

The Fight against Corruption in Ghana: The Role of the Church and Church Leaders

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Abstract: - This paper investigates the role of the Church and Christian Leaders in the fight against corruption in Ghana. Paradoxically, about 71% of the total population of 29.4 million Ghanaian claim allegiance to Christianity, with membership in one Christian denomination or the other. However, transparency international report in 2015 ranked Ghana second with 76%, even though earlier reports on Ghana by other Corruption Perception Index had ranked Ghana favourably in relation to other countries in Africa. This paper reviews mainly secondary sources on the Internet using news and business items in the Ghanaian media in the last twenty years (1998-20018) and primary data from a doctoral research to explore the causes and effects of corruption on Ghana's development and the role of the Church and Church Leaders in the country's efforts to curb the menace of corruption.

Key Word: Church, Church Leaders, Corruption, Fight

I. INTRODUCTION

Ghana is a country in the Western part of Africa. It was the first Black country, South of the Sahara to gain independence from the British Colonial rule on 6th March 1957 with Dr. Kwame Nkrumah as the first President. Since then, Ghana has been ruled by democratically elected Presidents interspersed by military regimes. Ghana runs the parliamentary system of government with three arms of government: The Executive, The Judiciary and The Legislature. Ghana has ten administrative divisions called Regions and headed by Regional Ministers. Ghana has a population of about 29.4 million of which about 71% are Christians, 17% Muslims and the rest are adherents of African Traditional Religion or no religion at all. Ghana is bounded on the south by the Gulf of Guinea, on the north by Burkina Faso, on the west by Ivory Coast and on the east by Togo.

Corruption has been in existence since the Fall of human kind in the Old Testament. "The earth grew corrupt in God's sight, and filled with violence. God contemplated the earth: it was corrupt, for corrupt were the ways of all flesh on the earth" (Gen. 6:12).

Since independence, Ghana has witnessed massive corruption at different levels from one government to another whether democratically elected or military regime.

On 4th June 1979, Flight Lt. J. J. Rawlings seized power from the Supreme Military Council II and accused the General F. W. K. Akuffo's regime of corruption. Three former Ghanaian leaders, namely Gen. A. A. Afrifah, Gen. I. K. Acheampong and Gen. F. W. K. Akuffo were executed by firing squad for alleged corruption in broad-day light at the Teshie Military

Range as part of his house cleaning exercise of ending corruption in Ghana. Lt. J. J. Rawlings organized parliamentary and presidential elections which were won by Dr. Hilla Limann's People's National Party. Dr. Limann took over power on 24th September 1979. However, with less two and half years in office, Lt. J. J. Rawlings staged a coup d'état on 31st December 1991 and seized power again from the democratically elected President accusing his administration of massive corruption. Lt. J. J. Rawlings ruled for 11 years until returning the country to multiparty democracy. He contested the election and won for two consecutive terms of four years making him the longest serving leader in Ghana's political history with a total of 19 years in government. He was succeeded by His Excellency, J. A. Kufuor on 7th January 2001.

His Excellency, John Agyekum Kufuor, the ex-President of the Republic of Ghana, in his Inaugural speech at Independence Square in Accra on 7th January 2001, promised to "cut waste and corruption from public life."¹ He solemnly pledged "zero tolerance of corruption in his administration" setting himself as a personal example.² However, at the end of his second term in office, eight years later, he was reported to have said, "Really that is the truth; corruption is as old as Adam and Eve and everybody knows it. Adam was corrupted by Eve and Eve was corrupted by the serpent."³ His remarks, as he later explained were not an endorsement of corruption in the country but rather an advice to office holders. He admitted that office holders face temptations every day in their offices. Therefore, he warned them to be very careful about people who come to them in order to corrupt them.

Since then, there has never been a day in the news media without one allegation of corruption or the other against an office holder in Ghana. Corruption has become so rampant in the Ghanaian society that it would be fair to say that it has now become a norm that everyone accepts and expects. In one way or the other, we have all been victims or perpetrators of corruption in Ghana.

