

POVERTY AS AN OBSTRUCTION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE JUSTICE IN AFRICA IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL INJUSTICE IN JAMES 2:6-7; 5:1-6

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Abstract

African society has always been characterized by the gulf between the majority who are poor and the handful that are rich. The African continent is ravaged with financial problems. Poverty is endemic. As some parts of the world are progressing, getting richer and enjoying a better standard of living, Africa is deteriorating rapidly. Countries are consumed by war and ravaged by diseases like Cancer, HIV/AIDS, and COVID 19 and so on, and the number of widows and orphans increases daily. Yet amid this suffering, a few individuals accumulate immense wealth and exert pressure on the poor. This situation raises questions about why there are so many impoverished people and few are so rich. This paper focuses on the Nigerian situations in the light of James' teaching in James 2:6-7; 5:1-6 about the rich exploiting the poor, dragging the poor to court, hoarding wealth and the refusal to pay wages to the labourers with the aim of curbing if not to eradicate, such unfaithful antics of public leaders. The methodologies employed in this paper are Historical, Expository, Analytical, and Phenomenological towards arriving at a logical conclusion.

Keywords: Religion, Corruption, Africa, Wealth (Riches), Poverty and Wealth.

Introduction

According to Donovan, it is impossible to solve problems until people acknowledge them and face them openly, honestly and courageously.¹ Corruption is a feature of African social, political and even religious life, with disastrous consequences. It not only impedes economic development but also increases poverty by making a few individuals richer and many poorer. Although Africans know that corruption in all its forms is illegal and undesirable, it seems to have a hold on them everywhere they go. Even mortuary attendants need to be bribed to provide services. Officials require bribes before they issue foreign exchange and import and production licences. A bribe can lead to a reduction of one's taxes or bill for water or electricity. Even the police, who are supposed to be guardians of the law, also receive bribes to obstruct the administration of justice.² Isiramen opines that Nigeria as a nation is faced with a multiplicity of challenges. Among others, current issues that attract attention include effective leadership, governance accountability, security, growing poverty, inequities and sliding socio-cultural values. An advanced approach by apologists of rapid economic transformation and development as a platform for stable polity and peace appears to be essentially exclusive and inadequate in addressing the myriad of problems faced by the Nigerian nation. Thus, the place of the Humanities and religion in analysing and addressing national issues in Nigeria appears evident.³

Abe opines that Nigerian society is full of peasant masses and the underprivileged, unquantifiable job seekers: the youth and graduates, the homeless, armed robbers, area boys, the sick and destitute, all who struggle for daily survival. Since independence, Nigeria has not had a sympathetic government, be it civilian or military, that had concern for these categories of citizens.⁴ He states further:

The Nigerian populace also believed that the inception of democracy would usher in the great relief, freedom, peace, justice and progress for the people. But alas! All aspects of our society have been permeated with high degrees of unprecedented corruption. The epidemic of corruption continues to beat the imagination of any reasonable person at lamentable proportions. Indeed, no section of our private and public life is spared of this cancerous disease.

We are living witness of the destabilizing effect that corruption has inflicted on our national psyche. It berates the mind, chills the blood, thickens the marrow that our generation has become almost optimistically irredeemable, morally debased, ethically decayed, economically crippled, politically deformed, confused and hopeless. We are culturally decomposed as a nation. Everybody engages in the rat race for wealth, abuse of official positions, arrogantly and defiantly jubilations in both adult and youth delinquency and decadence.⁵

Some Conceptual Issues

It is pertinent at this juncture to explore the relevant concepts underpinning this study to clearly demonstrate their referent in the study.

Corruption

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines Corruption as dishonest or illegal behaviour, especially of people in authority. It is the act or effect of making somebody change from moral to immoral standards of behaviour.⁶ It is an immoral conduct or practice harmful or offensive to society.⁷ James Chen, asserts that Corruption is dishonest behaviour by those in positions of power. Those who abuse their power may be individuals or belong to organisations such as businesses or governments. Corruption can entail a variety of actions, including giving or accepting bribes or inappropriate gifts, double-dealing, and defrauding investors. Corrupt behaviour is often the result of government intervention in the economy, but it can be prevented with certain checks and balances. In other words, Corruption is any behaviour that benefits an entity in power at the expense of others. As such, it's considered to be an abuse of power. Corruption occurs when someone in a position of power uses their authority to influence decisions or conducts any other dishonest or fraudulent behaviour like giving or accepting bribes or inappropriate gifts, double-dealing, under-the-table transactions, manipulating elections, diverting funds, laundering money, and defrauding investors.⁸

