestant reformation was anchored on three key issues:

1. The sole authority of the scriptures,
2. Justification by faith and
3. Priesthood of all believers.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the emphasis was on revival, missions and holiness. In the 20th century, the emphasis was on Pentecostalism- Holy Ghost baptism and empowerment. With the rise of Pentecostalism, there was emphasis on material prosperity, loyalty to the nation state and individualism and social dimension of the church decreased immensely. This has led to the public perception today that is a challenge to all true Pentecostals. This public perception has led to the non-recognition of Pentecostal Charismatic social contribution of goods and services valued at more than 2.3 billion US dollars and with more than 250 million people in over 100 countries since 1980. The perception is that Pentecostals are only interested in prosperity and not concerned about social issues in society.

The Pentecostal Movement is characterised by emphasis on baptism of the Holy Spirit and the manifestation of the gifts of the spirit. Christian Historians have characterised the Pentecostal movement into three waves:

1. First wave beginning in 1901 with a rediscovery of and a new experience of the supernatural with a powerful and energising ministry of the Holy spirit.
2. Second wave starting in the mainline churches in 1960 with Christians affiliated to non-Pentecostal denominations (Anglicans, Protestants, Catholic, Orthodox) experiencing baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Scholars have pointed out that between Pentecost in Acts Chapter 2 in AD 100 and 1901 when the first wave started is 1,800 years. Some have argued that the 1,800-year period can be regarded as spiritually dead. But others point out that there was a range of spirit
activity during this period ranging from hundreds of cases of prophesy to discernment of spirits and divine healing\footnote{Synan, V (Ed) (2011), Spirit Empowered Christianity in the 21st Century.}

The Pentecostal movement has grown from a handful of believers in the early twentieth century to a global movement now numbering over 600 million people, and those who embrace the Holy Spirit and His gifts are now the fastest growing religious group in the world\footnote{Synan, V (Ed) (2011), Spirit Empowered Christianity in the 21st Century.}. It is continuing to grow especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Today, the countries with the highest number of Pentecostals is in the global south as can be seen from the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Pentecostals 1910</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Pentecostals 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>989,000</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>95,316,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>111,000</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>82,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>53,400</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>76,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>22,000</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>43,920,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
<td>11,800</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>30,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>27,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>22,150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>D.R. Congo</td>
<td>21,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>14,800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Korea</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>14,507,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As shown in the table above, the highest number of Pentecostals are in the global South. Therefore, changes to the content and practice of Pentecostalism can come from the global south. Nigeria occupies a special place in the scheme of things.

When God gave us the vision to establish Palace of PRIESTS ASSEMBLY in 2016, two areas of emphasis was impressed on our hearts- Priesthood of all believers and the social dimension of the church. This is why right from the beginning; we established the Priests Peace and Justice Initiative (PPJ) as the social arm of the Church. It is our contribution to building a peaceful, just and orderly society. It is hinged on the dignity of the human person as created by God and the need to create an enabling environment for evangelism and holistic prosperity (3 John 2). At Palace of PRIESTS ASSEMBLY, we believe that the church should play a role in ensuring democratic governance, peace and stability of society. We see it as a duty to bring biblical perspective to the challenges of democracy, development, insecurity, injustice, service delivery and humanitarian crisis. The vision of PPJ is a world of prosperity and social justice. Our mission is to act as catalysts to empower citizens to reign as Priests and work for peace and social justice.
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We are guided by the values of leadership, empowerment, royalty, integrity and discipleship. PPJ has five thematic areas of focus:
1. Democracy: Elections, transparency and accountability and stewardship
4. Emergency and Humanitarian services
5. Education and Health

The conceptualisation of the SHUN CORRUPTION project is in furtherance of our mission as a church and the mandate that God has given to us. The project is conceived by the Priests Peace and Justice Initiative (PPJ)/Palace of Priests Assembly (PPA) to mobilise Christians, especially Pentecostals, to join the fight against corruption in Nigeria. The project which will be implemented within a period of three years (2018-2020) is supported by MacArthur Foundation. The project will commence with a research on the role of Christians in the fight against corruption and will include the production of a manual on Christianity and corruption; capacity building of Christian leaders and workers; production and distribution of Information, Education and Communication (IEC)/Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) messages and materials; creation of a platform for the promotion of Christian ethics and values; creation of a platform on Christianity and accountability; mobilisation of Christian leaders for credible, free and fair elections; projection of Christian role models; and creation of a movement of Christians advocating and campaigning against corruption from a Christian perspective.

We hope that with this project we will create a platform that will bring together Christian leaders across Nigeria to focus on Christianity and Accountability. The platform will be based on a recognition that there are Christian ethics based on the word of God (the Bible) which should guide the behaviour of Christian adherents. The ethics include holiness, faithfulness, worship, humanitarian spirit, liberality, self-discipline, defence of the poor and oppressed, opposition to cruelty, deceit, luxury and selfishness (Ex 20:3-17; Deut 6:5; Luke 3:10-14; Matt 22: 35-40; Colossians; 1 Peter; John 13:34; John 15: 20; John 13:14-15; Ps 14:6; Is 25:4; Ps 140:12).

As noted above, the conceptualisation of the SHUN CORRUPTION project is conceived by the Priests Peace and Justice Initiative (PPJ)/Palace of Priests Assembly (PPA) to mobilise Christians, especially Pentecostals, to join the fight against corruption in Nigeria.
The overarching goal of the project is to mobilise Christian leaders and workers to join the fight against corruption in Nigeria.

The specific objectives include:

- To empower Christians to advocate and campaign against corruption in Nigeria.
- To enhance the knowledge of Christians on their role in the fight against corruption.
- To create a platform for promotion of Christian ethics, values and accountability.
- To mobilise Christian leaders and workers for credible, free and fair elections.
- To project positive role models to serve as motivation for others
- To mobilise Christian leaders and workers to join the fight against corruption in Nigeria.

The project is being implemented within a period of three years (2018-2020) supported by MacArthur Foundation. The project commenced with a research on the role of Christians in the fight against corruption. The study was commissioned based on the understanding that there are ethical values in Christianity which abhor corruption. The study scoped the Holy Bible in its entirety to document reasons, with scriptural backing/references why Christians should not engage in corruption and why they should fight against corruption.

The focus of the study was on five main research topics:

1. Social Teaching of the Church-The Pentecostal Perspective
2. Christianity and the Struggle for Social Justice
3. Christianity and the Fight Against Corruption
4. Christianity and Political Leadership of Nations
5. Christianity and Accountability

Other aspects of the project include the production of a manual on Christianity and corruption; capacity building of Christian leaders and workers; production and distribution of Information, Education and Communication (IEC)/Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) messages and materials; creation of a platform for the promotion of Christian ethics and values; creation of a platform on Christianity and accountability; mobilisation of Christian leaders for credible, free and fair elections; projection of Christian role models; and creation of a movement of Christians advocating and campaigning against corruption from a Christian perspective.