¹<https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/republic/prez-inug-adr.php> [Retrieved on 5/10/18]

²<https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/republic/prez-inug-adr.php> [Retried on 5/10/18]

³ Corruption is as old as Adam' comment misconstrued – Kufuor <https://www.myjoyonline.com/politics/2016/september-2nd/corruption-is-as-old-as-adam-comment-misconstrued-kufuor.php> [Retrieved on 5/10/18]

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

In Transparency International report titled: “People and Corruption: Africa Survey 2015 – Global Corruption Barometer” Ghana was ranked second with 76%,⁴ even though earlier reports on Ghana by Vision of Humanity’s second annual Positive Peace Index of 2013 had ranked Ghana as the third of ten least corrupt countries in Africa.⁵ A report in the *Graphic Business News* of 7th February 2017 noted that “The 2016 edition of the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) scored Ghana 43 points out of a possible clean score of 100 and showed that Ghana’s performance has dropped by four percentage points from its 2015 score of 47 points.”⁶ The 2016 *Corruption Perception Index* score indicates that in spite of Ghana’s efforts at fighting corruption, the canker was still a serious problem and that Ghana’s score of 43 points was a likely reflection of the many exposés of public sector corruption in the last few years including the police recruitment scam and the Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Authority (GYEEDA) scandal.⁷ Other corruption scandals included the Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA) scandal, GHC144 million Ghana Revenue Authority / Subah Scandal, the infamous Woyome’s GHC51 million judgment debt saga and the Smarty’s bus rebranding deal. This is likely compounded by government perceived inability to fully resolve high profile corruption cases.⁸

A cursory look at the Ghanaian society shows that majority of Ghanaians are Christians. Available statistics reveal that the religious composition of Ghana in the first post-independence population census of 1960 was 25% Muslim, 23% traditionalist, 41% Christian, and the rest are about 9%.⁹ Moreover, reports from social media said,

With a population of over 71% being Christians and 17% being Muslims, you would reasonably expect a lot more of human order and would expect to see “love thy neighbour as thyself” in action. But that’s not the case—we woke up this morning to the lynching story of a young soldier-Maxwell Mahama, a father and a husband. This is not

⁴<https://yen.com.gh/30080-transparency-international-ranks-ghana-2nd-corrupt-country-africa.html#30080>

⁵ Starrfmonline.com, “Ghana ranked 3rd least corrupt African country – Report”

(General News of Saturday, 21 February 2015) [Retrieved on 5/10/18]

⁶<https://www.graphic.com.gh/business/business-news/ghana-ranked-70th-country-in-2016-corruption-index.html> [Retrieved on 15/10/2018]

⁷ <https://www.graphic.com.gh/business/business-news/ghana-ranked-70th-country-in-2016-corruption-index.html>

⁸<https://www.graphic.com.gh/business/business-news/ghana-ranked-70th-country-in-2016-corruption-index.html> [Retrieved on 15/10/2018]

⁹ <https://www.google.com/search?q=what+is+the+percentage+of+christian+in+ghana&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&client=firefox-b>

in isolation to what really happens in Ghana.¹⁰

Similar sentiments were expressed: “How a country with so many religious folks can be this wicked on many levels and this corrupt is beyond reason. If this is how a country with over 90% of its population being religious acts, then there’s a bigger problem at hand. What sort of Christians and Muslims are Ghanaians?”¹¹

These and many more sentiments by Ghanaians in recent times, prompted me to delve into the issue of corruption in Ghana, its causes, effects on national development and the role of the Church and Church leaders in curbing the canker.

This paper intends to investigate the causes of corruption in Ghana, the economic, social and political effects of corruption on Ghana’s development and the role of the Church and Church leaders in the fight against corruption. The Research Questions underpinning the study are: What is corruption? What are the causes of corruption in Ghana? What are the economic, social and political effects of corruption on national development in Ghana? What role does the Church and Church leaders play in the fight against corruption in Ghana?

III. METHODOLOGY

This paper uses mainly secondary sources from the media, especially Ghanaian newspapers online and radio news online in the last 20 years, and some primary data culled from a doctoral field research that surveyed people on the issue of corruption in Ghana.

Corruption in the Scriptures

Corruption is the dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, typically involving bribery. Our discussion begins with Scriptural references on corruption. “You must not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds clear-sighted men and is the ruin of the just man’s cause” (Exo. 23:8). Moses said to the people before his death in the book of Deuteronomy 31:29: “For I know that after my death you are sure to act perversely; you will leave the way I have marked out for you; in days to come disaster will fall on you for doing what is displeasing to Yahweh, provoking him by your behaviour” (JB). Isaiah 1:4 reads: “A sinful nation, a people weighed down with guilt, a breed of wrong-doers, perverted sons! They have abandoned Yahweh; despised the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away from him” (JB). The book of the Prophet Hosea 9:9 states, “These men are as steeped in corruption as in the days of Gibeah; Yahweh will remember their iniquity and, he will punish their sins” (JB).

