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Nehemiah's Strategy of Fighting Corruption and Injustice in Neh. 5: 1-19: Implication for Incorruptible and Just Leadership in Nigeria's Democracy

Apuuivom, Daniel B., PhD, Inyaregh, Abel A., PhD & Aande, Simeon I., PhD

Abstract

Corruption and injustice have caused a lot of setback in the Fourth Republic. This paper therefore analyzes Nehemiah's strategy of fighting corruption and injustice in Neh. 5:1-19, to reshape Nigerian democratic leadership using Nehemiah as a model. The authors make use of content analysis as well as qualitative analysis methods of collecting data for this work. Nehemiah is a Bible character who served as governor of Judah in the post-exilic era. While his project of rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem was ongoing, he selflessly tackled the problem of corruption and injustice, a major societal blight, as in present-day Nigeria. Corruption and injustice are among causes of failure of leadership. This paper is significant as it provides solutions that could guarantee efficient leadership in the country. The authors that similar leadership principles used by Nehemiah in Judah is also applicable to Nigeria.

Introduction

THIS PAPER EXAMINES NEHEMIAH'S LEADERSHIP STYLE OF BATTLING WITH corruption and injustice in Judah as stated in Nehemiah 5:1-19. The work contains historical and brief exegetical work on the above text. Nehemiah was an exilic Jew whom in the fifth century BC served in the court of king Artaxerxes, king of Persia as the cup bearer of the king. Out of his passion for his people he requested permission from the king to go and rebuild the Jerusalem wall for his deported fellow Jews who were in Jerusalem—the capital city of Yehud (Judah was called Yehud in the Persian era). Nehemiah made this request in about 445 BC. The king granted his request and made him governors of Judah.

Apart from the reconstruction project, Nehemiah also handled other

important issues in his government. One of them was the problem of corruption and injustice. Tokunboh Adeyemo interpreted that the name Nehemiah mean “Yahweh has comforted or Yahweh comforts” (543). Nehemiah was a real comfort to the Jews when he served as their governor. When he discovered that the nobles and officials were oppressing the poor Jews, he was angry at the system and he took gradual strategy that finally stooped the exacting of usury (interest) (5:7, RSV) in Judah for the prosperity and well being of the poor Jews.

Nehemiah serves as a deterrent to Nigerian democratic leaders today. The information obtained from primary and secondary sources of this paper reveal that many Nigerian leaders are selfish and corrupt, they also practice injustice. The primary source of this work has been obtained from interviewees of five states in Northern Nigeria namely Benue, Taraba, Nassarawa, Niger, and Adamawa states respectively. This paper calls on all Nigerian democratic leaders to make a U-turn and establish a better life in Nigeria using Nehemiah as a yard-stick.

Meaning of Corruption and Injustice

Chinenye Ochulor, Iheanacho Metuonu and Oduora Asuo state that corruption is derived from the Latin word “corrumpo,” which means to rot, decompose, disintegrate or decay; in other words to lose purity and integrity (92). *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* defines corruption as dishonest or illegal behavior, especially of people in authority. It also refers to the act or effect of making somebody change from moral to immoral standards of behavior (329).). This definition is faulty hence it seems to narrow down corruption to people in authority. Really, corruption has to be defined to incorporate everybody who does things which are considered synonymous with corruption. Corruption in other words refers to a deliberate act of indiscipline against the realized moral norms and values of the state and the natural law of justice. Corruption negatively affects the common good of the citizens. Injustice according to Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English refers to “a situation in which people are treated very unfair and not given their rights.” Injustice also refers to absence of justice; violation of rights of another and unfairness.

Nehemiah’s Strategy of Fighting Corruption and Injustice (5:1-13)

When Nehemiah started work as governor of Judah, he encountered the problem of corruption and injustice among the people of high social class. Some scholars assume that Nehemiah encountered this problem after he completed the work on the wall; however the text makes it known that Nehemiah effectively tackled the problem before he completed the wall building. Among the class affected by the corruption and injustice were the landless that were short of food. Basil G. Philips interprets that

... there was inequality between people who had just arrived back from Babylon and those who had come earlier. The earlier arrivals, of course, have got hold of the best bits of land. The later arrivals were forced to rent

land to live on and try to grow food. But the new arrivals did not make ends meet, and they end up selling family members into slavery (2).