We are aware that several governments in Nigeria have launched anti-corruption programs since 1966 when corruption was mentioned as one of the reasons for the military overthrow of the then civilian government. Despite the plethora of legislations and agencies fighting corruption in Nigeria, the issue has remained widespread and pervasive partly because the norms and behaviour of citizens have remained...
unchanged. It has reached a level that the members of the public do not seem to disapprove of corrupt activities. Even persons who have been convicted are given heroic welcome at the end of their jail terms and rewarded with extravagant thanksgiving services in churches. But churches are supposed to be the epitome of morality and good conduct. However, the social cognitive theory of behaviour reminds us that behaviour is shaped by personal factors (instincts, drives, traits, and other motivational forces) and environmental factors (situational influences) as shown in the diagram below:

**PPJ Behavioural Change Model**

![Behavioral Change Model Diagram](image)

**Social Cognitive Theory Model**

There is therefore the need to build the personal factors and motivate people to act on the environment to change behaviour in order to maintain public support for anti-corruption. Meanwhile, members of the congregation in the church have a lot of trust in their leaders. The trust is based on embedded Christian values and the solid reputation of the church for meeting the spiritual and physical needs of its members. But there is a huge challenge in the world today. Many people appear not to know what is morally right or wrong. People commit atrocities and post them on the social media. The behaviour of many people, even those who profess religion are guided by secular mindset which is based on the notion that the source of knowledge is not divine as against religious mindset anchored on revelation from God. But it is clear that secular mindset has limited scope of its worldview to the physical aspect of life only and does not play a crucial role in shaping moral character as religion. Unfortunately, as from the 16th century, the years of reformation promoted by Martin Luther King and others leading to the growth of the evangelical and Pentecostal movements neglected the social teachings of the church. The result is that many professing Christians not only participate in corruptible transactions but do not take any action among their members or participate in the larger society to fight corruption. There is therefore the need to improve the knowledge of Christians, motivate them and provide a platform for them
to join the fight against corruption.

This booklet is based on the research that has been conducted as indicated above. It is grounded in the scriptures and will be very useful to Pentecostals across the world. It is our expectation that with this and other efforts, the face of Pentecostalism will change not only in Nigeria but across the world.

Pastor Otive Igbuzor, PhD
General Overseer, Palace of PRIESTS ASSEMBLY, Abuja, Nigeria.
23rd May, 2020
Preface

There is an urgent call for the rescue of the Nigerian nation from the grip of corruption and the attendant malicious crisis spurned over the years. So much seems to have been done but much more requires to be done because the approaches hitherto used, including several declarations of wars on corruption by different administrations in the country to deal with the scourge of corruption have not created the expected impact. Scholars have written volumes on the causes, costs and consequences of corruption in the country while the anti-corruption war can boast of a few success stories, but victory is still largely a mirage. Those solutions have fallen dismally short in providing relief in the war against corruption.

Apparently, what is missing is the failure to mobilise the people through a language and a system that they can readily understand and relate to in their daily lives. For Christians especially, this language is that of faith and the authority of the Scriptures. Faith is the instrument with which a Christian can have a firm hold on the flow of life and provide an inspirational framework to act with conviction and courage while also acting as a check. This is the background to the publication of this pamphlet. The pamphlet is therefore a tool for mobilizing Christians across Nigeria through the Pentecostal perspective to join in the fight against corruption.

This pamphlet, along the others is a creation of an intensive and extensive research by a group of writers who were propelled by their passion to frontally tackle corruption through an evangelical-type approach that takes the content of the Bible and reproduces the instructions, promises, principles and sanctions in a simple manner to reflect God's position in dealing with the challenges of corruption. However, this pamphlet read together with others in the series is not just about corruption, but a bouquet of other related issues that will help to make the fight against corruption meaningful and effective. The other pamphlets are Christianity and the Fight against Corruption, Christianity and Accountability, Christianity and Political Leadership of Nations Christianity and the Struggle for Social Justice.

The researches were further validated by another group of Pentecostal Christians scholars and leaders who subjected the work and their content to a rigorous analysis session, vetted it and gave a stamp of approval as a body of literature ready and appropriate for use to mobilise the Pentecostal community in the fight against corruption.
As a result, its content is made simple and easy to read, understand & applied along with others in the series among which are the role of the Church in promoting accountability, the Church and the struggle for social justice, the Church and the Social Dimension of Christianity, the Church and political leadership of nations as well as the role of the Church in elections in Nigeria. The pamphlets will serve as the literature for reading along with the Bible for training, instruction & edification on winning the war against corruption. It is good for pastors for whom it is originally intended but it is also a keepsake for those, who must be carried along in the fight against corruption. In this way the message will reach a very large segment of the nation and dwell richly in the heart of all those that will read it and use it for good works.

This pamphlet is conceptualized to be an enduring work for generations to come on the strategy to fight corruption by Pentecostals. Our prayer is that this pamphlet will both be spiritually and intellectually stimulating for everyone who will read it and be galvanized, energized & emboldened by the Spirit of God to be enlisted into the rank of those prepared to speak against & stand against any form of corruption wherever it may occur across the nation. In addition, we encourage anyone who will want to take this pamphlet just as we regularly use tracts to spread the message & become Anti-Corruption Champions in Nigeria.
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Christianity and the Fight for Social Justice

Dr. Sam Amadi
Evangelical Christianity and the Anticorruption Campaign in Nigeria

Introduction:

A project to examine the place of corruption in evangelical or Pentecostal Christianity is one that demands real consideration. It must examine the biblical warrant for asking Christians to commit to fight against corruption. If this world is passing away and everything in it, should we pay such a big attention to how the world is governed? This is not an academic question. Some of the indifference of Christians to the social events and crises relate to how they have answered this question. In Nigeria, many have observed that evangelicals have been missing in serious engagement with social issues like corruption and good governance. This indifference, compared with the Catholic intense engagement with questions of justice and peace, demands an explanation and a new approach.

The paper reviews the landscape of social engagement by evangelical Christianity in Nigeria and argues that the lack of active engagement by evangelicals with issues of social justice, particularly corruption is a result of lack of compelling and orienting theology on Church and society and the absence of a programmatic intervention. The paper investigates the complexity of evangelical theology that may create an indifference to the realities of injustice in the society and offer some practical steps towards engendering intense commitment to anticorruption by evangelicals in Nigeria.

The Corruption Problematic:

Corruption now represents one of most serious challenges to human welfare and social justice in the world. Nigeria’s development failure is partly a result of failure to utilize its enormous natural resources to invest in critical human and physical infrastructure that engender economic and social development. Corruption takes away the financial resources to build infrastructure for growth and wellbeing. As important as resources are for development, utilization is more important. Waste and corruption could negate the impact of natural endowment. The resource curse is not just that abundant resource could create a perverse incentive to overlook investment in critical drivers of development. it also means that abundant resources may induce corruption. The recent Global Corruption Barometer reports that 12 out of 13 countries with the worst bribery cases are in Africa. The African Development Bank (ADFB) estimates that corruption cost Africa up to about 50% in lost revenue. The African Union estimates that about 25% of Africa’s revenue is lost to corruption yearly. That is about $148billion\(^1\). The John

https://guardian.ng/opinion/how-corruption-destroys-the-nigerian-economy/> accessed on June 25, 2018
CHRISTIANITY AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Hopkins University political economist, Professor Peter Lewis, in Growing Apart: Oil, Politics and Economic Change in Indonesia and Nigeria, argues that Indonesia achieve some significant transformation more than Nigeria because of the perverse rent-seeking amongst diverse and assorted groups of elites\(^2\).