¹⁰<https://www.ghanacelebrities.com/2017/05/30/ghana-country-71-population-christians-17-muslim-kills-people-anyhow/> [Retrieved on 15/10/2018]

¹¹<https://www.ghanacelebrities.com/2017/05/30/ghana-country-71-population-christians-17-muslim-kills-people-anyhow/> [Retrieved on 18/10/2018]

Similar Scriptural references abound in the New Testament on corruption. Paul in his letter to Galatians 6:8 said, “if he sows in the field of self-indulgence he will get a harvest of corruption out of it; if he sows in the field of the Spirit he will get from it a harvest of eternal life” (JB) and 2 Timothy 3:1-5 states,

You may be quite sure that in the last days there are going to be some difficult times. People will be self-centred and grasping, arrogant and rude; disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, irreligious; heartless and unappeasable; they will be slanderers, profligates, savages and enemies of everything that is good; they would be treacherous and reckless and demented by pride, preferring their own pleasure to God. They will keep up the outward appearance of religion but will have rejected the inner power of it. Have nothing to do with people like that (JB).

St James in 4:4 also writes, “You are as unfaithful as adulterous wives; don’t you realise that making the world your friend is making God your enemy? Anyone who chooses the world for his friend turns himself into God’s enemy” (JB). Furthermore, 2 Peter 2:20 observed, “And anyone who has escaped the pollution of the world once by coming to know Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and who then allows himself to be entangled by it a second time and mastered, will end up in a worse state than he began in” (JB).

From these Scriptural references, it is clear that corruption is against God’s plan for the world and anyone, especially Christians who know the word of God and act contrary to it, corrupting others or allowing themselves to be corrupted are guilty of corruption and condemnable by Christian principles. John the Baptist, like the prophets of old such as Amos (4:1-3) and Micah (3:5-7) fearlessly attacked corrupt practices and courageously challenged the political and religious leaders of his time against corruption of religion and the use of political power for selfish gain. He criticised King Herod Antipas for his adulterous relationship with Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife and for all the other crimes he had committed (Luke 3:19; Matt. 14:4; Mark 6:18). The story of the rich ruler (Lk. 18:18-20) and Zacchaeus the tax collector (Lk. 19:1-10) show Jesus’ zero tolerance for corruption. The Church, the body of Christ is called and sent out to preach on the foundation laid down by the law, the prophets and Jesus Christ in condemning corruption everywhere at all times.

However, a critical look at the Ghanaian society today shows the Church, the body of Christ is entangled with corrupt practices. It seems like the Church and Christian leaders have reneged their role as “salt of the earth and light to the world” (Mt. 5:13-16) and embraced some of the corrupt practices of the society in which they find themselves. The Church now

appears to be in love with the world in spite of what the first letter of St John says: “You must not love this passing world or anything that is in the world. The love of the Father cannot be in any man who loves the world...” (1Jn. 2:15).

Defining Corruption

Olusegun Obasanjo, the former President of Nigeria defined Corruption as “a form of dishonest or unethical conduct by a person or group of persons, entrusted with a position of authority or an activity which involves financial or any other resources, outside his or her own, often with a view to acquiring personal or group benefits.”¹² He added that

Corruption is also the misuse of a public office or a position of authority and responsibility for private material or social gain at the expense of other people, individual or corporate. It includes bribery which is the use of reward to pervert the judgement of a person in a position of trust; nepotism, which is bestowal of patronage by reason of prescriptive relationship rather than merit and misappropriation, which is appropriation of public resources for private use.¹³

Put simply, corruption is a “dishonest or illegal behaviour, an “inducement to wrong by improper or unlawful means by government officials”¹⁴ Corruption is “the misuse of public power (by elected politician or appointed civil servant) for private gain.”¹⁵

IV. THE CAUSES OF CORRUPTION IN GHANA

One of the main causes of corruption in Ghana is the diversion of state resources into private ventures or coffers. Dorcas Abedu-Kennedy reported on *Adomonline.com* on 23rd September 2018, that a consignment of 200 bags of cement meant for the construction of an office complex for the Ghana Fire Service (GNFS) mysteriously ended up in a private shop and was subsequently sold with or without the knowledge of the Ghana National Fire Service, Tema New Town District. The 200 bags of cement had been donated by the Ghana Cement Foundation for the building of offices by the Tema

¹²Olusegun Obasanjo, “The Role of the Church In the Fight Against Corruption In Nigeria,” (Premium Times April 8, <https://opinion.premiumtimesng.com/2017/04/08/the-role-of-the-church-in-the-fight-against-corruption-in-nigeria-by-olusegun-obasanjo/>) [Retrieved 22/10/28 at 10:15 am]

¹³Olusegun Obasanjo, “The Role of the Church In the Fight Against Corruption In Nigeria,”

¹⁴<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/corruption>

¹⁵ <https://www.google.com/search?q=what+is+the+meaning+of+corruption>

New Town District Command of the GNFS.¹⁶ This was a clear violation of the Public Procurement Law for storage and hence a breach of procedure, the consequence of which is that a punitive action should have been meted out to all culprits. However, culprits usually got away with it because they were protected by the powers that be.

