Pastor (Dr) Otive Igbuzor presents a new book “Contemporary Issues of development in Nigeria” on his 59th birthday in Abuja.

PPA Partners continue to establish Anti-corruption clubs in primary and secondary schools

- Pentecostal pastors continue to demonstrate how they incorporate Anti-corruption messages in their sermons.
- PPA women convention holds in Abuja with the theme “the complete woman” as the women leader charges christian women to maintain integrity.
- Building public ownership of the Anti-corruption war
- Pentecostal Christianity and the Anti-corruption campaign (Part 2) by Dr Sam Amadi
- More Anti-Corruption champions emerge and profiled on PPJ Hall of fame

The Force of Integrity
PST. INNOCENT ADANEHI
CHRIST ARK CENTRE, KADUNA.

The Nexus of our teaching and preaching at the Christ Ark Centre include Christian values, Christian character, holiness and righteousness and excellence in life. Even our tracts convey these. For us corruption is same as private and public sin which must be attacked. The core is that we must be told serially and repeatedly to live above the world. This for us at ChristArk means being a spectacle and a mirror for the world.
Pastor Innocent Adenehi shares a sermon he preached on the force of integrity.

There is a force behind the spirit of personal integrity that can check the menace of corruption. You recall that in Genesis 4.7 we discovered a force, a ‘him’ that empowers sin which we must rule over. Contrariwise, there is an overpowering force in the virtue of integrity. Personal integrity can rule over corruption.

There are three precepts at the core of irreproachable character:
1. Demonstration of pure love
2. Peacefulness in the mind and in relationships
3. The spirit of integrity.

For this discourse, corruption should be understood as the rottenness of character. You may also define it as the filthiness and demise of conscience. All corrupt persons possess and conduct their lives with a filthiness of conscience and a slimy character.

People of integrity are often strange and defiant. In our Nigerian society, they are actually the deviants where the norm is ostensibly unfaithful living. So Paul, the Apostle could insist before King Agrippa and the council that ‘Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience till this day’, and again, ‘And herein do I exercise my self, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men’. Acts 23.1, 24.16. I am always amazed by Paul’s emphasis in 1 Thessalonians 2. 10 ‘Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holly and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe’. By an integrity clad defiance, Paul warred against spiritual and material corruption before kings, councils and crowd.

Integrity is defined as conforming to the high moral code of honesty, reliability and confidentiality. The character that contends against corruption is a package of INTEGRITY, COURAGE, OPTIMISM, ENTHUSIASM and TRUST.

Integrity means being ONE with yourself in all disposition. No double face. No double standard. No hypocrisy. There is consistent honesty.

In mathematics, integer refers to a number that is not in fraction as in all natural numbers. Not a fractional character. To integrate means to make into a whole with emphasis in the wholeness of a being. Not a scattered character.

In Marketing, the term consumerism is a campaign to ascertain and certify the integrity of a manufacturer’s claims on its product and their key promotion agents. It is like this; the product ingredients, the packaging narrations, the marketing team presentation and what the promotion media say are same, true and agree concerning the product.

Integrity is the intent, the motive, the decisions, the actions, the perceived and practical manifestation of the political office holder are same and incontrovertible before the constituency members. That is, the politician represents a clear demonstration of his covenant with the people.

Let us examine five core perspectives of integrity.

1. Uprightness in decision taking. Concerning Samuel it was reported that He grew and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his word fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beer sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord. How did he acquire this reputation? 1 Samuel 12.3-5 is the answer. ‘Behold, here I am, witness against me before the Lord......of whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? or of whom have I received any bribe to blind my eyes therewith?’

Hear this concerning Job the wealthy man of integrity; Job 4.6 ‘Is not your fear of God your confidence, And is it not the integrity and uprightness of your ways your hope?’ 33.3 ‘my words will express the uprightness of my, heart, And my lips will speak what they know with utter sincerity’.AMP
2. Adherence to strict principles. People of integrity are strickler to established principles. Very consistent and tested principles under-guard their position and direction. They are hardly sifted to untoward compromises. What is to be done, be it done with practicable and functional exactitude. ‘My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work. I can of my own self do nothing : as I hear, I judge; and my judgement is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. John 4.34, 5.30. ’This is the master’s exemplary principled stand in His assignment.

3. Ability to be consistently trusted by others to pursue collective vision and goals. ‘And the Lord said, shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do, Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, And all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgement that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him’. Genesis 18. 17-19. Paul, the Apostle also spoke concerning Timothy his protégé; Philippians 2. 19-22 ‘But I trust in the Lord to send Timotheus shortly unto you…….For I have no man like-minded….For all seek their own…….But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he has served with me in the gospel’. From Abraham and Timothy’s example of integrity we can learn that integrity guarantees friendship with the mighty and ensures generational heritage.

4. To stand as one. What you represent in the public is what you are in the secret. There is no propensity for a hidden, particularly a heinous agenda to undercut others portions and destiny. ‘wherefore I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God’. Acts 20.26-27.

5. Aversion to short cut. The wise saying is true... shut cut can cut life short. Success is a long haul consisting of one victory after another. We must prepare to go through the process and the extra mile. The Psalmist said I can run through a troop and leap over the wall. Men of integrity are eventually unstoppable. Isaiah 30. 21…….’This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left’. 35.8-9. And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those ; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein…..nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon,…… but the redeemed shall walk there’.

We have had a few examples of the practice of integrity described here.

A Pastor in our church moved into a good new apartment recently. There are two disjointed flats in the compound but using one electricity meter. After a week, the Pastor discovered that the meter was not running but there was light. On inquiry, the occupant of the second flat who also doubled as the caretaker of the compound having been there for a while explained it away that the former occupant had adjusted the speed to curtail excessive billing. It was actually a total boycut of the meter although they were buying some credit for the meter as the older occupant had programmed so as not to attract the curiosity of the electricity workers.