Poverty

Poverty is a social condition characterised by the lack of resources necessary for basic survival or to meet a certain minimum level of living standards expected for the place where one lives. The income level that determines poverty differs from place to place, so social scientists believe it is best defined by conditions of existence, like lack of access to food, clothing, and shelter. People in poverty typically experience persistent hunger or starvation, inadequate or absent education and health care, and are usually alienated from mainstream society. Poverty is a consequence of the uneven distribution of material resources and wealth globally and within nations. Sociologists see it as a social condition of societies with an unequal and inequitable distribution of income and wealth, of the de-industrialization of Western societies, and the exploitative effects of global capitalism.⁹

Types of Poverty¹⁰

Absolute Poverty is what most people probably think of when they think of poverty, especially if they think about it at the global level. It is the total lack of resources and means required to meet the most basic living standards. It is characterised by a lack of access to food, clothing, and shelter. The characteristics of this type of poverty are the same from place to place.

Relative Poverty is defined differently from place to place because it depends on the social and economic contexts in which one lives. Relative poverty exists when one lacks the means and resources required to meet a minimum level of living standards that are considered normal in the society or community where one lives. In many parts of the world, for example, indoor plumbing is regarded as a

sign of affluence, but in industrial societies, it is taken for granted, and its absence in a household is taken as a sign of poverty.

Cyclical Poverty is a condition in which poverty is widespread but limited in duration. This type of poverty is typically linked to specific events that disrupt a society, like war, an economic crash or recession, or natural phenomena or disasters that disrupt the distribution of food and other resources.

Collective Poverty is a lack of basic resources that is so widespread that it afflicts an entire society or subgroup of people within that society. This form of poverty persists over periods stretching across generations. It is common in formerly colonised places, frequently war-torn places, and places that have been heavily exploited by or excluded from participation in global commerce, including parts of Asia, the Middle East, much of Africa, and parts of Central and South America.

Concentrated Collective Poverty occurs when the kind of collective poverty described above is suffered by specific subgroups within a society or localized in particular communities or regions devoid of industry, good-paying jobs, and lacking access to fresh and healthy food.

Case Poverty occurs when a person or family cannot secure resources required to meet their basic needs even though resources are not scarce and those around them are generally living well. Case poverty might be produced by the sudden loss of employment, inability to work, or injury or illness. While it might seem like an individual condition at first glance, it is a social one because it is unlikely to occur in societies that provide economic safety nets to their populations.

Asset Poverty is more common and widespread than income poverty and other forms. It exists when a person or household does not have enough wealth assets (property, investments, or money saved) to survive for three months if necessary. In fact, many people living in the U.S. today live in asset poverty. They may not be impoverished so long as they are employed but could be thrown immediately into poverty if their pay were to stop. This also describes the situation in the lives of an average working class (group) in Nigeria.

Obstruction of Administrative Justice

Administrative justice is the branch of law that requires public institutions and officials (as well as private institutions performing public functions) to adhere to due process principles when making administrative decisions or taking administrative actions.¹¹ Administrative justice concerns how we interact as individuals when the government, or those working on its behalf, act in ways that appear wrong, unfair or unjust. It encompasses matters of everyday importance to all of us, such as housing, education, health care, immigration, planning, social security and taxation.¹² However, the term “obstruction of justice” refers to any action that a person willfully takes to obstruct or hinder, the administration of justice. Obstruction of justice occurs when a person offers false information or otherwise takes some action that frustrates an investigation or other legal process.¹³

Wealth (Wealthy)

Dali opines that wealth means different things to different people. Essentially, wealth enables you to achieve your financial goals and be financially “free.” Wealth is the actual flow of resources, commodities, food, clothing, manufactured goods, capital and wages. In this sense, wealth includes everything people desire.¹⁴ Mairi Robison and George Davidson assert that “Wealth is riches, valuables and property, or the possession of them or abundance of resources.”¹⁵ In this sense, to have sufficient wealth is to have money, cash, capital, bread, funds, riches, treasures, assets, resources, means, fortune, property, goods, possessions, estate, etc. Similarly, having a lavish display of wealth means being affluent, opulent and prosperous. To be wealthy is to be rich, prosperous, well-off, well-to-do, well-heeled, rolling, moneyed and loaded, flush, comfortable and affluent. The opposite of this is

poverty. During the Industrial Revolution, wealth was related to how much one had accumulated in worldly goods, namely money. A lot of wealthy people acquire wealth in order to increase their purchasing power relative to others. The result is an acceleration of inequality and underdevelopment based on massive power imbalance built up over long history of plunder, extermination, slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism.¹⁶