Africa is the most underdeveloped continent. Even as the world has recorded massive decline in poverty, especially on account of the gigantic efforts of China to lift millions from extreme poverty in about two decades, Africa continues to post overwhelming statistics of the growth of poverty. It is arguable that if Africa has prudently utilized its abundant natural resources to upgrade its human and physical infrastructure it would have been able to achieve significant improvement in economic growth which historically results in massive reduction in poverty levels. Africa's story of missed opportunity tells a story of the negative consequence of corruption. Nigeria is a posterchild of Africa's failure in development. The recent report from a US policy thinktank confirms that Nigeria has overtaken India as the country with the highest number of poor people in the world. This is significant considering that Indian population is more than 8 times Nigerian population. The report also argues that Nigeria will have the fastest growth in poverty in the world in the years ahead. Clearly, whether we measure poverty in terms of income or vulnerability, Nigerian are evidently becoming poorer and poorer. The latest available statistics in Nigeria show that extreme power is between 70-60%.

The relationship between corruption and poverty is much nuanced. But grand corruption- large scale theft of public finance- bears significant responsibility for extreme poverty in Nigeria. By some estimation, Nigeria has earned more than N3 trillion in oil receipts since independence. A significant part of the revenue was stolen and stashed abroad in foreign banks by Nigerian rulers. Recently, the Switzerland released about $500million as part of the loot from Nigerian treasury by late military dictator, General Sani Abacha. This is just a tranche of what one Nigerian Head of State stole from the treasury. There is a clear urgency to combat grand corruption if Nigeria has any chance of exit extreme poverty and achieving sustainable economic growth to improve human welfare.

\(^2\)Peter M. Lewis, Growing Apart: Oil, Politics and Economic Change in Indonesia and Nigeria (University of Michigan Press, 2007)

\(^3\)See for further information on the trends in global poverty <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/two-trends-in-global-poverty/> accessed on June 29, 2018
Corruption is both a sin and an injustice. As a sin it violates the divine covenant of leadership. The Bible teaches that leadership or governance is a two-sided covenant: a covenant between God and the people and a covenant between the leader and God. At the heart of this covenant is a commitment to pursue justice with the people and righteousness with God. Justice and righteousness are at the heart of the leadership obligation. This is amply reflected in Deuteronomy 16:17-19 where God required the new nation (Israel) to appoint judges who will render 'righteous' judgement and follow 'justice and only justice'. See also Job 37:23 and Isaiah 28:17. When a leader deals corruptly, whether by pillaging the society or abrogating the rights of the people he has violated the covenant with God and the people. So, the social contract which was powerfully articulated in Deuteronomy 17:16-20 derives from the divine contract.

Corruption is also an injustice against the people. From a biblical perspective, the purpose of government is to promote the good. The ultimate good of human society is to ensure the people live in peace and prosperity so they will serve God acceptably. So, corrupt leaders that deprives the people of the resources which God has bestowed on them is a violation of the rights of the people. In secular scholarship, there is a growing understanding that corruption is a violation of human rights. It has moved from a leadership misdemeanor to a fundamental human rights violation. By covenant, the people are entitled to good governance. The leader who God appoints must, as King David put it in 2 Samuel 23, rule justly and in the fear of God. The result of good governance is prosperity (grass will sprout). Bad governance, which is mostly represented by grand corruption, is a denial of justice to the people. It is not just a sin against God. It is also a deprivation of social and economic justice to the people.

Evangelical Christians have a responsibility to stand against corruption because corruption is a sinful social order that militates against the purpose and plan for God for governance of human society. But, unfortunately, the reality is that evangelicals and Pentecostal Christians, in fact the entire community of protestant Christianity has not stood out clearly in the anticorruption campaign and advocacy. This seeming lack of commitment to fight against corruption may stem from failure to have a balanced biblical understanding of Christian commitment to social justice and how corruption violates social justice. This paper will examine why this is so. Furthermore, the lack of commitment to an anticorruption agenda negatively impacts on the mission of the

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1 Julio Bacio-Tarracino, Corruption as a Violation of Human Rights<file:///C:/Users/samad/AppData/Local/Packages/Microsoft.MicrosoftEdge_8wekyb3d8bbwe/TempState/Downloads/SSRN-id1107918%20(1).pdf> accessed on June 29, 2018
church. It has deprived the church of the credibility to evangelize effectively. This failure also affects the transformation of society.

In Nigeria today, the Christian voice is not loud and clear on the questions of peace and social justice. As Nigerians and their leaders struggle with insecurity, corruption and poverty many people everywhere express disappointment at the loud silence or at best muted intervention of Christian leaders and Christian ministries. The social media is a good barometer of national disappointment with the Christian stewardship in this regard. We recall the general outrage that greeted the message of the General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) at the killing of one the pastors of the church by Islamic fundamentalists in a suburb in Abuja. He has prayed that the Church was more interested in the killers repenting and becoming pastors so they will preach the word of God than in justice. The statement set off wide ranging criticism of Christian leadership in many social media platforms. Many alleged that Christians leaders are more concerned about the financial and numerical health of their congregations rather than on the 'weightier matters' of justice for the oppressed.

Of course, sentiments and statements on social media should not become the measure of truth or the basis of setting an agenda for the church. But it is a good measure of the sense of disappointment of the very people that the church ought to lead to salvation. More important, many of the incensed commentators on social media who call out these generals of the church identify themselves as evangelical Christians. So, clearly, there is a general perception that the Church is punching below its weight in matters of social justice and peace in Nigeria. The little kept secret is that the record of members of the church in matters of corruption, especially corrupt management of public finance has been at best depressing. We have read reports of professed Christians whose record of stealing would even shamed unbelievers. With such reputation, many believe that the church lacks the credibility to stand up for justice and good governance in Nigeria.

But, despite these contradictions, evangelicals and Pentecostals must rediscover commitment to the fight against corruption as part of the proclamation of divine sovereignty and divine justice. The message of anticorruption is part of the message of justice and peace, which ought to be the central to the message of salvation in Christ Jesus. The evangelical and Pentecostal church should not be blackmailed to abandon the work of justice and peace. We must retrieve the tradition from the ruins of bad testimony and take the message of justice to the distraught and hopeless world. But to be steadfast in the work of justice and peace we need to ground our commitment to justice and peace in the depth of the Christian message of salvation.
Why Should an Evangelical and Pentecostal Christian Care about Fighting Corruption? Does God really Care about Justice?

Is advocacy for peace and social justice central to the Christian witness? Or are Christians advocating on issues of justice and peace as ancillary commitment arising from circumstances? Is our engagement in justice and peace principled or merely strategic?