We are Priests... We Make Disciples... Empowered People... Better Society
This is evil. The pastor did not want to offend God and would prefer to pay the right cost and rather cut down on use of electricity if necessary. He called for a discussion after more than three weeks of a troubled heart, insisted on the necessity of pleasing God. A meter technician was called who sorted the matter at a fee. This is a play out of the force of integrity.

Another Elder in our church gave this simple but commendable story on the force of integrity. Next to their house is an elderly woman who is into some trading and farming. This woman usually package some money tied up and some choice food items and take to the custody of this elder. This Elder said often they lacked some money and some food themselves but the ones kept in their custody have never been touched ones. The elderly woman would meet the money and items exactly as packed and would openly wonder if they don’t ever get tempted. Our church Elder would tell her that they often lacked but since the items were brought for safe keeping by way of trusting their integrity they would never tamper with them.

This third story proves again that there anti corruption agents manifesting in official workplace. It is also a current issue as I write this message. A lady, our church leader, works with a finance institution. The branch manager, also a lady, is vacating the office to relocate abroad. She inadvertently has not given the mandatory one month notice nor desire to pay the one moment salary in lieu. Rather, she has made an arrangement with a superior manager in the area office so that our church lady would cover her function for the next three months while she is gone, but her salary shall still be paid to her account. Part of the thinking is that she is trying to favour our church lady to take over her position as she has arranged with the superior manager so a new branch manager would not be brought in. This a sinecure unofficial setup. Our church lady has openly rejected the arrangement but would rather get the position through the legitimate process or loose the manager’s position than be part of that corruption racket. According to her she must keep her salvation and her integrity before God and other workers no matter the consequences.

‘And from the time John the Baptist began preaching until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and violent people are attacking it’ Matthew 11.12 NLT. Maintaining integrity in many sectors of life engagements takes the violence of the Spirit and a preparedness to face the ugly backlash of snubbing some mighty agents of corruption. These few instances highlighted here and many more show that the war is winnable and we can.

PST. INNOCENT ADANEHI. CHRIST ARK CENTRE, KADUNA. +234 9023 049525/ pstadanehi@gmail.com
Bro Samuel Idogun shares his experience of rejecting corruption. According to him, "I traveled in the company of other aids of a particular "big politician" to a State recently. Usually, he gives money for logistics to one of his aids. I am not a direct employee of this VIP. But as a news reporter, I travel with him when going on some trips. On this particular trip, instead of giving logistics money to others, he decided to give me the money. The fuel in the car was much at our departure from him in his hotel. But he gave me fifty thousand Naira (#50,000. 00) for fuel.

Upon arrival back to Abuja almost twenty thousand Naira (20k) was still balance unspent. The man's orderly who was with us in the car, consulted with the driver, came to me that we should share the balance money. He tried to assure me that "Oga" will not ask for any report on the money. I told him, "it is Oga that gave me the money, let me report back to him. If it pleases him to give you people the money, then let him do that himself. The money is not my money. I cannot give it for sharing."

He looked at me, not happy and with a feeling that I was not cooperating.

At the VIP’s house, I called him and gave the report of how much was spent from the money. He sent one of his house aids to collect the money without giving a single Penny out of it. He never gave me money as he gave to others at the hotel for their feeding while we were leaving him. I though felt happy because I gave full account spent from the total money, and that I gave him the balance back to him. I give glory to God for His Spirit in my life to do the right thing and be accountable. I was proud to do it because it was a way of saying no to corruption, a course championed by PPJ.
Ekesiba Henry is a member of the Student Christian Movement (SCM) of Nigeria. Palace of Priests Assembly and its social arm is collaborating with the SCM to establish shun corruption clubs in about 900 schools in Nigeria where the SCM has a presence. Henry is an active member of the team who goes from school to school preaching and teaching the anti-corruption message. According to him, “it is a pleasure spreading the light of God and building Godly virtues by inculcating discipline and shunning every form of corruption in secondary schools within Calabar Metropolis. The Mission is to plant shun corruption clubs and Disciple Students and equip leaders for Societal Transformation.

Some of the Schools visited include:
* Unical Demonstration Secondary School
* Hope Waddell Training Institute
* Limelight Secondary School
* Government Secondary School Stqte Housing
* Community Technical College Ikot Effanga
* NYSC Demonstration Secondary school
* Brains High school Calabar
* Government Secondary School Akim
* Eastern Commercial Secondary school.
PPJ HALL OF FAME

Anti-corruption Champion of the month

Report on Volunteer Task

Photo Story

We are Priests... We Make Disciples... Empowered People... Better Society
PST. Barr. ESTHER Ehinosen ILEOGBEN is a pastor and an internationally licensed Gospel minister. She is the general supervisor of the Jesus’ Follower Ministry International (church) in Lagos. She runs a nondenominational women’s empowerment ministry. (Dynamic woman (single and married) discussion show) She is the coordinator of the Youth of Wonders Worldwide (YOWW), which has the objective of mentoring youth against detrimental habits and lifestyles, as well as avoiding corruption and negative vices. She is the youth director of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria’s Isolo/Ejigbo province in Lagos State, Nigeria. Getting involved with the PPJ initiative and the battle against corruption is very appealing to her because she wants to see youth become more innovative, have a good outlook, and avoid all sorts of corruption. As the MD of DOEFI consulting an outfit committed to increasing human performance and productivity, she is a capacity development trainer (personal and professional development) she organises seminars, conferences, talk shows symposiums, inter-school programs, and one on one mentoring and have committed to mainstreaming anti-corruption in all her programs and activities and share reports with PPA/PPJ. Barrister Mrs ESTHER Ehinosen ILEOGBEN does not mince words on laying strong emphasis on the need to shun corruption in our various capacities wherever we are planted.