Other classes affected were landowners who were compelled to mortgage their properties (Neh. 5:5) and those forced to borrow money at exorbitant rates and sell their children into slavery (Neh. 5:4-5).

At times of economic distress families would borrow funds, using family members as collateral. If a man could not repay the loan and its interest, his children, his wife, or even the man himself could be sold into bondage. An Israelites who fell into debt, however would serve his creditor as a “hired worker” (Lev. 25:39-40). He was to be released in the seventh year called “Sabbath year” or year of Jubilee, the fiftieth year, (Deut. 15:12-18), unless he chose to stay voluntarily. According to the Law of Moses, one, it was legally and ethically wrong to treat a Jewish fellow brother/sisters as a slave (Lev. 25:39, 42, 43, 46). And two, it was legally wrong to refuse to refund to your Jewish brother his land and properties and to set free you fellow Jewish servant on the Sabbath year as well as the year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:10, 28). And three, it was legally and ethically wrong to lend a fellow Jew money at interest or sell him food at a profit (Lev. 25:36-37. Ex. 22:25).

The wealthy Jews oppressed the poor by failing to keep the above three rules when they turned to be corrupt and treated their brothers and sisters without justice. Those who were oppressed and treated unjustly cried out greatly that “although we are of the same flesh and blood as our country men” (Neh. 5:5b) who oppressed us. Justice required keeping the laws of Moses including the above three stated rules that were established by God for the benefits of the less privilege who were the majority in the Holy land. Corruption and Injustice made the rich in Judah to become richer while the poor were becoming poorer. The similar situation which is experienced in Nigeria.

Nehemiah displayed himself as a godly leader by taking different strategies to tackle this problem of corruption and injustice. First of all he was angry about the corruption and injustice of his compatriots. He did not act immediately out of aggression, but he allowed his anger to cool down while he was pondering about this enemy within. Corruption and injustice constitutes internal enemy that destroys a country equal to the external human enemy. After taking a decision of what to do, he first of all called the nobles and officials. They were the people of high social class who were the most people responsible for this evil, and he accused them of “exacting usury” from their own countrymen (Neh. 5: 7 NIV). Nehemiah was not afraid to correct high ranking officers in his government, using his governor’s authority. Stephen Torbugh comments that “the great political leaders in our country seem to be incompetent to correct and discipline top officials in their government who engage in corruption. This makes corruption to grow in Nigeria like bees move from flower to flower”(Interviewed 02/06/2020).

Nehemiah did not stop from accusing the rich; he went further to call the general assembly of the Jews which the poor were also involved. They poor were

involved in taking the decision that could affect them positively. Quit a wise strategy, this is wiser than the situation in Nigeria where the democratic elected officials who are mostly rich make decision on the behalf of general masses who are mostly the poor. Nehemiah allowed the poor to voice out with a decision that could favour them even if such a decision would reduce the access of the rich. In Nigeria decisions taken to improve the status of the poor are not always successfully implemented, especially if such decisions would temper with the wealth of the high social class, reversal is the case with Nehemiah. It should be noted that the Jewish general assembly came out with dissolution that exacting of usury should stop. Nehemiah then ordered the rich to return properties of the poor- fields, vineyards, olive groves, houses and their children etc. back to them. Thus the godly leadership of Nehemiah made the poor to jubilate as they experienced the years of Sabbath and Jubilee (Lev. 25). Nehemiah was well knowledgeable with the Hebrew scripture and allowed the word of God- the Law of Moses to guide his leadership strategies.