The crisis we face today is a crisis of idea. For some time now Christianity has been responding to social trend instead setting the trend. We have lost control of the intellectual leadership of civilization. Although Christian values so called are still the backbone of what we refer as western civilization, those values are no longer consciously being linked to Christianity as a religion but to universal values that are accessible to everyone who exercises the minimum functions of rationality. I will say a little bit more about this intellectual crisis at the heart of waning influence of Christianity and its failure to achieve its mission in the world. But for now it is sufficient to state that we ought to begin this discussion with a clear statement of the scriptural basis of Christian commitment to justice and peace in order to recover clarity about how the church should engage with issues of justice and peace.

There is no doubt that the Christian message of salvation in Christ Jesus is rooted in peace and justice. The Catholic Church has a developed theological heritage on justice and peace. In many parishes of the Catholic Church there are functional Justice and Peace Committee, usually chaired by a priest and engaging the laity in a critical part of the apostolic work. I cut my teeth in justice and peace advocacy with the Catholics and was once the coordinator of a think-tank for Catholic Bishops to formulate ideas for justice and peace work. But mainstream evangelicals and Pentecostals have not made a structural accommodation for justice and peace as a ministry of the Church. This lack is both a cause and consequence of the diminished place of justice and peace in the theology and

The starting point for retrieving the scriptural basis of commitment to justice and peace is the prophetic tradition. The Christian religion and its sister, Judaism, are unique because of the prophetic tradition. The prophets in scriptural tradition are unique personas because they bridge the gap between God and man. Unlike other wise men and priests in other religions prophets translate spiritual principles into earthly programs. God speaks through the prophets who are often referred to as ‘God’s man’. That divine privilege of prophetic proclamation gives an opportunity for divine self-disclosure. The prophetic tradition in the Bible takes the form of non-conformism. The prophet takes his stand on behalf of God, stands on an Olympian height, surveys the
acts of nobles and commoners alike and issues a declaration that is often a denunciation. The prophetic tradition dates even as early as Moses in the scripture. Moses was the ultimate prophet who God sent, not just to stand up against Pharaoh and denounce the injustice and oppression of the people of Israel, but also to organize and lead the people into freedom and justice. The prophetic tradition has always been focused on twin pillars of freedom and responsibility. In his book, America's Prophet: Moses and the American Story, Bruce Feiler identifies these pillars thus, “The first is freedom. In times of oppression, slavery, or pain, the story suggests, human can cry out and God will liberate them from their distress”. As God told Moses at the 'Burning Bush', “I have surely seen the afflictions of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters.”

But freedom is not the only pillar of the prophetic tradition starting from Moses. The second pillar is responsibility. “Freedom”, says Bruce Feiler, “must be accompanied by the second pillar of the story: responsibility. In the Bible, this notion is captured in the word, brit, or covenant, an agreement between two parties to perform and/or refrain from certain activities”. Feiler argues that the founding fathers of the United States succeeded because they seared this twin pillars into the fabric of American life. The new republic was founded on the need to protect freedom and entrench responsibility. The prophetic proclamation is that God has bestowed freedom on mankind and have also entrusted responsibility to mankind to serve him in the spirit of freedom and righteousness.

The key point of this analysis is that the prophet is a social realist. He or she focuses on the realities that the people confront every day and brings divine perspective to define and transform the realities. The key difference between the prophet and other social commentators or critics is that whereas the latter critique or challenge the social realities with wisdom from this world, the prophet challenges earthly realities from the perspective of heaven. He condemns the evil and corruption of power on behalf of the God who rules amongst men and within nations. Dan 5: 21

*The Sovereignty of God and the Concept of Justice:*  
In the prophetic tradition of the Bible we see four distinctive characterizations of God. The first is the characterization of God is as a sovereign. The sovereignty of God is to some people a scandal. The British rational philosopher, Sir Bertrand Russell, has argued vehemently against the existence of God by appealing to what he considers the scandal of God who although omnipotent and all-good yet could not overcome evil. In
his view, either God is not almighty and therefore has to tolerate evil despite himself or he is almighty but not all-good and therefore accommodates evil.

We have also seen amongst theologians an attempt to defend the existence of God despite evil. This branch of theology is called ‘theodicy’. Some of the philosophers of religion like John Hick and Alvin Plantinga have offered defense of God and his goodness and almightiness. One of the defenses is to argue quite persuasively that this world- in all its tragedies- is the best world God would have made and still preserved human freedom. In other words, any other possible world that would have removed the possibility of evil would need the restriction of human freedom. That would be a very bad world. Recently, the late atheist Christopher Hitchens tried to ridicule religion in his book, God is not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything.

While Hitchens focused more on the irrationality of religious beliefs generally, Bertrand Russel in his book, Why I am not a Christian, dwelt on the scandal of omnipotence. How could God be omnipotent and good and still injustice and oppression are writ large everywhere. But the Hebrew prophets have a perfect answer to him. Despite injustice God is a sovereign. He governs even through the oppression of the wicked. The story of the exodus is an eternal message of hope that God sees all injustice and works to finally judge the oppression of the wicked.

All through history God has intervened in the history of mankind to stop oppression and judge wicked oppressions. We saw that in the drowning of the Egyptians in the Red Sea. When God called Moses to organize the liberation struggle, He told Moses that He has heard the cries of anguish of the oppressed Jews (Exodus 3:6-9. See the entire story of the exodus in Exodus Chapters 3-6. It was the same God that summoned the black civil rights activists to successfully challenge racism in the United States. Bruce Feiler's book: America's Prophet: Moses and the American Story tells the story well. The same God intervened in South Africa to end apartheid.

In Exodus, God declared “I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians and to bring them out of that land to a good and broad land, to a land flowing with milk and honey.”

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1 Bertrand Russell, Has Christianity Made Useful Contributions to Civilization? (1930)
2 Alvin Plantinga, God, Freedom and Evil (Eerdmans, 1989); see also John Hicks, Evil and the God of Good (New York, Harper and Row, 1978)
3 Christopher Hitchens, God is not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything (Twelve, 2009)
(Exodus 3:7-8). The same God also declared that he saw oppression and there was no one to intervene and he had to intervene to reverse the course of injustice.

The apparent triumph of injustice and what seems like divine impotence in the face of injustice has no place in scriptural tradition. The God of Israel, the God represented by the Hebrew prophets is better defined as the God who takes up a case against injustice. He is the God who charged us through his prophet, Micah, to 'do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God’ (Micah 6:8). The sovereignty of God in the scriptures includes the important fact that he has fully control over injustice. He will end the reign of terror and restore liberty to the oppressed. This is why he has anointed his son, Jesus Christ “to bring good news to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of prison to those who are bound” (Isaiah 61:1-3).