Favouritism

Favoritism is the unfair practice of treating some people better than others.¹⁷ This, however, manifests itself in various ways. For example, someone may be given something they do not deserve simply because they are relatives of or come from the same village or the same ethnic group as the giver. Such nepotism is frequent in Africa (especially Nigeria). Unfortunately, it is also evident in the church, where people are sometimes given positions because they are recommended by an authority figure, a political official or even the leader of a denomination. Favouritism also happens when people cheat and receive something at someone else's expense. For example, some patients get priority care in public hospitals because they are related to or know the doctor, while others who were there earlier must wait; this is favouritism because it is discrimination. Favouritism easily becomes corruption; a favour may be given in exchange for a money bribe or some other commodity. James denounces discrimination and reminds us that God makes no distinction between people but treats us all in the same way.¹⁸

Favouritism and Social Injustice in James 2:6-10; 5:1-6

6 But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? 7 Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you belong? 8 If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. 9 But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. 10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it (James 2:6-10); Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. 2 Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. 3 Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. 4 Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. 5 You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you (James 5:1-6 NIV).

The book consists of a series of ethical admonitions to those "who believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ."¹⁹ The book of James is very practical and moral, not doctrinal and theological. It is a manual of Christian conduct that assumes a foundation of faith.²⁰ It is against social injustice like Amos in the Old Testament; James deeply cares for the poor. The author stressed orthopraxy (sound deeds) and not just orthodoxy (sound doctrine). James's moral emphasis is similar to that of Jesus. James says less about the master and is more like him in teaching, expressions, and figure of speech than any other New Testament book.²¹ He reminds his readers of the need for genuinely Christian standards and values in every areas of life.²² The scene in James 2: 4-10 is that of a congregation gathered to dispense justice and found Jewish parallels as evidence of the need for impartiality, which would be called in question by the litigants who dressed themselves in fine clothes to impress the assembly and were given good seats as a mark of respect. The section brings no fewer than three charges against

the reader. First, they are guilty of social of snobbery and partiality, which runs counter to the character of God; second, they are strangely and ironically short-sighted in siding with the rich –here, at verse 5, the scope of the argument broadens to include the general situation of how rich persons treat the poor– the readers are taking the part of those who are their opponents and oppressors, verse 6-7. Finally, the social malaise and the topsy-turvy situation where misguided Christian actually prefer to play up to their persecuting foes, is given by the author the name sin as he turns the debate to side with the poor.

For James, sin is regarded as an infraction of the “supreme (loyal) law,” found in Lev. 19:18, “you shall love your neighbour as yourself.” When favouritism implies that the poor neighbour is treated with disdain and his social rights abridged, the community commits active transgression, the same broken law turns upon the offenders and “convicts” them as “lawbreakers.”²³

James continued his attack on self-cantered merchants who seem to succeed in their business plans and not only turn a profit but are considered rich with their hoarded wealth. Such wealth James declared waste. Spiritual access is found in sharing, not hoarding, possessions.²⁴ The rusting of the gold testifies to the social injustice the rich have committed; instead of using their wealth to aid the poor in time of need, the rich agriculturists have amassed their possessions only to see them destroyed. Legal redress in the court was impossible when the judges were the big landowners who “had a reputation for oppressive and venal verdicts.” As farming and commerce were linked, the landowners could bring their food directly to market and dominate the price structure with volume production. Lack of capital prevented the small farmer from expanding his holding and upgrading his equipment; in times of drought and famine, the large landowner had more resources to fall back on and could hoard his produce or, when market forces operated to his advantage, sell at inflated prices. By contrast, the small farmer had no reserves and was driven either to sell out to the magnate or to take a loan at high interest rates, and with the threat of expropriation for the default of payment, a real one, and the tendency was for the rural independent to be squeezed out of business and to become a wage earner or tenant farmer or worker in the employ of his feudal master.²⁵