Nehemiah's Unselfish Government (5:14-19)

In v.14 important historical facts are given in this verse, Nehemiah was appointed governor of Judah, The exact time span of his first tenure as governor was twelve years. According to Robert Jemieson, A.R. Fausset and David Brown, the years lie between 445 B.C. to 433 B.C (348). We should not forget the fact that after these years he returned back to Persia but came back and governed Judah again. But the specific period of his second tenure as governor is not specified in the Bible (Neh. 13:6-7). "Companions" in Hebrew is literally translated as "my brothers." This term refers to higher officials in the service of the governor. Nehemiah and his companions did not make use of their right to claim a food allowance from the people. A governor like a satrap had the right to collect taxes not only for the central treasury, but also for his own treasury. During his first term and second term of office, he used his privileges for helping the people, he did not use the people to build a kingdom for himself. Some political leaders exercise their authority in order to promote themselves and project their personal interests. They have very little concern for the needs of the people. Jesus Christ should serve as an example for political leaders not the ungodly leaders of this world. Christ laid down his life for His sheep.

Another important historical fact is given in these verses; the former governors of Judah exercised their right to levy taxes for their own use. Who were the former governors? We know of Sheshbazzar (Ezra 5:15) and Zerubbabel (Hag. 1:1, 14; 2:2, 21), but no names of governors in the time between Zerubbabel and Nehemiah are supplied. They were not regarded as important enough. D. Guthrie assumes that the governor of Samaria or a subordinate official at Jerusalem may be one of those governors mentioned (407). This reference by Nehemiah might be aimed at his immediate predecessors, who laid a heavy burden of taxes, including a food and wine allowance, on the people in order to live a luxurious life. "Forty shekels

of silver—” perhaps here it means that forty shekels of silver were claimed from each individual, and then in addition food and wine corresponding with fields and vineyards were collected as taxes. “Even their servants ruled the people.” “The servants, as we have seen (4:16), were probably minor officials in the service of the governor. With this we have quite probably reference to tax collecting” (Fensham, 187). Minor officials levied the taxes in a harsh manner in order to collect enough for the Persian king, the satrap, themselves, and the governor, it became a heavy burden. Nehemiah refrained from this practice out of reverence for God, because it was his own people who were burdened. His minor officials were not sent to collect taxes, but they were occupied with the work on the wall.

Nehemiah was directly involved in building a section of the Wall as it is clearly stated (Neh. 5:16). Nehemiah and his assistance did not use the official expenses, nor did they tax the people in order to have something to eat. They paid their expenses out of their own pockets and didn’t ask to be paid back. Nehemiah might have been using the money he saved while serving in Persia. The Apostle Paul followed a similar policy with the church at Corinth. He could have accepted support from them, as he did from other churches; but he chose to work with his own hands and preach the gospel to them without cost (1 Cor. 9). Nehemiah and his associates not only paid their own bills, but they were also careful not to exploit the people in any way (Neh. 5:15). Warren W. Wiersbe assumes that “the servants of previous governors had used their position for personal gain, perhaps taking bribes from the people and always promising to represent them before the governor.” (810). For people in places of authority, often fall into the temptation to increase their wealth and power always. But Nehemiah and his friends walked in the Lord and served honestly. Nehemiah and his assistants participated in the rebuilding of the wall (v.16). They were not like the democratic leaders who stay in their offices at the headquarters and come to their communities occasionally. Rather they were workers who stood with the people in the construction and defences of the city. Jesus said, “I am among you as one who serves” (Luke 22:27, NIV); Nehemiah and his aides had same attitude as they were servant leaders. “Bought no land”—Nehemiah emphasized with these words that inspite of his high authoritative position; he did not become a land owner, and therefore was not in the position to take people into debt slavery.

Verses 17-18. According to the Persian custom, as governor of Judah, Nehemiah had to entertain a number of people at his table. “In the Persian court, the nobles were usually at the table of the king” (Nicoll 134). “A hundred and fifty men” refers to head of the families who were a separate body above the congregation of the people, and who had executive powers. “Those who came to us from the surrounding nations” refer to officials of the Persian Empire. Nehemiah had to receive such officials who were appointed in surrounding countries; for example, any official from Egypt could stay in Jerusalem on his way to the Persian court. Reginald Fuller, Leonard Johnson and Conleth Kearns add that Nehemiah welcomed Jews from the Diaspora or dispersion to his table (393). For the