The Justice of God and the Scandal of Injustice:

As Christian we need to appreciate another important characterization of God: his justice. Justice is not just what does engage in. It is his nature. When God disclosed himself to Abraham, he could not hide this aspect of his personality. He announced himself as the God of justice. He is the God who gives everyone according to the work of their hand. He is God who does not show partiality. God is a God of justice (Isaiah 30:18). By him actions are weighed. This disclosure of God as a God of justice is so authoritative that when Abraham wanted to remonstrate with God on the planned destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, he chided God by the attribute of justice. Abraham wondered whether the God of all the earth will not do justice. God had to justify his name as God of justice (Genesis 18:23-25). The scandal of injustice will not last because God is a God of justice. God’s commitment against injustice is a matter of proving his nature. To know God is to know his love for justice. God sovereignty and rule over the earth is based on the principle of justice. Justice is the measure and essence of divine sovereignty (Isaiah 28:17).

The Compassion of God and the Scandal of Injustice:

God is not just almighty and just he is also compassionate. As the Bible puts it, God's compassion does not fail even in the face of the most gruesome atrocity or injustice. It is the compassion of God that made him to identify with the horrendous suffering of Israelites. According to Gary A. Haugen in his book, Good News about Injustice: A Witness of Courage in a Hurting World, “The word compassion comes from two Latin words: passion meaning 'to suffer' and cum meaning 'with'. To say that God has
companion for the victims of injustice is to say that he actually 'suffers with' them. At the root of God's compassion is the fact that he sees, witnesses, directly observes the suffering of the abused”. God shares identity with those who suffer injustice no matter who they are and where they are. The prophets of Israel were unpretentious in their depiction of God. The same God who rained plagues on Pharaoh and the Egyptians for the gross injustice against the Jews is the same God who chastised Israel for failing to show justice and mercy to other peoples.

The compassion of God is tied to his justice because even in exercise of judgement he shows compassion for those who suffer. In Exodus 22, God laid a major decree on the execution of justice which ties every enforcement of justice to the principle of compassion. The decree provides that “If you take your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, return it to him by sunset, because the cloak is the only covering, he has for his body. What else will sleep in? when he cries out to me, for I will hear for I am a compassionate” (verses 26-27). This could be the beginning of the doctrine of equity. The rigor of legal justice must be modulated by the tenderness of compassion. So, even though it is just to enforce a contractual obligation once such enforcement will result in the loss of life or dignity of the offending party, compassion will compel the exact terms of the contract to be superseded. The cloak must be returned before night, so the poor debtor does not die from cold or suffer indignity.

A compassionate God fights for justice because “The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed… He does not ignore the cry of the afflicted (Psalm 9:9,12). He will arise and fight to protect the weak and the needy from those who oppress them (Lamentation 3:36). He will gorge out the wages of the workmen who mowed the fields from the masters who have swallowed their wages. This is a most radical declaration of commitment to justice based on compassion for the oppressed and abused.

The Call of God against Injustice

Because God is a sovereign who has identified himself with justice and compassion, he has called his people and whoever will work together with him to fight for justice. One of the greatest ironies in the scripture is the failure of the people of God to recognize this call and to rise to it. Israel is a special people of God. God broke protocol to intervene in the affairs of a sovereign nation- Egypt- just to answer to Israel's cry of persecution and oppression. He orchestrated the most furious military action to effectuate the liberation of the oppressed Israelites.
Unfortunately, many people see this divine solidarity with Israel as unprincipled preference. They wonder why God should take side in such unprincipled strategic power tussle between the Jews and their neighbors. The truth is that God is not partial. He did not act sentimentally with the truth. The intervention of God on behalf of the Jews in Egypt and throughout their journey to the promised land is principled intervention to disclose his character of justice and to summon the whole humanity to the way of true peace and justice. Israel was designed to be model to other nations on the principles of justice and peace that will define earthly life. Expectedly, Israel gloated in their liberation and forgot that as a nation their mandate is a call to justice and peace. In the law that God laid for the new nation he emphasized dignity and freedom for the stranger based on recognition of the liberation of Israel from captivity in Egypt.

Throughout history, the exodus story has become a recurrent symbolism in the struggles for justice and freedom in the world. Though Israel missed the message, but the message has become dramatized through history that the Church can't miss it again. There is no partiality with God. Every exercise of deliverance or liberation God does on our behalf is a call for us to enlist and help God achieve justice and peace on earth. He is God who call for justice. His call to Israel is the same call to the church: do justice, show kindness and walk humbly with your God.

_The Christian Heritage of Fighting for Justice:_
The prophetic tradition continued with the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus never wavered in the commitment to justice and peace. His foremost religious action was taking the scroll in the synagogue and reading straight from the book of Isaiah 61 and declaring to the bemused religionists that the prophesy has been fulfilled in him. In other words, he is the only one that God has specially anointed to preach deliverance to the poor, set the captive free and declare liberty to all who are oppressed. What a claim! And this set the path for clear confrontation between Jesus Christ and the religious and political status quo.

After that message at the synagogue every other thing Jesus did or said was in furtherance of that mission. The life of Jesus was a life of confrontation with structure and ideas that held people captivity and bolstered unjust social order. He called the wicked political leaders and the suppliant religious establishment that aided and abetted the oppression of the poor and needy. This oppression is both spiritual as well as physical and social. At the heart of oppression is sin and its radical cure is repentance and reconciliation with God. The results of sin are social and spiritual alienation that manifest as violence, oppression and abuse of human dignity that we see in many
guises and forms. We will say more later about the distinctive and authentic message of Jesus Christ.

The early Christians kept faith with the core principles and mission of Jesus Christ. Although the disciples were focused on evangelism after the death of Jesus, they recognized the priority of justice and righteousness. They established the first nearly perfectly just social system amongst themselves where everyone was treated equally, and all their needs were met. They ensured equity and justice in their community and continued the tradition of confronting wicked governance systems with the liberating truth of the gospel. They continued to 'do justice, show kindness and walk humbly with your God" as God commanded through prophet Micah.

The early church fathers did not abandon the commitment. The edifice of human rights and democracy was built with the words and blood of Christian leaders throughout the age. Scholar of democracy and liberalism like Pierre Manet, have argued convincingly that the democracy is a product of religious crisis at the heart of western civilization. That crisis is the question of how church, particularly the Roman Catholic Church, should relate with the sovereign state. Those who pushed the envelope for the emergence of Westphalian state and its democratic credentials were Christian leaders who searched for a social order that will allow the unhindered practice of Christian faith.

The philosophers of democracy, especially John Locke who deeply influenced the US democracy, were professing Christians who understood from their Christological perspectives that the only formula for a peaceful society is to entrench the right of freedom of belief and conscience and to get the state as much as is possible out of religion. Careful reading of the major political texts of western civilization like John Locke's *Essays Concerning Human Understanding*, *Two Treatises on Civil Government* and *A Letter Concerning Toleration* were Christian apologias.

**The Closing of the Christian Mind:**
What happened to this illustrious history of commitment to social justice? Are Christians leaders still at the forefront of addressing issues of social justice and global peace? Of course, not. What changed?

