A Communique issued at the Second Annual Summit of Pentecostal General Overseers in Nigeria held at Presken Hotel, Opebi, Lagos on Thursday, March 30, 2023

Preamble
The second annual summit of Pentecostal General Overseers in Nigeria held at Presken Hotel, Opebi Lagos, on March 30, 2023, was convened by Priests Peace and Justice Initiative (PPJ) in collaboration with Catalyst for Peace and Justice (CPJ) as part of PPJ’s on-going Shun Corruption project. The summit which had over 50 Pentecostal Christian General Overseers in attendance deliberated on a wide range of issues bothering on the role of the Pentecostal church and the fight against corruption in Nigeria. Specifically, a keynote address was delivered on: The Pentecostal Church in Nigeria and the National Anti-Corruption Strategy while a paper on Operationalizing the Social arm of the Church and Setting the Anti-Corruption Agenda for theIncoming Administration in Nigeria was equally presented. These were followed by a session of a panel discussion as well as a robust interaction by participants, the panel section was brought to an end with the book lunch “Pentecostals Promoting Zero Tolerance to Corruption in Nigeria”. At the close of the meeting, some key issues were identified and suggestions were proffered on the way forward as below:

The Issues Identified

1. Corruption has reached an unacceptable level in Nigeria as it has become pervasive cutting across various segments of our society including education, religion, politics, economy, business, and health among others.

2. There is a perception of Pentecostal Christianity to be synonymous with prosperity, individualism, flamboyance, and extravagance thus creating a negative impression of the church’s attitude towards corruption.

3. Unfortunately, the Pentecostal church is faced with the challenges of addressing the influence of societal corruption on its members as they are not isolated from other sections of society.

4. The Pentecostal church community in Nigeria seems not to be united enough to forge a common front on issues of corruption and bad governance in the interest of national development since we have a large number of them running
Pentecostals running an independent body that is not under PFN these may pose a great issue in a matter of control, which is limiting the effort of the executives

5. Until very recently, there appears to be a lack of emphasis and prioritization of the social dimension of Christianity as the Pentecostal church relegated the place of the social arm of the church which is one key area through which it can engage the issue of corruption.

6. Despite the plethora of legislations and agencies fighting corruption in Nigeria, corruption has remained widespread and pervasive partly because the norms and behavior of citizens have remained unchanged as the country has been consistently rated by Transparency International (TI) to be among the most corrupt countries in the world in its Corruption Perception Index.

7. Efforts of the past and present administrations in Nigeria in fighting corruption seem not to be yielding the desired result because the approaches adopted have not been holistic as they were/are without the input of the Pentecostal church.

8. Some critical ingredients that seem to be missing in the fight against corruption in Nigeria include the freedom of Information regime and the protection of whistle-blowers as well as the political will and commitment of a critical mass of people both in leadership and followership.

9. Unfortunately, it has been observed that those who should be playing the role of soldiers in the war against corruption (the judiciary, legal enforcement institutions, police, and other such official legal bodies) are the biggest part of the problem of corruption rather than the solution.

10. The fight against corruption in Nigeria and other many African countries is not located within the broader paradigm of fighting for the transformation of society in a way that will deal with the multi-factorial causes of corruption.

What Should Be Done:

a) **By Pentecostal Christian Community**

1. Pentecostal church leaders should prioritize and emphasize teachings on holiness and godliness vis-à-vis contentment in their conduct and sermons which are the examples of our Lord Jesus and deemphasize the focus on prosperity and other
worldly teachings which undermine their faith as Christians. This will give Pentecostal leaders the moral standing to effectively engage in the fight against, using God’s word the bible as an element of operational tools.

2. The existing Pentecostal Christians platform – PFN should be strengthened, united, and capacitated to engage on issues of corruption and governance and to be in a position to forge a common front in the interest of the church and national development.

3. The establishment of the social arm of the church should be expediently considered by Pentecostal churches as a formidable way to engage the issue of corruption as well as address some of its root causes which could make members vulnerable to corrupt practices, also to act as a means to step down the training received to other members. This will invariably help to fulfill the dual mandate of our Lord Jesus who ministered to the spiritual and physical needs of people, which can come in form of income generation by churches, engaging members in a form of corporative society to empower the poor ones.

4. The Pentecostal church need to urgently come up with a common stand on issues of corruption in Nigeria that condemns corruption in all ramification by the church. The church should also engage in a service revival to purge it of bad eggs by calling them to repentance, which also comes with rewarding exemplary work against corrupt practices.

b) By the Incoming Administration

1. There is the need for government to give attention to issues bothering norms and values that are capable of changing the attitude and behavior of citizens in its fight against corruption. In this direction, the Pentecostal church has a role to play in building the moral and spiritual minds of members to stand, shun and speak against corruption in society.

2. The incoming administration should endeavor to learn lessons from the failure of the anti-corruption agenda in the past as well as utilize universally accepted and time-tested strategies in its fight against corruption. A formidable anti-corruption strategy that is holistic and inclusive of the input of the Pentecostal Christian community should be developed to aid the fight against corruption in Nigeria.
4. Beyond declarations and speeches that could be seen as mere lip service to the issue of corruption, the incoming administration should demonstrate its zero tolerance for corruption through the behavior and actions of the President and top government officials. This should also include redressing some perceived injustice by sections of the country in the spirit of equity, fairness, and justice which are the hallmarks of a corrupt-free society.

5. The fight against corruption should be seen as part of the fight to transform a society that will promote humanity, and challenge power relations, institutions, mechanisms, and systems that aid corruption.

6. The incoming administration’s anti-corruption agenda should adopt a whole-of-society approach as corruption in Nigeria can only be dealt with if the whole of society is involved in the fight against it. The agenda should be comprehensive and integrated combining elements of sanctions, systems, and society.

**Conclusion**

More than ever before, participants at the meeting expressed the urgent need to address the issue of corruption in Nigeria that has permeated the fabric of the society. They were equally resolute and determined to work together to use the above recommendations to engage the incoming administration toward evolving a well-articulated and holistic strategy to fight against corruption in Nigeria.

**SIGNED**

1. Bishop Wale Oke - PFN National President
2. Arch. Bishop John Osa-Oni - PFN National Vice President S/West Zone
3. Dr. Otive Igbuzor - GO, PPA/Program Director, PPJ
4. Rev. Sam Aiyedogbon - GO, Realm of Glory International/Chairman, CPJ
5. Apst. Ukwuonu - PFN Chairman, Lagos State