entertainment at his table, Nehemiah had to slaughter every day, one ox and six of the best Sheep and fowls, but Fensham assumes that “it may be wild birds, not chickens” (198). The palace of Nehemiah contained many skins of wine, and they were refilled every ten days. It is possible that Nehemiah bought all the above commodities from his own pocket hence it is not stated from where these were supplied. But he made it clear that they were not supplied by taxes. Nehemiah did not only pay for his own food, he shared what he had with others. He regularly fed over 150 guests, both residents and visitors, and he gave them a marvelous meal (Solomon did same; 1 Kgs. 4:22-23). Nehemiah must have kept “open house” constantly. He was generous to others and asked no reward. Leaders should lead by example.

Verse 19. Here we have another prayer of Nehemiah, what he did was not out of charity; he did to receive the favour of God. To promote their welfare was to promote the cause of God. Nothing should be done to thwart the plan of God for his people. Nehemiah's action was motivated religiously and was not for purely humanitarian reasons. This is difficult to understand in the light of modern conceptions. Other scholars suspect egoistic tendencies in Nehemiah's example. It might be partially true, but we must remember that Nehemiah and the Jews were at that moment the sole bearers of the true religion. What they were doing for themselves, they were doing on behalf of the maintenance of their religion. Ted Slater criticizes that Nehemiah seems egoistic, frequently taking credit for the work of others. (5:18). He speaks as if he did the work without assistance of others. At times he speaks as if it is the Lord who assists him to accomplish such feats, but at other times he seems to hold himself in such a high regard apart from the Lord (6,7). In fact one could agree that Slater is right since sometimes Nehemiah considered himself to be better than other people (Neh. 5:15).

Corruption and Injustice in Nigeria

Corruption is practiced in Nigeria in many ways; all sectors in Nigeria practice corruption, it is practiced in politics, schools, universities and colleges. It is observed in the police, Nigerian football, churches and mosques. It is also practiced on internet and other sectors that the scope of this paper may not warrant us to discuss in detail. This section of the dissertation is basically focused on discussing corruption among political leaders and how the book of Nehemiah could help solve the problem for the nation. Corruption is one of Nigeria's biggest challenges. Nigeria as a country in Africa which has the largest population has been ranked high on corruption by Transparency International and other notable organizations that monitor corrupt practices around the world. High corruption affects almost all citizens who migrate to foreign countries. Foreigners consider all Nigerians to be corrupt. Mike Uzochukwu attests that in 2017 Nigeria was ranked the 28th most corrupt country in the world.(4) The money which is supposed to be used to reduce poverty in the country goes into the pockets of few individuals and groups. Samson Ngenmi says that the money amounting to \$2.1 billion

which was set aside to use and buy weapons to fight Boko Haram insurgency sect disappeared suddenly. The government could not explain whether the money developed legs and ran off (interviewed 03/06/2020). The popular saying that a corrupt society deserves corrupt leaders was not applicable to Nehemiah. He was born from a Jewish community that was corrupt but he did not come out with corruption marks on his body; his contact with God made him to be a Jew with a unique character. Nigerian leaders will turn to hate and succeed to fight corruption only if they have genuine faith and genuine relationship with God like Nehemiah.

The evil of corruption does not exclude antigraft agencies as Uzochukwu reports that a former chairman of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), Ibrahim Lamorde, was charged of using falsehood to divert more than Nitrillion which was recovered from corruption by the agency (6). It is very unfortunate that people who are appointed to fight corruption also fall victim of the very crime they are fighting. It becomes very difficult to trust people in the country. Many governors in Nigeria have been found guilty of corruption. Example, Kadzai David of Adamawa state responds in an interview saying that “a former governor of Adamawa Nyako and seven others including companies were to stand trial before Justice Okon Abang on a 37-count charge bordering on money laundering” (interviewed 09/05/2020). The governor opened 30 different accounts in Zenith bank using different names to stash embezzled funds, stealing to the tune of N29 billion.