There was a gradual closing up of the Christian mind. Christian thinkers and leaders became shy of the gospel truths. It took a series of reactions to close down the Christian mind. The major cause of this was the rise and spread of liberalism. Immanuel Kant was a pioneer in the influences that created a virus known as liberal Protestantism that forced the Christian mind to close to the gospel of justice. Immanuel Kant is famous for
his categorical imperative in moral philosopher. He produced the Copernican revolution in epistemology, the study of knowledge. He distinguished between the noumenal and phenomenal world. The 'noumenal' realm refers to the physical world that exists outside the mind while the 'phenomenal' realm refers to the world as represented in the mind, that is the world as it appears.

This was a major change of perspective that damaged moral realism and objectivism. Since our knowledge of the world is phenomenal, that is as it appears to us, we cannot lay too much stock on what we know. This revolution seeped into theology through the agency of German theologian, Friedrich Schleiermacher, the father of modern liberal theology. Borrowing from Kant he argued that theology is within the phenomenal world. God exists in the noumenal world. But we cannot have the knowledge of God as he is. We are left with knowledge of God as he appears to us. Thus, theology is not 'the study of God himself' but rather, 'the study of the human experience of God'.

Many theologians like Albrecht Ritschl and Adol von Karnack radicalized this perverse insight to undermine some fundamental doctrines relating to the person of Jesus Christ, the inerrancy of the Bible and the problem of sin. Liberal Protestantism manifested as 'social gospel' which became strong in the United States in 19th and early 20th century. The social gospel movement tied salvation and good works together through the emulation of the life of Jesus Christ.

On its face, the social gospel may not represent much deviation from the gospel of salvation in Christ Jesus. But because it sprang from the fountain of Liberal Protestantism it was viewed with much distrust by the mainstream orthodox evangelical churches and movements. The rejection of the social gospel and its strong emphasis on social justice and good works fell into the path of many reactions to doctrinal errors in Christianity.

The first of the reaction was the reformation in the 16th century pioneered by Martin Luther's 'sola scriptura': scripture alone. This was a reaction to Catholic church attempt to include other sources of inspiration, including ex cathedral statements of the papacy. Protestantism followed suit in the 17th and 18th Centuries based on the works of Martin Luther and John Calvin. The many denomination that identified as protestants all agreed on the authority of the Bible as the breathed word of God that was sufficient for instruction and guidance in life.

The rise of liberalism has a devastating impact on Protestantism. The publication of the Charles Darwin's Origen of Species in 1859 spelt trouble for Protestantism. It shook
CHRISTIANITY AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

faith in creationism and ultimately on God of creation. In the 20th Century, liberalism was relaunched with the scopes trials, better described as The State of Tennessee v. John Thomas Scopes where a school teacher was arraigned for teaching evolution contrary a Tennessee law. The trial mobilized the media and civic leaders against Christianity and further radicalized liberal rebuff of the Christian gospel. This influence seeped in universities across the United States.

The reaction to extreme liberalism Protestantism is fundamentalism in the 19th and 20th Century. This movement was led by such Christian leaders like Billy Graham, Carl Henry and L. Henry Nelson. It led to the formation such Christians icons like Fuller Theological Seminary, International Fellowship of Evangelistic Students and Tyndale Publishing House to counter the influence of liberalism. 1909 a major effort was made to publish a magisterial work of Christian fundamentalism, titled *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to Truth 1910-1915)*.

The fundamentalist reaction to extreme liberalism is to shut off from social gospel and its commitment to dealing with issues of social justice. As the editor of the English Standard Version Study Bible put it, “In short, the fundamentalism of the decades immediately fulling the scopes trials retreated from any aggressive intellectual engagement on behalf the Bible's truth with their culture's most educated elites, and also withdrew from any intentional efforts to address the physical and social needs of society”

The shutting off the Christian mind through fundamentalism of the sort that disengages from social question troubled many Christian thinker. One of such thinkers is the Harvard professor, H. Richard Niebuhr, who argued in *Christ and Culture (1956)* that “The many-sided debate about the relations of Christianity and civilization is as confused as it is many-sided”. Niebuhr defined 5 categories of Christian reactions to the world: Christ of culture; Christ and the church in paradox; Christ against culture; Christ above culture; Christ the transformer of culture. Three of those categories looked at Christianity and culture in a congenial sense. Either the essence of culture is captured by Christ and his teaching or they can lie side by side. The other categories focus on the conflict between the person, work and words of Jesus and culture and either argue that Christ stands above culture or transforms culture.

It would seem from the pessimism expressed by Dr. Niebuhr that the confusion generated by the attempts to reconcile Christ and culture is very deep and seemingly unmanageable.
How do we recover the tradition of fighting social justice without losing evangelization?

We must recover the tradition of caring for the economic and social conditions of human existence because that is in keeping with our mission as witness of the life and truth of God that is in Christ Jesus. We can no longer continue to violate our call as a church. We have to become the change agent that we are called to be. We have to defend the oppressed and abused and fight for justice for all.

But to become the prophetic presence of God in the world we have to be careful that we speak in the name of the Lord; and speak the work of God just like the prophets of old. The distinctive mark of the prophets of God is that they speak in the name of God. Therefore, there is no guarantee that their message will satisfy the expectations of the people. The Bible says that the ways of God are different from the ways of humans.

Arising from its history the 21st Century church faces a troubling choice to make. It can decide to embrace the world or continue to keep the world at arms-length, except for the purpose of evangelism. I will urge that the church should make a choice of re-engaging the work of global peace and social justice because it is in line with its call as a body of Christ and in line with the character of God as the foremost proponent and defender of justice. But, this reengagement should be conducted in a manner that does not result in the world absorbing the church and nullifying its message and mission.

The role of the church is to bear witness to the truth of God. This witness is integrated. It will require the church to minister to the spiritual, social and economic needs of humanity. This means that we have to embrace the social gospel. But the social gospel must be, first and foremost, gospel. It must start by recognizing that the basis of justice is acceptance of the fact that God requires justice as an affirmation that man and woman are created in his image. We cannot divorce the need for justice from the character of God and his plan and purpose for his creation. The books of Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy are clear on the underlying rationale for the prophetic insistence on social justice.

We are living in an age of human rights. Human rights have become a secular religion. The danger for Christian involvement in human rights is that Christians can now be dragged on a wagon of secularism, even to the point that they abandon evangelism. The challenge is to integrate advocacy for social justice and evangelism. Or better still, make social justice an integrated part of the message of salvation in Christ Jesus. To get this transformation, we have to first decide which of the many types of church and culture engagements outlined by H. Richard Niebuhr best represents the relations that should...
exist between Christianity and culture. These forms of engagement are (1) Christ of Culture, (2) Christ against Culture, (3) Christ Transforming Culture, (4) Christ and Culture in Paradox, and (5) Christ above Culture. I will think that the model of Christ transforming culture best ties with the prophetic tradition and the message of Jesus the savior. It is the most scriptural of these forms of engagement.