YOUTH OF WONDERS WORLDWIDE YOWW has a music band that has songs that thrill both young adults and full blown adults to shun corruption.

For her, fighting corruption is an ever persistent, continuous and never ending fight starting from infants, children, young adults and adults.
Photo Story
Photo Story

We are Priests... We Make Disciples... Empowered People... Better Society
Photo Story
Working in the Nigerian civil service is the most challenging job due to very poor and inconsiderate remunerations that keep workers’ morale at an all-time low. The pay package is very dismal coupled with a lack of promotions and when due, no annual incremental rates, and leave bonuses are not been paid for years. Reward systems for the deserving are nonexistent or hardly employed while punitive measures are hurriedly meted out on erring officers. There are very high levels of pressure to do wrong things from higher authorities. This gets worse as it cascades from the federal level to state and local government levels where pension and retirement benefits are hardly forthcoming. The above has provided very fertile grounds for corruption to thrive robustly. Gratification is being asked for at all levels: from the security and messenger to the highest boss in the organization. Figures are being falsified and costs are over bloated for selfish financial gains. While some engage in these unwholesome habits to make ends meet and save for the future due to the poor remunerations, others do it for ostentatious living and displays and as a tool for oppression since those that have can command the gullible have nots around as they will. Civil Servants spend most of their productive years serving the government only to retire to hopelessness and grave uncertainties. Despite these daunting realities, I, Emmanuel Ojonimi Itodo a Director of the Kogi Agricultural Development Project stood severally against corrupt tendencies by refusing to falsify figures to carry out official assignments and even returned cash back to the organization on no fewer than nine occasions even at such times as I had dire financial needs. I considered the fact that I must honor God at all times and must not join the corrupt society around me to be corrupt. I was so glad to be a part of the PPJ training on Christianity and corruption which was held on 22/10/2019 in Lokoja. The training gave me more courage as it gave credence to what I believed in and practiced. I have always spoken the truth and stood for it anywhere. Shortly after the training, I did a step down in the church I pastor, Abundant Life Church in Gadumo area of Lokoja. I made them know that wherever they found themselves they should uphold the truth and do what is right no matter how many are doing what is wrong. I told the students to avoid joining others to cheat in exams, the workers to avoid falsifying figures or records, and to stop writing the wrong time of resumption at work and closing. Business people were told to be honest in their business deals as Christians so that God’s name will not be tarnished through them. I made it clear that every Christian should represent Christ well in every area of their lives as his ambassadors 2Cor 5:20. I want to urge every Christian who claims to be born again to consider giving God honour wherever he/she may be found irrespective of the position they occupy, from the person at the gate to the topmost boss in any organization. I urge us never to give in to pressures from within us or other persons to do what is wrong even when you don’t have your needs met. Look unto God!
All roads led to the Palace of Priests assembly Abuja on 5th of September, 2022 when Dr. Otive Igbuzor, the Founding General Overseer of the Palace of Priests Assembly and founding Executive Director of the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy & Development (Centre LSD) marked his 59th birthday celebration with a book presentation titled "Contemporary issues of development in Nigeria, the 9th in his series of collections. A statement issued by Mr. Itia Otabor on behalf of the Birthday Planning Committee said the Public Presentation of the book titled “Contemporary Issues on Development and Change in Nigeria” written by Otive Igbuzor, PhD to mark the birthday celebration. According to Mr Otabor, the book presentation was under the distinguished joint Chairmanship of Comrade John Odah, mni, Former General Secretary, Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and Dr Jummai Umar-Ajijola, Board Chair, ActionAid Nigeria, while the book Reviewer is Iroro S. Izu, PhD, DAP, MNPSA, FIBAKM, of the Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Abuja, Nigeria. The event took place on Monday 5th September 2022 by 2.00 - 4.00 pm. Other dignitaries who grazed the occasion includes the former Governor of Cross River State, Dr. Lyel Imoke, the Africa Director of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur foundation, members of the national assembly, CSOs and members of the media.
The book reviewer, Iroro S. Izu, Ph.D, DAP, MNPSA, FIBAKM Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Abuja, Nigeria in his review stated that the anthological book—Contemporary Issues on Development and Change in Nigeria written by no other scholar-activist than Otive Igbuzor, Ph.D, is yet another clear ramification that the author's pen and paper, over the decades, have been consciously and conscientiously tailored towards attaining a marked material advancement and progressive metamorphosis in the political economy of Nigeria, and beyond. Nigeria, as the author rightly acknowledges in this all-important masterpiece, yearns not just for urgent development but for an all-encompassing productive change that will significantly sprout the single most populous and resource-endowed black nation in the world from the debacles of backwardness and the manacles of governance failure so as to establish it in the El Dorado much desired. In doing this, the book resonates and sufficiently redounds enigmatic works of scholarship like Ake's Democracy and Development in Africa, Zik's My Odyssey, Mazrui's The African Condition, Mandela's Long Walk, Okri's Famished Road, Nkrumah's Pathway to Freedom, and Meredith's Born in Africa, among others. Igbuzor courageously establishes that the cycle of development is not complete until there is a paradigmatic change from unfavorable conditions to favorable conditions, thereby reinforcing Seer's resolution of three fundamental questions, Rodney's anthropomorphic manipulation of the environment, Sen's proclamation of the spectrum of freedom, equality, and capacity, as well as Todaro's gamut of change. But the axiological, teleological, and aesthetic constant in Igbuzor's compendium which makes it stand out is his ability to conflate development theory and practice into one realizable public policy. The twenty-five-chapter book has been masterfully distilled into four interlocking parts with each thematically and topically shoring up the others and deliberately potentially and kinetically -spurring monumental waves of restlessness in theoreticians and politicians to curry and cultivate the appetites and apparatuses for development and change within the Nigerian hemisphere and Africa's stratosphere. One unequivocal thread that runs through this magnum opus is the advocacy for the tripartite involvement of the public sector, organized private sector and civil society organizations in the pursuit of real development and progress in Nigeria especially in the areas of agenda setting, policy formulation, budget making, project designing, and program implementation as well as in areas of monitoring and evaluation so as to gain, consolidate and replicate the democratic-developmental dividends required, thereby dousing tensions of insecurity, non-inclusivity, poverty, impropriety, inequality and ethnoreligious intolerance. Another spectacular heritage created in the letters and lines of this intellectual way-maker is the primacy
placed on knowledge acquisition, promotion and management because in the final analysis development that is not rooted in the dais of mind power is shaky and erasable. This no doubt incarnates the fidelity of the knowledge is power drive enconced in the several writings of Chinese Confucius, Indian Gandhi, America's Kennedy, and Nigeria's Azikiwe. The third plank on which this book rest is the sublime and pristine advocacy of professionalism in security services, civil service, anti-corruption crusades, and justice administration; the promotion of ability in disability, clean water for all, ethics in politics, governance in ungoverned areas like the family, friendliness of the business space, the consciousness of personal and behavioral health and hygiene, revisit of Nigeria's federal imperative so as to guarantee a more responsive and responsible leadership at all levels and arms of government as well as looking at the right side of religion in making the Nigerian society a saner and safer place. The book is thus a melting pot of understanding and making sense of the various tragedies, trajectories and triumphs that have defined management of the Nigeria.
It has been recognized by development theorists and practitioners that addressing any developmental challenge requires ownership of the content and process. Ownership has been defined in various ways. Ownership has been described as the state of having or holding the legal right to something; to control. But according to the Wikipedia encyclopedia, ownership is the state or fact of exclusive rights and control over the property which may be an object, land/real estate, intellectual property, or some other kind of property. From the two definitions, two main characteristics of ownership are the right to and control over. The implication however is responsible for actions regarding what is owned. Therefore, building public ownership of the anti-corruption crusade will involve all the processes that will make the public or citizens have right and control over the content and process of the anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria. When that ownership is operationalized, the public or citizens will now see it as their responsibility to design, implement and evaluate the anti-corruption crusade and defend it when it is attacked by corrupt individuals and their collaborators.