Mr Elvis Afriyie Ankrāh, a former Minister of State at the presidency observed that “the promise by politicians to fight corruption will remain utopian if the political system remains the same.”¹⁷ According to him, the current system whereby political fanciers give T-Shirts, money and gifts encourages corruption and ties the hands of political leaders, making it difficult for them to prosecute those found culpable. Political leaders cannot prosecute the hands that fed them.¹⁸ Mr Afriyie Ankrāh argued that the majority of the culprits are party financiers of both ruling and opposition political parties. So “they will come after you. The powers that be will put pressure on you from within and without.”¹⁹ He observed that “we have created a system that legitimises and institutionalises the corruption and then we say we want to deal with the corruption.”²⁰ He noted that “corruption is deeply stained in Ghana’s political system, and it will only take a complete overhaul of the system to root out corruption.”²¹

Massive looting of state funds takes place in public organisations. “A forensic audit conducted by reputable international auditing firms into the affairs of some government agencies show massive looting of state resources through procurements and deliberate stealing of money running into several billion Ghana Cedis.”²² Mr William Yaw Owusu reported of auditors’ report that reveals massive breaches of the Public Procurement Law (Act 663, 2003) and the Public Procurement (Amendment) Law (Act 914, 2016).

¹⁶Dorcas Abedu-Kennedy “Corruption Watch: 200 bags of donated cement to Fire Service finds its way to private shop” (<https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/200-bags-of-donated-cement-to-Fire-Service-finds-its-way-to-private-shop-687118>) [General News Sunday 23rd September 2018] source: adomonline.com, [retrieved on 22/10/18 at 5:20 pm]

¹⁷Why we are corrupt - Elvis Afriyie Ankrāh 'confesses' [Retrieved on 18/10/18]

¹⁸Why we are corrupt - Elvis Afriyie Ankrāh 'confesses' [Retrieved on 18/10/18]

¹⁹Why we are corrupt - Elvis Afriyie Ankrāh 'confesses'

²⁰Myjoyonline.com, “Afriyie Ankrāh’s confession: Our hands are tied; we can’t punish our funders”

<https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/religion/Afriyie-Ankrāh-s-confession-Our-hands-are-tied-we-can-t-punish-our-funders-689871>

[Retrieved on 22/10/18 at 5:40 pm]

²¹Jonas Nyabor, “Corruption fight goes beyond Martin Amidu – Afriyie Ankrāh” **Source:** citinewsroom.com/Ghana General News of Thursday, 4 October 2018 <https://citinewsroom.com/2018/10/04/corruption-fight-goes-beyond-martin-amidu-afriyie-ankrah/> [Retrieved on 22/10/2018 at 8:35 pm]

²²William Yaw Owusu, “Prosecuting corrupt officers: Six cases sent to Amidu over massive fraudulent deals” <http://dailyguideafrica.com/prosecuting-corrupt-officers-6-cases-sent-to-amidu-over-massive-fraudulent-deals/> [Retrieved on 22/10/2018]

The rot, he noted includes “inflation of contracts sums and non-performance of contracts. Others include non-enforcement and breach of contracts.”²³ One audit firm discovered a “breach of the provision of the Financial Administration Regulation, 2004 (L.I. 1802); cash disbursement without authorization, deposit of public funds into personal accounts and failing to account for accountable travelling allowances.”²⁴ Chris Nunoo traced corruption to the inflation of prices in public procurement. He cited a statement made by Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, the Vice President of Ghana that public officers inflate the prices of projects. Dr. Bawumia believes that “Over 90 per cent of corruption in the country is related to procurement. Current project costs are believed to be in excess of those accepted in the sub-region and globally. For instance, a comparative analysis reveals that quality hospitals are currently built at more cost-effective rates in places such as India than they are built in Ghana.”²⁵ Even though the Parliament of Ghana has passed into law the Public Procurement Act 2003 (Act 663), public officers continue to inflate prices of projects such as roads, schools and hospitals without thinking of the consequences of their action. Dr. Bawumia lamented that “many procurement decisions have been made with the goal of attaining fit for purpose, efficiency and effectiveness, infrastructural projects are in the end characterised by huge cost overruns and undue delays which eventually fail to deliver on their objectives to the ultimate beneficiaries”.²⁶ He believes that “Value for money” in public procurement, therefore, refers to a judicious, economic and efficient use of state resources at a reasonable cost. It is not about achieving the lowest initial price but rather the optimum combination of whole life costs and quality and arriving at best contract terms for Ghana.”²⁷

These are but a few of the causes of corruption in Ghana. The list is by no means exhaustive. We now discuss some of the effects of corruption in the development of Ghana.