Niebuhr's framework has been criticized as being rooted in liberal Protestantism and therefore does not do justice to the conservative evangelical tradition. The argument is that the five models are points within the same trajectory of liberal interpretation of Christianity that is not focused on scriptural proclamation of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. For the believer in the scriptures, we should always bear in mind that whatever is done in the name of the Lord must bear the signature of his message. Jesus was opposed by the political and religious establishment of his days because he continued the tradition of the prophets. Of course, he was identified by the prophets as the messiah who will disclose divinity to humanity in the clearest terms. He embodied divinity. Moses told the people before while he was with them that God would send them another prophet who they must obey at the cost of their lives.

Jesus's message was inconvenient truth to the people of his days. He supported the cry for justice from those who have been oppressed and abused by the lords of the land. But he was quick to point out to the man who asked to be restored to his properties that the value of a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. He was unmistakable on the priority to be accorded to our relationship with God. He proclaimed that at the roots of the violence, sufferings and injustice in the world is our alienation from God through sin. Sin is the critical bondage that creates other bondages. Jesus shocked his generation. He left a message that trashed every human false presumption. There is no age that will not find the authentic message of Jesus hugely inconveniencing. It is a call to repentance. And no one who is still sure that he is fully on the right road is ready for repentance.

The Christian social gospel must be a gospel that starts from the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. It must restate clearly that the truth that Jesus Christ has shown us the way of salvation and that salvation is in believing that Jesus is Lord. It must make a case for God. A case for God is a case that we are created by a holy and loving God and our destiny is to be found in him and not having our own righteousness. This means that when we talk about social justice we are talking of the dignity and entitlement of people created in God's image. When we talk about human rights we are talking of the liberties that lead us to wholeness.°
Between Social Justice and an Anticorruption Commitment:

We started this paper by pointing corruption is both a sin and an injustice. As sin, public corruption is a violation of divine covenant on rulership. Rulers are ordained in human society so as to preserve good order. Saint Augustine in his classic, The City of God, argued the moral foundation of human governance. From scriptural perspective, we have seen that the basis of human government is the foundational truth about covenant. The leader has a covenant with God. That covenant places a responsibility on the leader to promote the covenant between the people and God. The covenant between the people and God is that they will serve God by doing justice and righteousness. As the Bible puts it Micah 6:8, “He has told you, O man, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God”.

Justice and righteousness are foremost in the universe of the Bible. The justification for human government is to promotion of justice and righteousness. This is the reason whenever the divine government of Jesus Christ- The Son of God- it is usually described in the language of ‘justice’. As Isaiah 42: 1-4 declares, “Behold my servant whom I upheld, my chosen, in whom my soul delights. I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations… He will not grow faint or discouraged till he has established justice on earth: and the coastlands will wait for his law”. The centrality of justice is unmistakable in the scriptures. As the editor of ESV Study Bible put it, “In the Bible, justice means fulfilling mutual obligations in a manner consistent with God’s moral law. Biblical justice creates the perfect human society”.

But, the problem is oftentimes Christian behave as if the pursuit of justice is not a cardinal obligation of biblical covenant between God and Israel and between God The problem with evangelical Christianity in Nigeria in the public sphere has been the failure to commit to a strong anticorruption strategy. This failure may relate to the failure to develop an intellectually coherent and theologically compelling concept of state and society. How should the Christian live in a society that is yet to be redeemed? The secularization of the state arising from the war between the Roman Empire and the Catholic Church (leading to what Pierre Manent calls “the theologico- political problem”9) seems to have inordinately influenced Christian witness away from active engagement with quest for justice in the world. The evangelicals unlike the Catholics in

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Nigeria are notoriously weak in articulating a state-society consciousness. For years, the Catholic Church in Nigeria has followed its overseas dioceses to develop justice and peace committee incorporating both clergy and laymen. These committees have helped to mobilize Catholic communities to do the work of justice and peace through various activities.

Apart from programmatic failure, it seems that the main challenge of evangelical engagement with anticorruption war is the lack of a coherent and compelling theology. I argue that such a theology can be easily sourced from the prophetic tradition. The evangelical history of cynicism about humanism and the cult of progress that has characterized the enlightenment as a project of debunking Christian witness has demoralized evangelical engagement with 'worldly' pursuit. This disinterest in 'worldly' affairs has lead to lack of interest in the fight against corruption. There have been many high-level corruption cases involving prominent evangelicals in government positions. The evangelical church responded as expected. We don't hear as much condemnation of corruption from the pulpits as we hear against other sins and offences. There is a sense in which public corruption seems to be condoned by church leaders. It could be said that Christianity has been privatized to the point that what Christians do in the public sphere is not as important as what they do in the private sphere.

The privatization of Christianity is also evident in the manner that Christian leaders have refused to take how Christians behave in the public sphere as part of a Christian lifestyle. A new theology is necessary to prioritize public ethics as part of a revival of prophetic Christianity.

**Strategies for Mainstreaming Anticorruption Strategies in the Ministry of Evangelicals and Pentecostals:**

A New Theology: How do evangelicals and Pentecostals begin to focus on championing anticorruption in the politics of Nigeria? What should the leadership of the evangelical and Pentecostal community do to institutionalized commitment to anticorruption. First, the community should develop a coherent and comprehensive state and society theology that provides biblical support for a prophetic church that fights on behalf of transparent and accountable governance. We can borrow from the tradition of the Confessing Church in Germany that sourced from the scripture a commitment to oppose Hitler and the Nazi government. The leader of the group, the theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer argued in his classic essay, The Cost of Discipleship,
that “When Christ call a man he calls him come and die”. Writing about the theological transformation of Bonhoeffer, G. Liebholz states that “Bonhoeffer was firmly and rightly convinced that it is not only a Christian right but a Christian duty towards God to oppose tyranny, that is, a government which is no longer based on natural law and the law of God. For Bonhoeffer this followed from the fact that the church as a living force in this world entirely depends on her this-sidedness”.

We also have the example of the church in Latin America who under the leadership of the Bishop Oscar Romero and other Catholic Bishops developed the liberation theology as a platform to mobilize the church against the tyrannies of capitalist juggernauts and American imperialism. Liberation theology proclaimed God's preference for the poor and a declaration of justice for the poor and the oppressed as emblematic of biblical covenant.

These two episodes in the transformation of church social agenda provide lessons for the evangelical and Pentecostal community in Nigeria. The existential challenges of the Nigerian society provide a context similar to the German and Latin American experiences to engender a commitment to develop a comprehensive theology of social justice in Nigeria. Such a theology will have to carefully navigate the tension between 'this-world' and 'the world-to-come'; between 'salvation for the world' and 'salvation in the world'. Nevertheless, such a theology must be firmly rooted in the experience of the people and take seriously the violations of the right of the people. In the Nigerian context, such a theology will acknowledge that corruption in the public sector (especially, grand corruption) is a structural violation of the right of the people to dignity and wellbeing. Therefore, a corrupt government, institution or regime is an injustice to the people and deserve strong prophetic denunciation.