It is important to point out that public ownership can be built or operationalized through public participation. Like most terms in the social sciences, the concept of participation though a familiar one lacks an acceptable universal definition. But according to Onibokun and Faniran, one of the most useful definitions is that which defines it as the organized effort to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social conditions. Participation can be classified into two broad categories namely macro-level (top-down) participation and micro-level (bottom-up) participation:

Macro-level (top-down) participation is that imposed by the government in order to mobilize the masses to implement activities or programmes earmarked for it. It is an induced or enforced act which involves the manipulation of the masses. Although it is easier to achieve, its survival depends on continued coercion, pressure or incentive. Micro level (bottom-up) participation on the other hand, involves authentic empowerment of the masses at micro levels of activity, where homogenous values and interests are not difficult to find and mobilize. This form of participation is generated by the people themselves through self-help projects and activities. Micro level participation is however, the most difficult to elicit and sustain; it is also the most indispensable to genuine (political) development. It starts at the bottom and reaches progressively upward. It is initiated by the concerned non-elite population (and) matures into a social force incorporating the mass of participating communities.
Building Public Ownership for the Anti-Corruption War

Public participation has been defined as a process by which the government and civil society open dialogue, establish partnerships, share information and otherwise interact to design, implement and evaluate development policies, projects, and programs...that require the involvement and commitment of all interested parties, including among others the poor and traditionally marginalized groups especially disadvantaged racial and ethnic minorities. Some scholars see participation as a continuum ranging from information sharing to consultation, negotiation/collaboration, and then delegation.

Information sharing Consultation Negotiation/Collaboration Delegation

Sponsor provides information on ongoing activities Interchange of information; inputs requested; concerns addressed at the option of sponsor Joint problem solving; evaluation of alternatives Decision making power shared or transferred to beneficiaries No systematic feedback Responsive feedback and accountability Consensus building, bargaining & collaboration Power sharing/transfer; Veto power Participant as beneficiary; impact recipient Participant as client Participant as partner Participant as Manager

Passive role Discussion of options and risks Influence Shared Control.


Participation should be guided by certain principles including inclusiveness, comprehensiveness of scope of participation, adequacy of timing, appropriateness of the information, fairness, and legitimacy of the process, openness and transparency of the process, coordination, and efficiency of the process.

It is well established that participation by the public or citizens is crucial for democracy and development. For citizens to effectively participate in the political process, they should have unfettered access to information. Scholars are in agreement that when citizens participate in the planning, execution, utilization, and assessment of social amenities or facilities designed to improve their welfare, the success of those efforts is assured.

It is important to note that certain factors have been identified to make citizen participation imperative. These factors include:

• The presence of a nagging or persistent problem: poverty, social insecurity, environmental degradation e.t.c.
• The Equilibrating attractions of collective, group actions supported by both social theory and experience
• The emergence of advocacy planning; and
• The claiming of the democratic (fundamental human) rights of citizens, leading to their empowerment.
BUILDING PUBLIC OWNERSHIP FOR THE ANTI-CORRUPTION WAR

There is a recent trend all over the world that places a lot of emphasis on the participation of the people particularly the poor and those that were hitherto excluded in governance and development issues. It has been noted that whether in budgeting, policy dialogue, planning, project appraisal, poverty assessment, monitoring, or evaluation, there are “participatory” alternatives to expert-driven processes. There is also a shift from participation as “beneficiaries” in projects to the more political and rights-based definitions of participation by citizens who are the “makers and shapers” of their own development. This is why a lot of effort is being put in to strengthen the process of participation. However, it has been argued that strengthening the process of participation alone cannot bring about community empowerment and development but that it has to be complemented by strengthening the accountability of responsiveness of democratic institutions and public policies that will ultimately lead to just and accountable governance.