V. THE EFFECTS OF CORRUPTION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF GHANA

Corruption affects everyone. It threatens sustainable economic development, ethical values and justice. It destabilises our

²³William Yaw Owusu, “Prosecuting corrupt officers: Six cases sent to Amidu over massive fraudulent deals” <http://dailyguideafrica.com/prosecuting-corrupt-officers-6-cases-sent-to-amidu-over-massive-fraudulent-deals/> [Retrieved on 22/10/2018]

²⁴William Yaw Owusu “Prosecuting corrupt officers: Six cases sent to Amidu over massive fraudulent deals”

²⁵Chris Nunoo, “Bawumiabemoans corruption in public procurement” (Accra, General News, graphiconline.com.gh, Jun 26, 2018) <https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/bawumia-bemoans-corruption-in-public-procurement.html> Retrieved on 22/10/2018 at 8:50 pm

²⁶Chris Nunoo, “Bawumia bemoans corruption in public procurement” (Accra: General News, graphiconline.com.gh, June 26, 2018).

²⁷Chris Nunoo, “Bawumia bemoans corruption in public procurement” (Accra: General News, graphiconline.com.gh, June 26, 2018).

society and endangers the rule of law. Corruption delays infrastructure development, it promotes shoddy work and decreases the quality of projects implemented. Speaking at a National Anti-Corruption Action Plan (NACAP) Regional Level Awareness Campaign 2018 in Ho, Mr Richard Quayson, Deputy Commissioner, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), expressed concern about corrupt practices which are sinking the fortunes of the nation. According to him, Ghana loses about three billion dollars annually to corruption and this represents about 300% of all aid inflows to the nation. He noted that the figure lost to corruption yearly represented an average of 20% of the national budget and called on the citizenry to eschew all forms of corruption and report corrupt conducts.²⁸ He was of the view that this 20% could relieve the struggling masses, create employment avenues and provide social amenities for the citizenry.²⁹ In a similar development, Dr Archibald Yao Letsa, Volta Regional Minister, also observed that “corruption as a killer was robbing Ghanaians of financial and other resources needed for development.”³⁰ He advised public office holders and public servants to eschew corruption and judiciously manage the resources of the people to bring about better conditions and standards of living.³¹

The Auditor-General of Ghana, Daniel Domelevo also declared that Ghana is losing more than \$3 billion every year through corruption.³² The amount is said to be about 300 per cent of all the aid it receives in the same period.

Mr Moses Kojo Baffoe, the Ahanta West Municipal Director of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) noted that corruption negatively affects the country's development. He pointed out that corruption and bribery were becoming a norm in the country and was a bane to national development. Togbe Afede XIV corroborates with a statement by President Mahammadou Buhari of Nigeria, at the launch of this year's African Union in January 2018, under the theme “Winning the Fight Against Corruption: A Sustainable

Path to Africa's Transformation” that corruption is the number-one evil on the continent. He said,

Corruption is indeed one of the greatest evils of our time. Corruption rewards those who do not play by the rules and also creates a system of distortion and diversion, thereby destroying all efforts at constructive, just and fair governance.” “In effect, corruption deprives our young citizens of opportunities to develop meaningful livelihoods. We must therefore work together to defeat this evil.³³

In an exclusive interview with the B&FT, Obed Attah Yeboah reported that Togbe Afede XIV attributes Africa's lack of development to the age-old canker of corruption. According to Togbe Afede XIV, corruption is the bane of the continent. “The biggest impediment to Africa's development is corruption. When you talk about the selfishness, the unwillingness to collaborate, and losing control of our economies, all come from corruption.”³⁴

Sheikh Aremeyaw Shaibu also linked corruption to selfishness and greed on the part of citizens. He bemoaned the attitude and behaviour of many Ghanaians, including Government officials and Politicians who inflict untold hardships on the citizenry for personal gain. He notes that “Our society is hurting; our society is bleeding. We are hurting ourselves and that's where the corruption is leading us to,”³⁵ thus weakening our economy. According to him “the love for one's country has been lost on many citizens and, therefore, engaging in bribery and corruption is not seen as a crime.” As a result, corruption has become culturally acceptable. He expressed the view that in spite of the religiosity expressed by Ghanaians (Christians, Muslims and adherents of Traditional Religion) in their values and morals, corruption keeps thriving in Ghana.³⁶

From the analysis above, it is evident that in spite of the fact that majority of Ghanaians are very religious people, their religiosity does not reflect in their behaviour, especially as far as corruption is concerned. Many concerned citizens are of the view that the Church and Church leaders have a daunting role