Society has always been characterised by the gulf between the majority who are poor and the handful who are rich. The latter are powerful; they set themselves up above the law. They make demands that are harmful to the interest of the poor.²⁶ It is a natural human tendency to defer to social superiors and despise those below us on the social scale. There is nothing Christian about this. The right thing is to treat everyone with equal respect and love our neighbour as ourselves, as God’s commandment teaches us (8; Mark 12:28-31).²⁷ One must learn to accept others, whatever their status or class. He must show courtesy to all, compassion for all, and consistency to all. Equity, love, and fidelity are the vital ingredients.²⁸ James is content to warn his readers against siding with the rich, who turn out to be the church’s enemies. In 5:1-6 the “rich” are personally confronted with direct address, and though James employs phrases and idioms drawn from the OT, his speech is intended to serve as an encouragement to his Christian brethren who have suffered at the hands of the rich.²⁹ There is a special danger in wealth (James 5:1-6; 2:67). It wraps people up in false security. They are so well-insulated that they cease to feel for those who are cold and hungry. This life is so pleasant that they forget the day of reckoning. But God sees and hears all. In the style of an Old Testament prophet, James denounces those who pile up riches yet pay out no wages.³⁰

The Accountability and Responsibility of the Wealthy

According to Endicott, Accountability is a fundamental requirement for responsible government because public officials cannot be trusted to act responsibly if they don’t have to face up to anyone. Accountability needs to take diverse forms in a complex 21st-century state. Parliament imposes certain forms of political accountability on government, and the courts impose certain forms of legal accountability, but accountability has to reach far beyond the courts and parliament. Auditors holding public authorities to account for their finances, and their decision may be backed by massive financial

penalties for officials involved in corruption. Public authorities ought to be accountable in a wide variety of ways to a wide variety of people and institutions- to the ombudsman, to public inquiries, to police investigations, to school inspectors, to a variety of tribunals, to the voters, to the media, to the courts etc.³¹ Robin Kelly opines that:

Instead of seeking wholeness and harmony as brothers and sisters, people in society tend to exploit each other where possible, even under the cloak of co-operation. This can be seen most graphically on the global scale. At present two-thirds of the world lives in poverty. The seventy-five percent of the world population who live in developing countries have access to very limited resources. Meanwhile the wealthy twenty –five percent protect their wealth with a vast arsenal. The Old Testament vision of just society includes a just distribution and use of resources. The law of Moses was framed both to help the Israelite community curb exploitation, and to be a model of political, economic and social justice. The land and resources of Israel were distributed equally. Many of the laws of Moses were framed to prevent people from becoming hopelessly poor, to preserve their access to the means of making a living, and to avoid their becoming completely dependent on others. The prophets announced God's judgment on systems of land from their land and by ending their line of kings. Jesus announced the arrival of the kingdom of God and attacked those forms and forces of evil which prevented the Old Testament vision of justice from being fulfilled. He saw the need to Right all wrong relationships. And he traced the cause of these bad relationships not only to personal sin but also to demonic powers of evil which possess persons, pervade the structures of society and infect the whole created order.³²

Jesus proclaimed a direct personal relationship with God, with no need for the mediation of a religious hierarchy. He renounced the use of violence for personal or political security. He rejected everything that served to maintain economic inequality and all forms of social, racial and sexual discrimination. He displayed the bias of the kingdom of God towards those most tragically affected by harsh effects of the sins of humanity- the powerless, the socially outcast, the sick and the poor. Jesus gave substance to the vision of a just and whole human society, and this was one reason why he was persecuted by the established order. But in his death and resurrection, Christians believe he won the decisive victory over all evil and made it possible for human society to be liberated from every form of distortion. In their experience of Jesus Christ through the life of his Holy Spirit, the members of the New Testament churches sought to express the harmony of a restored and just society. They experienced the work of the Spirit as they shared economic resources, as they crossed social barriers and as they used their gift to serve one another, especially the poor. They claimed that in Christ all the division between Jew and Gentile, master and slave, male and female were being broken down. These communities renounced violence. They naturally attracted the weak and the vulnerable, the poor and the non- propertied classes. They gave them a house where they could experience a complete human life.³³

Consequences of Corruption

Corruption has long been recognised as one of the biggest challenges which entities wanting to do business in Nigeria must contend with. The frequent demand for bribes by public officials has led to increased business costs, particularly for foreign investors.³⁴ Oludahunsi asserts that:

Corruption is the offspring of bad leadership. The pangs of corruption can be very painful and devastating. It destroys the economic life of a people; it stunts growth and development and crates social unrest, crime, inefficiency and other unethical value. I.M.F and World Bank

define Corruption as abuse of public office. It includes the misuse of entrusted power and funds for private benefits. Corruption in African countries is a far-reaching problem affecting various sectors of the economy. Africa has succeeded in producing many leaders who are expert in stacking the nation's money in foreign banks for private use.³⁵

As rightly observed by Rogers, cited by Oludahunsi, "This age long problem has suddenly burst upon man with shocking force in that the area of comparison between the rich and the poor has widened so much that a poor farmer and his children no longer feel comfortable toiling while a neighbour close by is wallowing in stupendous wealth without doing anything significant."³⁶ Roger E. Dickson opined that "poverty is very good in poems but very bad in the house; very good in maxims and sermons but very hard in practical life. Poverty is still that relentless hell which yawns beneath civilised society."³⁷ Kunhiyop asserts that "there is no doubt that one of the greatest factors contributing to poverty in Africa is corrupt governments and leaders. Corruption has clearly infected politicians and the various governmental systems in Africa. Transparency International identified Nigeria as the most corrupt country in the world." The World Bank 1999 noted that Nigeria has gained the reputation as a country whose ample resources are wasted due to corruption and where corruption poses a formidable barrier. For example, \$250 billion was earned from oil proceeds since the early 1990s, but due to inflation of contracts and diversion of funds, very little development has been achieved.³⁸ Abati opines that "our value system is so bad that the only thing Nigerians value is money; an average Nigerian would do anything because of money."³⁹

In order to meaningfully combat corruption, a collective effort is required by all enforcement agencies, as many individuals who engage in corrupt activities, are not deterred by the knowledge of engaging in unlawful conduct but rather by the risk of getting caught and successfully prosecuted.⁴⁰ All of this justifies the following sobering assessment of Africa's current situation: Falling living standards, environmental degradation, and high population growth rates risk pushing already impoverished communities to the brink of their capacity to survive and into competition for scarce resources. As the rest of the world is progressing, getting more prosperous, and having better living standards, Africa is rapidly deteriorating, getting more children and, of course, getting, poorer, hungrier, sicker, less clothed, and less sheltered.⁴¹ Abogunrin expresses his shock thus:

The shocking revelations in national and international newspapers and periodicals confirm that over the years, many Nigerian elites and others in positions of authority have used their privileged position to defraud the nation. Or else how come that Nigeria, the most endowed nation in Africa in terms of natural and human resources, and which is expected to provide leadership, not only in Africa, but for the whole of the black race, has become one of the twenty poorest nations in the world?⁴²

Government officials are more interested in enriching their families and their own tribal communities. Similarly, their own townsmen expect special privileges from their own sons and daughters. In most African countries, what creates an immense barrier to successfully combating poverty is the fact that ethnic and tribal factors take precedence over national commitment. Most Nigerians have come to believe that unless their 'own men' are in government, they cannot secure those socio-economic amenities that are disbursed by the government. Hence, governmental decisions about the sighting of industries, the building of roads, the award of scholarships, and appointments to positions in public services, are closely examined in terms of their benefits to the various ethnic groups in the country. The problem of tribalism really describes the situation facing many African countries. Tribalism or ethnic conflicts are the leading causes of civil war in Africa (Rwanda, Sudan, etc.). And it is almost impossible for any economic system to succeed in such an environment. The problem suggests more than just a

tribal issue: it is a symptom of moral problems. What is needed critically and urgently in these countries is not a different economic or political system (as important as those are) but rather a moral and ethical foundation in the hearts of people to be able to sustain these systems. At this point, the Church can precisely influence the development of a strong and viable economy. The point is any attempt to deal with poverty must deal not only with the external causes (bad economy, famine, death) but also with the internal moral issues. Moral and spiritual solutions are essential in any attempt to deal with the problem of poverty and corruption.⁴³