An important dimension of participation is the need to develop specific techniques and programs to involve women who constitute at least half of the population. It has been shown clearly that when women are involved development happens faster. It is important to note that the participation of women is not just about good politics. It is also about good economics.

Another important dimension is that the kind of spaces where participation occurs is very crucial. It has been argued that there is a difference between invited “spaces” created from above through donor or governmental intervention, and spaces which are chosen, taken and demanded through collective action from below. Whatever their origins, spaces for participation are not neutral; power relations shape them. This is why the following questions must be examined:

a. What spaces and mechanisms exist for community participation?
b. Who is creating these spaces and why?
c. Who fills the spaces?
d. Do the new spaces carry within them tracks and traces of previous social relationships, resources and knowledge?
e. What prevents long established patterns of power from being reproduced?
f. Who speaks?
g. For whom?
h. Who is heard?

We have argued elsewhere that what can be done is to ensure that the spaces available for participation are taken, owned and utilized by the community and civil society for their own development. For this to happen:

• Communities should be involved in the conception, implementation and evaluation of projects that have impact on their lives.

• Community Based Organisations, Town Development Unions and Faith Based Organisations should be involved in implementation of government projects that impact on livelihoods.
BUILDING PUBLIC OWNERSHIP FOR THE ANTI-CORRUPTION WAR

• Communities, labour and relevant civil society organizations should be involved in committees, panels and commissions set up by government.
• Participation of civil society representatives should be done openly and transparently in a systematic manner.

In order to operationalise the building of public ownership of the anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria, three actions are necessary:
1. Establishment of an all inclusive steering committee to lead the entire process.
2. Development of a strategy for public ownership which will define the principles of engagement, operational guidelines, institutional mechanisms and accountability systems, and
3. Development and implementation of an action plan that is specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time bound and costed.

Pastor (Dr.) Otive Igbuzor
General Overseer/Project Director
Palace of PRIESTS ASSEMBLY (PPA)/Priests Peace and Justice (PPJ) Initiative
The institutionalization of the social arm of the Church by Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria and Pentecostal churches having social arms of the church that will be actively involved in social issues and fight against corruption is at the heart of the Shun Corruption project being implemented by the Palace of Priests Assembly.

The City of Divine Grace Ministry is actively involved in the fight against corruption and mentoring of younger Christians to be involved in the fight against corruption. City of Divine Grace Ministry inaugurated the Social Arm of the Ministry on Tuesday, 26th April 2022. The objective is to enable members to imbibe the culture of abstaining from corrupt practices.

The Church recently had a special dedicated Sunday service with the Topic: GOD HATES CORRUPTION. Text: Luke 22:3-6, Matt. 26:3-4, 14-16, 47-49 taking a clue from the Palace of Priests Assembly.

According to the president, Corruption is dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power typically involving bribery. Corruption can be segmented into various aspects of life. a) Family - between husband, wife, and children. b) Church - It is alarming to see that even in the church there are many corrupt practices just like we can find in our texts. c) Society - our society is riddled with corruption which can be seen in the behaviors of the citizens. d) Politics - It is common knowledge that politics breed corruption.

Causes of Corruption
1. Poverty Mentality
2. Covetousness
3. Selfish Ambition

How to Shun Corruption
1. Be more diligent in your work
2. God’s blessings is the ultimate Prov. 10:22
3. Exhibiting Dignity in Labour
4. Be contented with God gives you.

The Church also runs a Nursery and Primary School with the name PEARL REGAL SCHOOL. As such we have inaugurated a Shun Corruption Club principally to inculcate the habit of honesty and integrity in the character of children as they grow up in life. THE PEARL REGAL SCHOOL SOCIAL CLUB AGAINST CORRUPTION. The School Club has equally presented a Drama during the Schools DRAMA and LITERARY DAY.
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 compassion 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 has to 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 has to be returned before night so the poor debtor does 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 greatest ironies in the scripture is the failure of the people of God to recognize this call and to rise up 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 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 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 in essence 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 Karrack 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 cathedra 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 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.
One key area of service the church has not paid adequate attention to is the area of politics and governance. This negligence is perhaps, the Church’s greatest disservice to God and humanity. The abandonment of politics as an unholy sphere is in every way distasteful. Hardly can anybody argue the truism that next to God’s power on earth is the political power. The church made a great mistake by labelling politics dirty and shunning it. This gave room for the enemy to move in and take over the government of many nations. When we examine the prevailing attitude of the church in the light of the teaching of the Bible, it becomes obvious that we got it wrong.

For example, the Bible makes it very clear that God wants Christ to have pre-eminence in every sphere of life on earth (Colossians 1:15-18), which certainly includes politics and governance. There is a clear statement of scripture that the government will be upon the shoulder of Christ and that the increase of His government and peace shall have no end (Isaiah 9:6-7). This makes God a principal stakeholder in politics and governance of nations. The resting of government upon the shoulders of Christ is indicative of the responsibility the believers are expected to shoulder by their participation in the political process. Later in Isaiah we have this revealing scripture: “For the LORD is our judge, our lawgiver, and our king. He will care for us and save us” (Isaiah 33:22). You can see the three arms of government mentioned in the verse defining the scope of God’s interest in human government:

· God as Judge (judiciary) – He is interested in the administration of justice and honest interpretation of our law by the courts.
· God as Lawgiver (legislature) – He wants to see that just and righteous laws are made that guarantees fairness to all irrespective of status.
· God as King (the executive) – He desires to see effective stewardship and equitable distribution of our commonwealth in a secure and tranquil atmosphere.