²⁸Corruption is Sinking Ghana
[<https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Corruption-is-sinking-Ghana-CHRAJ-687054>] source: ghananewsagency.org General News Sunday 23rd September 2018

²⁹Corruption is Sinking Ghana
[<https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Corruption-is-sinking-Ghana-CHRAJ-687054>] source: ghananewsagency.org General News Sunday 23rd September 2018

³⁰Corruption is Sinking Ghana
[<https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Corruption-is-sinking-Ghana-CHRAJ-687054>] source: ghananewsagency.org General News Sunday 23rd September 2018

³¹Corruption is Sinking Ghana
[<https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Corruption-is-sinking-Ghana-CHRAJ-687054>] source: ghananewsagency.org General News Sunday 23rd September 2018

³²Starfmonline.com, “Corruption fight: I'm willing to die – Auditor-General” General News of Tuesday, 17 July 2018

³³Obed Attah Yeboah, line.com, “Corruption is hurting African economies – Togbe Afede XIV Thebftonline.com Friday, 8th June Business News of Friday, 8 June 2018 [Retried on 18/10/10]

³⁴Obed Attah Yeboah, line.com, “Corruption is hurting African economies – Togbe Afede XIV Thebftonline.com Friday, 8th June Business News of Friday, 8 June 2018 [Retried on 18/10/18] <https://thebftonline.com/2018/headlines/corruption-is-hurting-african-economies-togbe-afede-xiv/#>

³⁵Radioxyzonline.com “Corruption in Ghana is endemic -Sheikh. Sheikh AremeyawShaibu <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Corruption-in-Ghana-is-endemic-Sheikh-Aremeyaw-659946> retrieved 24/10/18 at 10 pm (General New of Wednesday, 13 June 2018 [Retrieved on 18/10/18])

³⁶Radioxyzonline.com “Corruption in Ghana is endemic -Sheikh. Sheikh AremeyawShaibu <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Corruption-in-Ghana-is-endemic-Sheikh-Aremeyaw-659946> retrieved 24/10/18 at 10 pm (General New of Wednesday, 13 June 2018)

to play in this state of affairs and hold the key to the fight against corruption in Ghana.

Therefore, the next section of this paper examines the role of the Church and Church leaders in the fight against corruption.

VI. THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH AND CHURCH LEADERS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION IN GHANA

The early Christian missionaries used education as one of the most important means of evangelisation in Ghana. The early Christian missionaries set up schools as means of evangelisation. The schools contributed to the ways in which people appreciated the Christian message. Education helped to improve the living conditions of the people. The Churches continue to provide education in partnership with government in order to train the needed human resource capacity to manage the affairs of the country.

However, it is sad to note that at the launching of the Association of Catholic Teachers (ACT) in Kumasi in September 2018, Most Rev. John Bonaventure Kwofie, the Catholic Bishop of Sekondi-Takoradi Diocese in Ghana said, “most of the the educated class of the Ghanaian society are corrupt beyond comprehension.”³⁷ According to him, “most of our educated people turn to be more corrupt than the uneducated ones.”³⁸ He noted that “one does not need any analytical tool to ascertain the veracity of his statement. Though public and civil services, the security services, businessmen and women, political offices are being headed by educated people and Christians, corruption is still on the ascendancy.”³⁹

Table 1 reports of a survey data from a doctoral research project showing that 82.4% of respondents were of the opinion that Christianity has raised moral standards in Ejisu Juaben Municipality in Ashanti Region of Ghana.

Table 1: Respondents’ Stand Regarding Christianity “raising moral standard”

| Responses | Frequency (n) | Frequency II (n2) | Percentage (%) | Percentage II (% 2) |
|----------------------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| I strongly disagree | 17 | 47 | 4.5 | 12.5 |
| Disagree | 30 | | 8.0 | |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 19 | 19 | 5.1 | 5.1 |
| I agree | 164 | 310 | 43.6 | 82.4 |
| I strongly agree | 146 | | 38.8 | |

³⁷<https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Most-educated-Ghanaians-are-the-most-corrupt-Catholic-Bishop-fumes-688130>(Ghana News of Wednesday 26th September 2018) [Retrieved on 18/10/18]

³⁸<https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Most-educated-Ghanaians-are-the-most-corrupt-Catholic-Bishop-fumes-688130>(Ghana News of Wednesday 26th September 2018) [Retrieved on 18/10/18]

³⁹<https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Most-educated-Ghanaians-are-the-most-corrupt-Catholic-Bishop-fumes-688130> [Ghana News of Wednesday 26th September 2018] [Retrieved on 18/10/18]

| | | | | |
|----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Total | 376 | 376 | 100 | 100 |
| Missing Number | 1 | 1 | | |

Source: Field Survey 2017

Table 1 shows that out of the 376 respondents, most of them, 310 (82.4%) agreed that Christianity had raised moral standards in the municipality while 47 (12.5%) disagreed. One respondent did not express opinion on the question. An interviewee was of the opinion that “Christianity has helped to change the lifestyle of people; many Christians live righteous lives.”