The Church and the Enthronement of Justice

Herrick observed that, today, there is a great need to understand the essential nature of the church from what Scripture teaches and not firstly from the role some claim she should play in society. We cannot continue to define the church existentially, that is, by the way, she interacts with the world and the resultant changes she undergoes. We must begin with the word of God to get a sense of the kind of entity she is, and from there, we can decide on the type of tasks she ought to be engaged in.⁴⁴ The New Testament Church in Jesus is the “Community of the Spirit” –the mystical Bride/Body of Christ/ The Church is God’s chosen vehicle to change the world through the imperfect service of the faith community. One of God’s wonders is that He chose to work through fallen humanity to be His caretakers, complete the calling of Gospel expansion, and rule the world as His stewards. The study of the Church in theological terms is *Ecclesiology* from the Greek word *Ekklesia* meaning a public assemblage or congregation called together by a herald. In the New Testament, the Church is assembled by the Spirit through faith in Jesus as the Spiritual family of God. Wherever the Spirit unites Christians together, the mystery of the Church in worshipping God and proclaiming His truth about Jesus is displayed.⁴⁵ However, the church exists for the purpose of worship, nurture, fellowship, evangelism and ministry. Worship is a natural expression of one’s relationship with God, and nurture is for the building up of disciples in the church. Evangelism (proclamation and witness) is basically for sinners outside the church, while ministry is meant for both believers in the fellowship and sinners in the society who are not yet part of the fellowship. These functions make the church a group of people with a mission to the world in which they live. The church influences the world as salt and light primarily through evangelism (outreach) and ministry or social concern. The church’s mission is comprehensively encapsulated in the Great Commission, which is the basis of other functions of the church’s ministries. The church is a servant community whose ministry is not restricted only to the members; it also involves others in the world that can be served in Christ’s name; this requires serious commitments on the part of all Christians.⁴⁶

The church should emphasise the theology of the workplace in which members see themselves primarily as God’s workers and Christ’s ambassadors. This attitude will help a great deal to raise people who will work with integrity and thus prevent the corruption and injustice in the system from deepening. Enthroning justice is not limited to reaching out to the public sector or those in governance; the church also needs to look inward for necessary purging. The concept of church discipline is gradually becoming obsolete in contemporary time; this has significantly contributed to various issues of corruption and justice in society. Misappropriation of funds, discrimination and self-centeredness are common forms of injustice often condoned by the church. It is no longer strange to find church people in public service, private practice and other positions of leadership demonstrating unfaithfulness, greed and gross injustice in their service to the nation or in their dealings with fellow citizens.⁴⁷ The church should influence society to recognise and reward honesty. The system of recognition and award should be geared towards the promotion of a positive value system. When achievements of people ignore ethical consideration, it cannot enrich the society, like conferring chieftaincy titles on wealthy persons known to be thieves and awarding honorary doctoral degrees to fraudsters. Every year, people are selected in Nigeria for national merit awards, which have nothing to do with the morals of the awardees. Nigerian society must consciously appreciate citizens who demonstrate integrity: people found faithful when probed, people who return lost but found money, etc.⁴⁸

The church should lead in the objective critique of the entertainment media, newspapers, radio and television which promote materialism. Nigeria is bombarded with a series of advertisements and promotion of quick ways of becoming rich without hard work but through mere luck. Recently, a series of TV episodes of *The Ultimate Search* led to the award of five million naira. Nihinlola rightly commented on the implication of such monetisation of our values: "The desperate quest for money and wealth in our society is obnoxious and in many ways our television programmes tacitly endorsed this." When money becomes a society's ultimate search, the logical result is greed and moral decay. Discipleship training for Christians should include civic responsibility, patriotic citizenship and honest living. The church can make a tangible contribution to the war against immoral acts such as corruption and bribery through the exemplary living of Christians in their places of work. How else can people be delivered from the evils of bribery if there are no courageous Christians in society who will refuse to participate in this sinful practice? If all the Christians in the country refuse to practice bribery, it would change that country's culture. Church members who are politicians should be counselled, prayed for, encouraged and supported to remain faithful to God in political involvement.⁴⁹

Conclusion

Globalisation has put an unrelenting quest for money far above all other human concerns, this explains why people no longer see their fellow human beings as their neighbours or do not feel passionate towards their felt needs. Instead, they see them as a means to increase their materials.⁵⁰ The root of all corruption in Nigeria is the love of money which is spent on our passions. All forms of corruption in the public and private service are traceable to the love of money. The societal evils are traceable to the love of money. Perversion of justice in any society is against the nature of God and is not acceptable in any guise, corruption and favoritism should be done away with at all tiers of government. To those who may have been the victims of the heartless conduct of the rich, or who may have been tempted to turn to similar short-sighted goals. James recommended patience. Finally, to all believers, whether blessed, burdened, or backslidden, James appealed for praise, prayer, and persuasion, in his concluding remark center on sharing-sharing one's possessions, sharing with patience, and sharing in prayer.

End Notes

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