The church must see it as a duty to represent God’s interest in these departments of government by becoming proactively involved in raising the spiritual, moral, and emotional qualities of politicians. Whereas it is inadvisable for the core leadership of the church to leave their core duty of preaching, they should intentionally make provision for their members to engage in the political processes. The most convenient way of achieving this is to establish an arm that will take care of this. In my own denomination, we have such an arm which we call “CRM Political Academy,” otherwise known as the Initiative for Development of Future Accountable Leaders.
THE CHURCH – POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

By Rev Cosmas Ilechukwu

The church’s involvement in the political process should go beyond encouraging her members to register and vote in elections. She must go further to encourage them to become party members and push to become among the delegates that will determine those to stand for elections. In that way, the church will ensure that men and women of integrity are nominated by different political parties to stand election.

THE CHURCH AS THE BEACON FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

What role can the church play to ensure equitable redistribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within the society as a way of bridging the widening gap between the rich and the poor? Does the church have what it takes to arbitrate in the ongoing class struggles by way of ensuring the restructuring the power relations within the polity, by intentionally empowering the socially and economically disempowered? Has not the mindless plunging of the church into the macabre scramble for material wealth weakened its poise to stand in solidarity with the oppressed masses against the ravenous governments and the ultra-rich who maraud our space?

Poverty is rife in our society, and the church must go beyond providing “mercy drops” to help the poor to keep soul and body together. The church must find a way of addressing the whole question of crippling poverty among most of her members. We are often wont to encourage the poor to work harder to overcome poverty. The truth of the matter is that poverty is a creature of social injustice. The poor is poor not because he is lazy but because the power structure favour the rich to the detriment of the less privileged. The scripture notes, “Again, I observed all the oppression that takes place under the sun. I saw the tears of the oppressed, with no one to comfort them. The oppressors have great power, and their victims are helpless. (Ecclesiastes 4:1”, NLT). This verse hit the nail right on the head, “The oppressors have great power, and their victims are helpless!” This is the beachhead of corruption. You must have heard the popular saying, “power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Only the spiritual can muster the morality to steward power in a way that benefits humanity and glorifies God. The church must show interest in politics to ensure the restructuring of power relations in favour of the poor (Amos 2:6).

As a matter of fact, poverty has a spiritual root and only the church can provide the structures to adequately tackle its menace.

Bryant Myers, in his classic book: Walking with the Poor, identified poverty as a spiritual problem which occurred when man fell and which can be solved through the ministry of reconciliation. He proposed an understanding of development in which the physical, social, and spiritual dimensions of life are seamlessly interrelated thus defining poverty as deprivations arising from broken relationships with God (Sin), Self (Low Esteem), Others (Broken Relationships) and Creation (Abuse of Resources – Global Warming)[1]

In our ministry, we responded to this challenge by establishing the CRM Enterprises Agency, which is helping our members establish and run lucrative businesses of their own. It is also helping our members to form cooperatives to help them access government facilities to grow their business. Our future, economically, has never looked brighter.
While focus and productivity will boost your career and performance, it also goes beyond your professional life. We’re constantly distracted by notifications and devices. Incorporating reading into your routine can actually help reduce the distractions that hinder your productivity. Reading is shown to be a great way to train your focus.

Research has found that reading for 30 minutes a day stimulates the prefrontal cortex, which improves focus, concentration, and memory and can lead to a better attention span.

Dedicating 10-30 minutes a day to reading trains you to focus and avoid multi-tasking. And as you develop this ability to focus, it travels with you across other areas of your life, boosting your productivity in the process.
Book Reading Breakfast
Reloaded

September

VOLUNTEER READERS

Miss Ojonugwa
Mrs. Esse Irhezaen
Mr. Isaac Ogah
Mr. Orinya Samuel

We are Priests... We Make Disciples... Empowered People... Better Society
Book Reading Breakfast Reloaded

With Dr. Otive Igbuzor

September

PARTICIPANTS

We are Priests... We Make Disciples... Empowered People... Better Society
This year's Women’s Convention was Tagged: "THE COMPLETE WOMAN"
Text: Proverbs 31:1-end.
The three-day program took place on 16th Friday --- - Sunday 18th of September, 2022.
A statement by the Women leader, Pastor Loveth Ese Udu said the word 'Complete' means Wholesome, perfect, and full of life.
The Complete Women is a royal child, full of the life of Christ. " She is very, very precious far above *rubies*. ..... Proverbs 31:10. She’s an asset to the world and joy to her generation.
The program began with a prayer retreat on Friday 16th September and a brief moment of Evangelism.
Pep talks and other activities marked the second day of the convention.
Why God Chose You, by Pastor Lovette.
Domestic Violence and Abuse in marriage by Pastor ESE Joel. In her sermon entitled "Work your Ikigai" a Chinese word meaning "Discover your purpose" Pastor Mrs. Ejiro Otiwe-Igbruor enjoined women to know their VALUE, which is our fragrance. She stated that our value is our "attention cramp". She said we cannot be COMPLETE WOMEN, until we enable our environment. A thanksgiving Service was held on Sunday 18th September to conclude the Women Convension, with the Women leader, Pastor Loveth Ese Udu charging women to maintain a life of integrity as they support their spouses to build their homes.
(DEBORAH SISTERS)

Women Convention

Photo Story
(DEBORAH SISTERS)

Women Convention

Photo Storm

We are Priests... We Make Disciples... Empowered People... Better Society
Let’s again see some definitions of corruption.

(a) To change from good to bad in morals, manners and actions.
(b) To alter from the original or correct form or version.

We can go on to define corruption, but I want to dwell on these two above as I discuss and share with us some challenges and help from the Holy Spirit of God to help me stand, speak and shun corruption. Let’s read the following Scriptures to help us see clearly as we endeavour to speak, stand and shun this virus called corruption.