However, contrary to this opinion, Abiodun Simeon Ige in his article “John the Baptist Approach to Corruption: A Recipe for the Church in Africa observed,

commercialization of the gospel has overtaken salvation messages. “Cash and carry pastors”, “freelance preachers”, “pastors for hire”, “emergency pastors”, “hungry pastors” (and so on) have given the Church a bad name. They live flamboyant lifestyles like the politicians. They own and maintain private jets ably financed by their Church members who are government workers, peasants and artisans among others. Donors of huge amount of money irrespective of the source(s) are being applauded in the Church and given special seats. Small donors are not recognized; they are being alienated and marginalized. This is another form of corruption similar to terrorism operating in the Church.⁴⁰

He argued that in certain situations, “the Church tends to keep silent while corruption thrives like the harmattan wild-fire. Church leaders and founders wine and dine with looters of the nation’s treasury and celebrate them in their Churches. Church leaders are not courageous enough to correct corrupt individuals in the society but they shamelessly are in the loots.”⁴¹ Church leaders must therefore live by example and practice what they preach.

On 3rd October, 2018, the Danish Ambassador to Ghana, Her Excellency Tove Degenbol, observed that “religious leaders in the country have the power to ensure that the public abstain from indulging in corrupt practices.”⁴² She explained that Pastors, Imams, Traditionalists are very much respected by

⁴⁰Simeon Ige Abiodun. “John the Baptist Approach to Corruption: A Recipe for the Church in Africa” *FACTA UNIVERSITATIS Series: Law and Politics* Vol. 14, No 4, 2016, pp. 577 - 585 DOI: 10.22190/FULP1604577I

⁴¹Simeon Ige Abiodun. “John the Baptist Approach to Corruption: A Recipe for the Church in Africa” *FACTA UNIVERSITATIS Series: Law and Politics* Vol. 14, No 4, 2016, pp. 577 - 585 DOI: 10.22190/FULP1604577I

⁴²Tove Degenbol “Religious leaders have the mandate to stop corruption – Danish Ambassador” (Adomonline.com, 3 October 2018) [Retrieved on 18/10/18]

the public hence their impact in the fight against corruption will help achieve the purpose of reducing the canker. Thus, their involvement in the fight against corruption would be effective tool in curbing the canker. She noted that efforts should be made to support “religious leaders to educate the general public on the importance of not paying a bribe, not taking bribes and reporting corruption.”⁴³ She believed that the involvement of religious leaders will produce an effective change of attitude among their members. This, she indicated is that “Religious leaders have a special position in communicating and conveying the messages in a very reliable way to their constituencies. This is the only way that the society can prioritize and spend their resources in an efficient way instead of seeing the money going to the wrong way and wrong pockets.”⁴⁴ Thus, the involvement of spiritual leaders in spreading the message against corruption is in the right direction. She underscored that fact that “Ghanaians are very religious and they would want to do the right thing.”⁴⁵

In line with the above, the Anglican Bishop of Kumasi, Most Reverend Dr Daniel Yinkah Sarfo pledged to encourage the youth of the church to eschew corruption. He made this declaration when he delivered an address to mark the 3rd Anglican National Youth camp at Takoradi in the Western Region. According to the Bishop, the youth are the future leaders. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the church to train them with “integrity and proven leadership skills grounded on the word of God.”⁴⁶ The Bishop admitted that the high level of moral decadence in Ghana is affecting socio-economic development of the country.

He was optimistic that the Anglican Church will “inculcate sound moral values into the youth and look out for leaders who would not loot national coffers and impoverish the ordinary Ghanaian.”⁴⁷ He was of the view that most Christian public office holders “were not Christ-like. They compromise their Christian doctrines and misconduct themselves. He therefore suggested that “the youth must be guided by the clergy to tread on the path of righteousness to transform the nation.”⁴⁸

In spite of the criticisms against Church and Christian Leaders that they are silent in the fight against corruption in Ghana, Kent Mensah reported that The Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference has bemoaned the spiraling level of bribery and corruption in Ghana. They lamented the deafening silence in tackling the canker which they believe is denting Ghana’s image globally. According to Mensah, the Conference described the high rate of corruption in Ghana’s society as

⁴³ToveDegnbol “Religious leaders have the mandate to stop corruption – Danish Ambassador” (Adomonline.com, 3 October 2018) [Retrieved on 18/10/18]