Uzochukwu writes that former president Obasanjo reacted negatively on the level of corruption going on among members of the House of Assembly and House of Representatives, stating that

Members of the National Assembly pay themselves allowances for the staff and offices they do not have or maintain. Once you are a member, you are co-opted and your mouth is stuffed with rot and corruption that you cannot opt out as you go home with not less than N15 million a month for a senator and N10 million a month for a member of the House of Representatives. (7)

National Assembly is all about business enterprises, and the basic aim of the members is to make money for themselves. The National Assembly is the highest paid legislature in the entire world, in an underdeveloped economy, earning far more than congressmen of the world's richest economy. “United States senators make an approximate annual income of \$174,000.00 while that of Nigeria is \$2,183,683.00” (7). The leadership style of the biblical Nehemiah challenges the political leaders as he did not accept to collect any salary or allowances from his nation's treasury while he served as governor. As a servant leader he rendered free services to his people to reduce their poverty. Members of the National Assembly give unfair treatment to their compatriots by being reluctant to imagine the sufferings of their followers.

People write a lot of books about corruption, discussions are made about the subject matter and preachers preach on it. However the political perpetrators pretend and pay deaf ears to such preaching, they feel they are above the law. Corruption takes many shapes which include: embezzlement, bribery, rigging in elections and so on. Corruption is highest in the political system, in Senate, House of Representative and House of Assembly, corruption is seen as normal. Many youths are becoming political togs or militia because political leaders show them that, this is the way they can use corrupt tricks to fill their pockets with public funds. Political leaders authorize their militia to destroy lives and properties of their opponent party. This tendency has caused some young people to die prematurely. Many political leaders put their trust in their militia instead of relying on God. Janeth Magaji says that the recent former governor of Nassarawa state-Umaru Tanko Al- Makura due to his trust in militia and rigging of election, he used to say openly that “even if it is one person that will vote for him he will win the 2019 Senatorial election in his district” (Interviewed 10/15/2020). Thus many political leaders win their election not through votes, but through the power of their militia. Election rigging is not an unheard phenomenon. During elections, the contestants hire thugs who go round the polling units to hijack the ballot boxes. When they steal these boxes, they then use their hands to vote for their candidates. Shehu Ali says that in the recent 2019 election which card-readers were used; contestants have adopted the act of buying voter’s cards so that they can manipulate and use the cards for their own advantages (Interviewed 03/06/2020).

Embezzlement of public funds is common among political leaders. Maimuna Usman responds in an interview in this way “many leaders have helped boost the economics of other nations by depositing embezzled money in foreign banks. Facts and figures have shown that on many occasions, the men who rule the country have embezzled funds into foreign banks” (Interviewed 03/06/2020). Political corruption is persistent in the Nigerian state. There have been cases of official misuse of resources for personal enrichment. Oladayo Nathaniel Awojobi states that

after the death of the former ruler Sani Abacha, an investigation was carried out to detect the amount of money he embezzled in gas plant construction in the country. The investigations led to the freezing of accounts containing about \$100 million US dollars that he stole (158).

According to Uzochukwu, “the Abacha administration in the 1990s notoriously looted upwards of \$3 billion” (9). Zungwenen Abam from Benue state says in an interview that in many instances government organizations call farmers in the state to give them loan. Farmers spend a lot of money to register to get the loan; they spend transport money to go to Makurdi to and fro severally, at the end the rich embezzle the money and few people get the loan of small amount of money (Interviewed 02/07/2020). Many Nigerian politicians are very corrupt,

if contracts are given to them, they embezzle the money and fail to complete the contract. Habila Diko responds in interview in these words: a road contract was given to a politician; the road from Diko to Kaba, in Niger state, a road of about one hundred kilometers. The contractor did the road for about ten kilometers and abandoned the project, but nobody raised an allegation against him (Interviewed 06/04/2020). In many occasions, politicians have bribed some top officials to do wrong things to their favour. Some political leaders, including governors and presidents have been sued by opponents, but the sued followed the back door, bribing barristers and judges. At the end of the judgment, the leader who bribed won in the case.