2 Tim 3 (NKJV)

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness,
17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.”

— Josh 1:8 (NKJV)

“Because My people have forgotten Me, They have burned incense to worthless idols. And they have caused themselves to stumble in their ways, From the ancient paths, To walk in pathways and not on a highway,”

— Jer 18:15 (NKJV)

The above scriptures are God-breathed as 2 Timothy states and are useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that any man or woman of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

There are temptations and challenges daily to pursue the trends of events, but God through His Holy Spirit had always encouraged me to stand tall and not join the evil bandwagon both in the Church and outside the Church. God has helped me to encourage those within my capacity to always speak, stand and shun any corrupt disposition.

I began from the house of God, and that’s where we should all begin because that’s where the judgement will start and from the leaders.

The challenge to always go to church early must be adhered to. The challenge to also go to work early always must be encouraged and adhered to.

Do you go to church and work late? If you do, then you’re corrupt and immoral, because you have changed from good to bad, moral to immoral and you have altered from the original. I keep to appointments and I always encourage those within my reach to keep to appointments and on the agreed time too. If you are fond of breaking appointments without a genuine reason, you have lost your trust and you will be worth less than nothing before many people.
Do you know that God is time conscious? Don’t allow God to be in church or any Christian gathering before you, just as you will not allow the governor to be cited in a meeting before you. Some church leaders have turned to big masquerades that have to be accorded with so many accolades before they’ll sit down after 30 minutes or even one hour after the start of the worship. If you are one of them, you are a very corrupt leader and need to change.

We must always determine to do the right thing. Go to church early. Go to work early. Go to church activities early. Keep to appointments. Please let’s be practical and teach those within our scope to do the same, remember, they are watching.

Please don’t extend worship time because of latecomers to discourage lateness.

I encouraged those within my reach to always pray with the Spirit and with understanding and I will urge you to do so too, maybe this will not sit well with many of us and especially those in the Pentecostal sect. Please be patient to read and study the entire chapter 14 of 1 Corinthians. And you should know that it’s the scripture and it’s God’s inspiration, 2Timothy 3:16-17.

If I go to any Christian gathering and everybody is speaking in the language(s) I don’t understand, I don’t always feel comfortable. Do you know that the Devil and his agents also speak in tongues and that they are in our congregations? And the Bible says that...he has come to kill, to steal, and to destroy, to counter your prayers in the language you do not understand. So let’s always pray with the Spirit and with understanding - 1 Cor. 14:15.

In verses 27-28, the Bible says:

27 If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret.
28 But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and God. These verses are in the Bible and they’re also inspired by God.

Isaiah 1:19 say, "If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good of the land". God demands obedience from His children and no one who had obeyed God regretted it. Obedience has a reward.

Please do not say or think that these things do not matter, they matter hence they are written down for us, and they all matter to God. He says that heaven and earth shall pass away but not a dot in His word will go unfulfilled and Jesus says that the hairs in your head are all numbered, so everything in God’s word matters.

May God give us understanding and obedient hearts. Amen.

Elder Michael U. Ngeleh
Resurrection Life Power and Prayer Evangelical Assembly.
email: ukamike63@gmail.com
Phone: 08038902956.
Adversity is a difficult or unpleasant situation. Today the world is living in adversity occasioned by political, economic, social and spiritual crisis. Political leaders are having a difficult time with trust deficit increasing. The economy is in shambles. There is social crisis. There is spiritual crisis and decline in the worship of God and service to humanity. All these crises are exacerbated by the impact of the corona virus or COVID 19.

The message today is that you need courage in times of adversity and God Almighty has equipped you with that courage.

Prov 24: 10 If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small (KJV)

We are living in a time of adversity: Economic, Political, Social and Religious adversity. This adversity has put fear in the minds of many people.

WE NEED COURAGE IN TIMES OF ADVERSITY
We live in very turbulent times but we must not be frightened – 1 Peter 3:13-18

13 Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14 But even if you should suffer for what is right
you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats[b]; do not be frightened.”[c] 15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. 17 For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. 18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. (NIV)

Physical threat to our lives – armed robbers, kidnappers, terrorists
Connivance and opposition to righteous positions
Malicious attack
Evil, inequity and injustice everywhere
Demonic attacks
Illustration: Threat can come from unsuspected quarters. The story of a 20 year old man in Amana Maikasuwa village in Kaduna State who killed his brother because their father trusted and loved the brother more.

Tips on Response to Adversity

Do not focus on the circumstance – Every human being is bound to pass through some period of difficulty.
Maintain hope in the midst of difficult circumstances Prov 24: 10 If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small (KJV)
Difficulties, troubles and challenges are the ingredients of testimonies
We are not called to win a popularity contest. We are called to stand on the word of God.
Examples

1. Story of Hannah More – born in 1745 in England. At age 28, wedding was planned to a wealthy landowner Mr. William Turner. Turner refused to show up on wedding day. Hannah refused to marry after that and devoted her time to writing, fighting poverty, slavery and illiteracy. Wrote Christian tracts which sold in millions in England, America and other parts of the world.

John Lord, a historian wrote about her “No woman in England or the US ever occupied an exalted position or exercised such a broad or deep influence on public mind in the combined character of woman of society, author and Philanthropist”.

We are Priests... We Make Disciples... Empowered People... Better Society

37
SERMON OF THE MONTH

Courage in Times of Adversity

Pastor (Dr.) Otive Igbuzor
General Overseer

Palace of PRIESTS ASSEMBLY (PPA)

2. Jesus – 1Peter 3:18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. (NIV)

3. Personal experience

Conclusion: you are not fighting the battle alone Ex23:22

The Lord delivers the righteous from all troubles Ps 34:19
If you have given your life to Jesus, you do not need to fear.