From Theology to Proclamation: To mainstream a commitment against corruption and social injustice in the evangelical and Pentecostal community in Nigeria requires that a convenient theology feeds into preaching in the churches. Just as the pastors and evangelists are unrelenting in proclaiming Christian obligation in respect of tithes and offerings, they have to be valiant to call worship to the higher morality of fighting against all forms of abuses in the exercise of political power. The church has to take seriously the preaching of Christian commitment to promote justice and expose and oppose corruption of public power as a form of worship. The Bible states clearly in Jeremiah 9:23-24, “Thus says the LORD: Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the riches boast in his riches, but let him who

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boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am who practices steadfast love, justice and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD”. Our preaching, our teaching should be oriented towards making the believers truly understand the LORD of justice who says that if we do justice then we truly know him, and we will be blessed *(Jeremiah 22:15-16)*.

From Proclamation to Action: from theology to proclamation is a journey that should end with action. The evangelical and the Pentecostal church has to return to the tradition of the evangelicals of previous centuries, particularly, the eighteen and nineteenth centuries. As Carl F.H. Henry put it, “evangelical movement was spiritually and morally vital because it strove for justice and also invited humanity to regeneration, forgiveness, and power for righteousness”. The twentieth and twenty-first century church has got it wrong with its evangelical mission. As David Bosch points out, “it was a stupendous victory of evil one to have made us believe that structures and conditions in this world will not or need not really change, to have considered political and societal powers and other vested interests inviolable, to have acquiesced in conditions of injustice and oppression, to have tempered our expectation to the point of compromise, to have given up the hope for the wholesale transformation of the status quo, to have been blind to our own responsibility for and involvement in a world enroute to its fulfillment”*. The evangelical church should recover its glorious history and reembrace its mission to the world.

The evangelical church should emulate the Catholic church to establish sociopolitical platforms to advance its reinvigorated theology of church and society. It has to establish its own Peace and Justice Committee (even anticorruption committees) with clear organizational mandate and administrative structure to enable effective action against corruption and other forms of injustice in the exercise of political power. Apart from these church structure and para-church platforms helping to reorient Christians toward full embrace of the cause of justice and promotion of transparent and accountable governance, it will provide opportunities for Christian volunteers to learn practical skills and techniques in mobilizing religious and cultural resources against corruption and other abuses of political power. Overtime, the development of church committees and para-church platforms focused on mobilizing against corruption will fully align the church to its mission to the world. Then we will realize the vision of a church that is the hope of the Nigeria.

*David Bosch, Transforming Mission (Orbis, 1996) page 509 quoted in Gary A. Haugen, Good News about Injustice: A Witness to Courage in a Hurting World (Intervarsity Press, 1999) page 63*
Conclusion
The conclusion of the matter is that Christianity abandoned its historic commitment to stand for justice. It did so as a result of the fear of the slander and scandal of liberalism. This abandonment has undermined the mission of the church as the body of Christ who is the salvation of the whole of creation. Psalm 89:14 says that “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of the Lord’s throne”. The church has preached and practiced (even if halfheartedly) righteousness. But it has abandoned the justice pillar of the kingdom of God. This failure arises from the closing of the Christian mind at the height of liberal Pentecostalism. It is important to recover the justice pillar of the Christian mission so that evangelism will be integrated and successful. Carl F.H. Henry is right that “if the church preaches only divine forgiveness and does not affirm justice, she implies that God treats immorality and sin lightly. If the church preaches only justice, we shall all die in unforgiven sin and without the spirit's empowerment for righteousness. We should be equally troubled that we lag in championing justice and in fulfilling our evangelistic mandate”. The gospel addresses the whole man. We must address the gospel to man in all his economic, social and political situations. But it must be the gospel and not another concoction of liberal humanitarianism. The social gospel must be about the social aspects of the salvation in Christ Jesus, and nothing less.

In addressing the gospel to contemporary Nigerian man, we have to address it to the issue of corruption. Corruption is a major form of injustice in Nigeria. if biblically, injustice is defined as abusive exercise of power, then corrupt governance is a social injustice. Corrupt governance treats citizens as less than persons of dignity and equal respect. When leaders act abusively, they sin against God for violating his covenant with them and also, they violate the dignity and equality of fellow citizens. This biblical sense is also embodied in the social contract theory of legitimacy of public leadership. The only difference is in liberal political theory we attribute the reason for this contract as human rationality while in biblical theory it derives from divine purpose. Corrupt governance is an injustice for another reason: it deprives the people, particularly the poor, of the resources to provide essential services needed for social and economic wellbeing. So, it is a deprivation of right to property.

Therefore, the evangelical church or the Pentecostal church that identifies with the mission of the Lord Jesus in Isaiah 61 must take up its cross and wage war against corruption.
CHRISTIANITY AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

3Ibid
6Wilson, William (2011), Executive Director, International Centre for Spiritual Renewal
About Priests Peace & Justice Initiative (PPJ)
The Priests Peace Justice Initiative (PPJ) is a faith based organisation and social arm of the Palace of Priests Assembly. Palace of Priests Assembly is a duly registered and incorporated Church of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Priests Peace Justice Initiative is set up to anchor the social dimension of the Church and to contribute to the building of a peaceful and orderly society.

It is hinged on the dignity of the human person as created by God and the need to create an enabling environment for evangelism and holistic prosperity. At Palace of Priests Assembly, we believe that the Church should play a significant role in ensuring democratic governance, peace and stability of nations. We see it as a duty to bring Biblical perspectives to the challenges of democracy, development, insecurity, injustice, service delivery and humanitarian services.

**Vision**
Our vision is a world of prosperity and social justice.

**Mission**
Our mission is to act as catalysts to empower citizens to reign as Kings and Priests and work for peace and social justice.

**Values**
The Priests Peace and Justice Initiative will be guided by the following values:

1. **Leadership**: requiring us to build leaders because He made us in his own image and called us to lead. We build leaders that will impact this generation and the next generation.
2. **Empowerment**: requiring us to equip the saints in all aspects of life to live as Kings and Priests that bring honour to God and work for peace and social justice.
3. **Royalty**: requiring us to live as Kings and Priests in accordance with God’s design as a chosen and peculiar people working for peace and social justice.
4. **Integrity**: requiring us to demonstrate faith and action as Children of the Most High. Our behavior will match our belief. We will trust God and work in integrity (Ps 26:1).
5. **Discipleship**: requiring us to make disciples in all nations with solid biblical foundations who are then able to disciple and empower others to live in peace and harmony.

**Areas of Focus.**
**PPJ will work in the following five thematic areas:**

1. **Democracy**: Elections, transparency and accountability and stewardship
2. **Peace Building**: Human Security and Conflict transformation.
3. **Social Justice**: Poverty, Inequality and Justice.
4. Emergency and Humanitarian services
5. Education and Health

PPJ Management and Governance
Priests Peace and Justice Initiative (PPJ) is managed by an Executive Committee made up of a Co-ordinator and five thematic heads. The secretariat is supported by Programme Officers and Finance Officers. The governance and oversight is provided by the Board of Trustees of Palace of PRIESTS ASSEMBLY (PPA).

Strategic Approach
The approach to work revolves around four key strategies:
- Research
- Capacity Building
- Advocacy and Campaigns
- Services

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