Kayode Oladeleamar assesses that “where there is the failure of government and the country’s leadership, the governed on a number of occasions have not shown their distaste for corruption” (9). Oladeleamar is right in his assessment because where there is failure of leadership, the followers too have failed to appropriate the power that they wielded as checks on the government. It is laughable the number of corrupt Nigerians that go to mosques and Churches for thanksgiving even after looting the nations treasury. Some preachers praise them without criticizing their evil. If collective governance is maintained, the followers too will have a role to check and shape governance. Some politicians exercise violence against preachers when they criticize their evil, this makes many preachers to be silent about the evil of politicians in order to live. Terseer Gire of Benue state says that Rev Gideon Adoor of NKST church was killed at Makurdi by political togs the very day he challenged the state government in his sunday message. The incident took place in the democratic regime that ended in 2015. (Interviewed 03/07/2020)

Nigeria needs political leaders who are the type of Nehemiah who will rise up at this time of high corruption in the country and use their clean hands to rebuke and wipe away the evil of our country like Nehemiah did in Judah. Our leaders should live by example. Corruption can be reduced possibly by self-satisfaction. Nehemiah was not greedy but he was satisfied with what he had. When the leaders of Nigeria are satisfied with the salary they are paid and use them in the right way, the issue of embezzlement and money laundering will be a history. Nehemiah was not involved in any of the corrupt practices discussed above; he was a selfless leader as well as a servant leader. Nehemiah had a special love and compassion for the poor; that made him to hate corruption and cared for his people wholeheartedly. He led by example. Nehemiah insisted on justice to prevail in his leadership, if leaders could allow justice to prevail in the country corruption will be reduced to a minimal level. Leaders should not be afraid to correct the rich; the people of high social class who are the leaders of corruption and injustice. Nehemiah was angry at corruption and took measures to kick it out. Nigeria leaders should not take corruption as a normal way of life but should frown their faces at it like Nehemiah did.

There is great practice of injustice in Nigeria. In northern Nigeria, Muslim’s

Politicians are giving unfair treatment to the Christians living in the north. James Leman an indigene of Nasarawa state who works at Katsina north responds in an interview saying: at Katsina North and other states in the North, Christian Religious Studies is not taught in government schools. Indigenous Christians in the state are compelled to give Muslim names to their children, else they are denied admission into state schools (Interviewed 05/04/2020). Thus Christians in many states in the north are regarded as second-class citizens. For example, Lami Joshua says in an interview that in Niger state if the government is sharing some benefits to the communities, it is only Muslim communities that benefit. Government sometimes gives loans to farmers to do farm work, but Christian communities are denied of such privileges (Interviewed 05/04/2020). Emphasizing that the poor are not treated justly in the country, an interviewee says that in Niger state political leaders loot huge amounts of money but they are not arrested, however if a poor man steals a goat he will be arrested and charged (Isa. Interviewed 05/04/2020). This kind of injustice is not only experienced in Niger state, it is experienced all over the country. Even the punishment given according sharia criminal law is stricter on the poor than the rich; if a poor man steals a chicken he is punished severely by the *hisbah* (Sharia police), but if a rich man embezzles millions of naira no punishment is administered on him by the *hisbah*. In some communities in Nigeria widows are given unfair treatment as Reuben Dasu says that in Adamawa, when government is distributing food, fertilizer, and cash crops—maize and rice—in many instances widows are neglected (Interviewed 08/05/2020).

Some states in the north have done their best to pay state workers up to date example, Juliana Bwala and Danjuma Kitso say that Adamawa and Taraba states are not owing salaries (Interviewed 09/05/2018 and 02/06/2020). However some states do not do justice to workers: Benue state owes state workers 7 months arias of salary of the year 2017. Maria Akum says in an interview that Benue state is owing local government workers twelve months arias of salary of the year 2017 (Interviewed 02/07/2020). Kwaghfan Mbam a retiree says that the state owes pensioners for more than seventeen months (Interviewed 02/07/2020). Gratuity is hardly paid to retirees in the five states where the research is carried out. However part of workers salary is always deducted for gratuity and pension. According to Bridget Lazarus, in Adamawa state, local government workers are not paid for three months and nine thousand retirees have not been given their pension for a long period of time (Interviewed 09/05/2020). The civil servants in Nasarawa state complain bitterly about the attitude of their former governor Tanko Al-Makura towards civil servants, according to Abdulahi Haruna, the governor used to pay workers any percentage of the amount of salary he chooses to pay them. Sometimes 70%, 35% or 60%. After this payment, he used to say publicly that he is owes nobody any salary (Interviewed 15/03/2020). Musa Audu says that pensioners in the state have not been paid for one and half years. Although few retirees are given their pension up to date, but state government