⁴⁴ToveDegnbol “Religious leaders have the mandate to stop corruption – Danish Ambassador” (Adomonline.com, 3 October 2018) [Retrieved on 15/10/18]

⁴⁵ToveDegnbol, Religious leaders have the mandate to stop corruption – Danish Ambassador” (Adomonline.com, 3 October 2018) [Retrieved on 15/10/18]

⁴⁶“Anglican Church prepares youth to fight corruption” (Religion of Saturday, 4th August 2018, Ghananewsagency.org) [Retrieved on 15/10/18]

⁴⁷“Anglican Church prepares youth to fight corruption” (Religion of Saturday, 4th August 2018, Ghananewsagency.org) [Retrieved on 15/10/18]

⁴⁸“Anglican Church prepares youth to fight corruption” (Religion of Saturday, 4th August 2018, Ghananewsagency.org) [Retrieved on 15/10/18]

“cancerous” and “unacceptable.”⁴⁹ The Conference lamented that their “previous directives on this issue seem to yield no positive result,”⁵⁰ They reiterated their previous statement that “corruption in every facet of Ghanaian life is not only perceived but very rife. This, according to the Conference, is unacceptable and must be dealt with at all times and at all levels of human endeavour.”⁵¹ The Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference observed that “Ghana has become an openly and pervasively corrupt nation.”⁵² They were of the opinion that “persons at all levels of society, including some Christians, are engaged in “naked corruption with impunity.”⁵³ The Conference expressed worry about the high rise in corruption scandals rocking the nation in recent years and criticised the government for failing to tackle the social canker by arresting and prosecuting indicted persons.⁵⁴

As a result of these incessant corrupt practices, Ghanaians went to the poll on 7th December 2016 and elected Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo whose major campaign promise was to fight corruption in Ghana and protect the common purse. He won Presidential election in a landslide over the incumbent President, His Excellency John Dramani Mahama. Since assuming office on 7th January 2017 as the President of the Republic, His Excellency, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo has made several efforts to fight the menace of corruption. His latest being the appointment of Mr. Martin Amidu, a person known and respected in Ghana for his anti-corruption campaign. The Ghana Catholic Bishops Conference and the Christian Council of Ghana have therefore, commended Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo for setting up the Office of Special Prosecutor and congratulated those appointed to oversee the operations of the Office. They have strongly urged the President not to make the campaign a lip service but to investigate and bring to book all corrupt practices and prosecute culprits in accordance with the laws of Ghana.⁵⁵ All Ghanaians, especially Christians, are called upon to work harder to eliminate the evil of bribery and corruption, to cherish fearless honesty, probity and accountability.

VII. CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the different facets of corruption in Ghana and their effects on the development of the country. It

⁴⁹Kent Mensah, corruption-rife-ghana-catholic-bishops/ (starrfmonline.com/2017/11/23/).

⁵⁰Kent Mensah, corruption-rife-ghana-catholic-bishops/ (starrfmonline.com/2017/11/23/).

⁵¹Kent Mensah, corruption-rife-ghana-catholic-bishops/ (starrfmonline.com/2017/11/23/).

⁵²<http://citifmonline.com/2014/11/17/ghana-openly-corrupt-catholic-bishops-conference/>

⁵³<http://citifmonline.com/2014/11/17/ghana-openly-corrupt-catholic-bishops-conference/>

⁵⁴<http://citifmonline.com/2014/11/17/ghana-openly-corrupt-catholic-bishops-conference/>

⁵⁵ <https://otecfmghana.com/2018/05/24091/> Fighting corruption: CCG, Catholic Bishops’ Conference applaud govt [Retrieved on 18/10/18]

reiterates the fact that corruption is cancerous to the life and vitality of Ghana. Every Ghanaian – individuals, Government agencies, service providers, public and civil servants, and especially Church leaders ought to stand up and defend the cause of justice, probity and accountability. The Government of Ghana in the recent past has introduced the National Anti-Corruption Action Plan (NACAP), the Economic and Organised Crime Organisation (EOCO), Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and in recent times the setting up of the Office of Special Prosecutor (OSP) in order to tackle issues of corruption. A number of structures, policies and laws have been put in place to check public servants and to eradicate all forms of corrupt tendencies.⁵⁶ However, it seems it is business as usual. One cannot but strongly urge the Church and Church Leaders to lead and live the crusade against corruption in Ghana by the example of their lives and inculcate in their members the consequences of corruption on every citizen of the nation and how to eliminate this canker in our body politic. They should use the pulpit to teach and preach righteous and honest living. Church leaders must preach to their members to work earn their living in honest work since to “acquire wealth without labour is not only deceitful; it is a call to corruption. It is false preaching and it is sinful.”⁵⁷

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