Father, help me to overcome every adversity.
SERMON OF THE MONTH
Courage in Times of Adversity
Pastor (Dr.) Otive Igbuzor
General Overseer
Palace of PRIESTS ASSEMBLY (PPA)

2. Jesus – 1Peter 3:18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. (NIV)

3. Personal experience

Conclusion: you are not fighting the battle alone Ex23:22

The Lord delivers the righteous from all troubles Ps 34:19
If you have given your life to Jesus, you do not need to fear.

Father, help me to overcome every adversity.
Palace of Priests Assembly holds interdenominational Couples Night with the theme: Blissful Marriage in a Depressed Economy.

Palace of Priests Assembly, on Friday, 30th September 2022 held her annual interdenomination couple’s night with the theme Blissful marriage in a depressed economy. In his welcome address, Pastor Otive Igbuzor noted that marriage was instituted and designed by God (Gen 2:18-25). At the heart of marriage is companionship and intimacy which both husband and wife must promote (Gen 2:18, 24). The relationship between husband and wife is similar to that between Christ and the Church (Eph 5:23; Eph 5:31-32). We must also note that marriage is not an event. Marriage is not a contract. Contracts have escape clauses. Marriage is an unconditional commitment. The marriage commitment is both holy and practical. Marriage commitment involves three individuals: Husband, Wife, and Jesus. (Eph 5:23). Marriage commitment is a cooperative venture. Marriage is meant to be enjoyed and not endured.

According to Pastor Otive, about 14 years ago on their 15th Wedding anniversary, they testified that they have had a blissful marriage and identified seven factors that can contribute to a blissful marriage. The factors are:

1. COMMITMENT BEFORE MARRIAGE AND AFTER MARRIAGE CEREMONY: When both parties are committed to the marriage before and after the wedding, the possibility of blissful marriage is higher. Commitment is dedication, obligation, vow, promise, loyalty, and pledge. Commitment attracts commitment. Commitment attracts support. Commitment attracts reward. In marriage, you need the commitment to be free from the past, commitment to love, commitment to change, commitment to communication, commitment to listening: with ears, eyes, and body (Prov.18:13), commitment to resolving conflicts, and commitment to positive in-law relationships.

2. COMMUNICATION: Communication is a process whereby information is imparted by a sender to a receiver. Communication is key to building trust in marriage. The golden Rule: Speak to your partner with the same sort of kindness, courtesy, and consideration that you want your partner to use towards you. Communication occurs with i. Words ii. Body language iii. Voice inflection e.g. what is wrong with you? iv. Look in your eyes. Bad communication destroys marriages.

3. SEX: Sex was created by God to be enjoyed only in the marriage institution Heb 13:4 Marriage is honorable in all and the bed undefiled. In the Old Testament, the Bible prescribes that newlyweds should not work (Deut 24:5). Husband and wife owe each other the duty of sex 1 Cor 7:2-5.

4. MUTUAL SUBMISSION AND RESPECT: Mutual submission is a pre-condition for the wife’s submission and Husband’s love (Eph 5:21). Look after each other’s welfare and respect each other.

5. RELATIONSHIP WITH IN-LAWS:

The husband and wife must have a commitment to building a positive in-law relationship. Communication between the couple and with in-laws will help to build a positive in-law relationship. Both husband and wife
Palace of Priests Assembly holds 2022 annual interdenominational Couples Night with the theme: Blissful Marriage in a Depressed Economy.

must commit to living in peace with in-laws (Heb 12:14-15).

6. THE GOD FACTOR: If the marriage is built on the solid foundation of God, then it will blissful.

7. TRUST: Trust is a relationship of reliance. A trusted person fulfills policies, ethical codes, laws, and previous promises. Trust in a relationship is the greatest key to developing intimacy. If you are trustworthy, then you can be trusted. Faithfulness reinforces trust. Adultery devastates trust.

He noted that, In this year’s Couples Night, we are looking at the topic – ‘Blissful Marriage in a Depressed Economy”. Can we have a blissful marriage in a depressed economy? For instance, will a depressed economy decrease libido or can it generate a compensatory mechanism to have a pleasurable sexual experience? We have invited a Guest Speaker and seasoned panellists that will help us X-ray the topic.
Birthday Gallery

Happy Birthday!
Bro. Sylvanus
24th September

Happy Birthday
O J
12th Sept 2022

Happy Birthday
Sis. Janada Kadir
Wishing you God’s continuous favor.

Happy Birthday
Pastor Ese
May the joy that you have spread in the past come back to you on this day. Wishing you a very happy birthday!

Happy Birthday
20th September

Dr. Agbaji Orinya
Program Manager PPJ and Executive Secretary PPA

YOU ARE APPRECIATED. WISHING YOU GOD’S ETERNAL BLESSINGS WHICH ADDS NO PAIN

With Love from PPA

We are Priests... We Make Disciples... Empowered People... Better Society
We are Priests... We Make Disciples... Empowered People... Better Society

Palace of PRIESTS ASSEMBLY

Palace of PRIESTS ASSEMBLY (PPA)
Priests Peace and Justice (PPJ) Initiative
NEWSLETTER

+234 812 710 0087, +234 706 387 9653
www.priestsassembly.org/www.ppj.priestsassembly.org

Palace of PRIESTS ASSEMBLY Auditorium
Ebenezer Place, Durumi 2,
after Gwagwalada Park,
Area One.
Federal Capital Territory (FCT).
Abuja.
Nigeria.

Telephone: +234 8068 455697
Website: www.priestsassembly.org
E-mail: info@priestsassembly.org
Twitter: @priestsassembly.org
Facebook: facebook.com/priestsassembly
Instagram: priestsassembly

We are Priests... We Make Disciples... Empowered People... Better Society