decides to pay them any amount of money she feels like paying them below their normal pension (Interviewed 15/03/2020). The situation of salaries, pension and gratuity in Nigeria is so sympathetic not because there is no money to pay, but our leaders engage themselves in unjust practice because of their lack of love and compassion on their subjects. Abubakar Danjuma says in an interview that the immediate past governor of Nasarawa terminated appointments of many who were employed by his predecessor, when complains were made, he expressed his intension to renew those appointments. But for a long period of time this promise was not been fulfilled until he left the office (Interviewed 15/03/2020).

Effects of Corruption in Nigeria

The bad effects of corruption are many, as stated:

- a. Poor investment: Companies that might have invested in the country are in fear because they do not know if the corrupt practice will ruin their industries in time. But if they invested, more job opportunities would have been created for the unemployed.
- b. Rise in poverty: since top political and government leaders are busy laundering the funds that should be used to create job opportunities, there is increase of poverty in the country. Since political leaders are selfish and do not have the zeal to help the poor, poverty is on the increase.
- c. Poor national development: Any country that highly practices corruption will possibly enter into development bankruptcy. The high rate of corruption in Nigeria has led the nation to under develop economic. As great people in the nation continue to carry Nigerian currency to other countries, less economic development is experienced in the country.

Some Ways to Eradicate Corruption

Corruption can be eradicated using the following remedies:

- a. Institution of a strong anticorruption groups: Uzochukwu suggests that “creating strong anti-corruption institutions is another way to win the fight against corruption; these groups are to work independently with the government to ensure transparency” (19). The anti-corruption agency should decide the consequences that any person caught with corruption will face. Anybody caught with corruption will face a similar punishment whether he is a minister or a state governor.
- b. Giving of equal treatment to all citizens: Uzochukwu states that “treating any offender in the country equally will help reduce corruption. Nobody is above the law and any who acts contrary to it should be given the punishment that he or she deserves” (19). If a head of state or minister is given punishment for corruption, others will take caution and avoid it.

Conclusion/ Recommendations

This paper highlights the leadership style of Nehemiah in the old testament and how it challenges the present crop of Nigerian leaders to better provide good and

God-fearing leadership in Nigeria. There is lack of patriotism among Nigerian leaders, this has led to the sufferings of the masses as Helen N. Iorngurum and Torkwase Gbande put it, “many people take part in political activities because of the desire to acquire economic and material gains.” (16) It is this group of people who think that politics is the shortest route to wealth who are involved in corrupt practices to enrich themselves once they hold political offices. However, the reverse is the case with the Biblical Nehemiah who emerged as the governor of the Jews. He was a patriotic leader in the kingdom of Judah when the Jews returned from the Babylonian exile. Nehemiah was a godly leader who loved his country and did not want to relax in luxury when his people were in great distress and unsecured. Nehemiah was a leader who had great faith in Yahweh and his faith created a positive change in his practical and leadership behavior.

The research has revealed that many Nigerian leaders lack godly and moral traits. They want money and power, not hard work. They see leadership as a place of enrichment. They are self-centered and arrogant, devoid of a moral compass and conscience. They prefer stealing, lies and embezzlement. Many of them are appointed but they do nothing of significance for their people. It is high time Nigeria gets leaders like Nehemiah; leaders with moral integrity, leaders who are compassionate and moved by the burden of the people they serve. Leaders are needed who treat their subjects justly irrespective of whatever religion or tribe they belong to.

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