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EDITORIAL
The Bible and Political Stability in Africa

Political stability is critical for the development and progress of human society and ecological well-being. Scripture encourages Christians to seek the welfare and peace of any geopolitical jurisdiction that they find themselves at any time because their peace is a subset of the peace of the state/country. In recent times, some African countries have experienced coup d'états, some have argued that it is the result of poor governance and corruption by the political elite while others attribute it to greediness on the part of the military officers who undertook coups. That notwithstanding, it is difficult to find a military government in Africa that has a better governance system which makes the citizens prosperous than civilian governments. Various approaches have been propounded by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) to return these countries to democratic civilian rule. Since Africans are inevitably religious this issue discusses biblical and theological means to emphasise good governance in Africa.

This volume is composed of nine (9) insightful articles from various countries in West Africa in the field of biblical and theological studies. Victor Umaru opened the volume with a study of good governance in Deuteronomy 16:18-20 and its relevance for political leadership in the African context. He adduced the virtues of impartiality, justice, and integrity from Deuteronomy 16:18-20 as enduring and non-expiry elements for good governance and leadership in Nigeria in particular, and Africa at large. The focus of Tom Udo Tom Ekpot's article is the principle of frugality in the New Testament as a principle of dealing with economic challenges in Nigeria. He argued that the Nigerian government has failed in the handling of economic matters that would help lessen the hardship on the citizenry. Consequently, Nigerians must cut down on their expenditure on their wants to reduce the economic burden. Ekpot mainly used the parable of the Rich Fool in Luke 12:16-20 to support his argument.

Julius Ndishua argued that political stability is a critical resource for economic development in West Africa. He explained that economic well-being during the monarchical period in ancient Israel was hinged on political stability through the rule of the Kings. Some of the Kings insisted on a good relationship between Israelites and YHWH through the observance of the stipulations in the Torah. In other words, it was a theopolitical system that led to political stability and economic well-being. Emmanuel Foster Asamoah examined the biblical concepts of leadership and the United Nations (UN) concept of leadership to draw lessons for good governance in Africa. He explained that the African context is bedeviled with leadership challenges that have become visible in the quality of life of its citizens. He identified a correlation between the UN definition of good governance and the biblical definition that should make the Christian politician lead for the economic well-being of the citizens.

Gifty Ama Kyerewaa Dei Dawson is concerned with the use of ethnic sentiments to campaign for political power. She argued that voting on ethnic affinity has the potential for non-performance by the government and creates conflict among ethnic groups. She drew lessons from Judges 9: 1 – 21 to convince Ghanaians not to consider ethnicity as a factor in voting for a candidate. Edward Akintunde Ojediran engaged Micah 3:1-12 in a historical-grammatical manner to argue that the judgement oracle is the expectation of Yahweh that governments promote social justice and economic equality. He contextualised the text that political instability can be dealt with in West Africa if governments would implement fair economic standards in every State's activities and that it is the godly responsibility of pastors and church leaders to speak truth to political powers.

Okechukwu Okorie's attention was on one of the critical elements that caused coups in Africa. He identified "impunity" by the political elite as the leading cause of political instability. "Impunity" causes insidious and oppressive society and leads to despondency and the thoughts of overthrowing governments. Okorie argued that Qoheleth 8:11–12 demonstrates the means of dealing with "impunity" which is national interests against self or parochial interest, and making the rule of law apply to all persons in society.

James Edo Ikwulono analysed Matthew 20:25-28 to draw key lessons for political leadership in West Africa. He conceded that although Matthew 20:25-28 might be considered as addressing the Greco-Roman political issues of the first Century CE, it is still relevant for the 21ST West Africa Century political leadership. He posited that servant leadership and exemplified leadership as can be deduced from Matthew 20:25-28 within the framework of humility and selflessness is required for political leadership transformation in West Africa. Abel Aor Inyaregh concluded the volume with a historical-critical interpretation of Matthew 6:1-8 to emphasise the need for authentic Christian piety in worship in West Africa.

Dr. Daniel Nii Aboagye Aryeh
Editor-In-Chief
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Analysis of the Biblical Principles of Good Governance in Deuteronomy 16:18-20 for African Leaders

Victor Umaru
Baptist College of Theology, Obinze, Owerri, Nigeria
honagombi@gmail.com; +2348060052887; +2349048305454

Abstract
This study explored the foundational principles of good governance in Africa through a focused analysis of Deuteronomy 16:18-20. These verses emphasise impartiality, justice, and integrity in leadership and provide ethical guidance for contemporary African leaders. The study shed light on the enduring relevance of the passage in African governance. It employed a discourse analysis approach that juxtaposes these biblical principles with modern African governance models and practices to extract meaningful insights to enhance the quality of leadership and governance on the African continent. Through this examination, the study endeavoured to offer a comprehensive understanding of the principles that underpin good governance in Africa, ultimately contributing to more just, impartial, and ethically sound leadership in Nigeria.

Keywords: Deuteronomy 16:18-20, African Leadership, African Governance, Justice, Integrity, Biblical Principles, Traditional Governance, and Nigeria.

Introduction
The quest for good governance has long been a cornerstone of societal progress and stability. Fortunately, the Bible has an enduring reservoir of wisdom and guidance in the dynamic embroidery of governance principles. Within its verses lies a wealth of insights, offering timeless directives for leadership and governance. Deuteronomy 16:18-20 emerges as a profound source, encapsulating foundational principles that transcend time and geography, resonating particularly with the intricate landscape of the African quest for good governance. With its diverse cultures, histories, and contemporary challenges, the African continent grapples with the perpetual pursuit of just and effective governance. Amidst this quest, the relevance of the biblical texts might seem distant. However, the enduring truths found in Deuteronomy 16:18-20 agree with the core values needed for good governance in modern Africa. It transcends its time of origin, offering principles that, when decoded and applied, can transform leadership paradigms, fostering a governance landscape rooted in moral rectitude and equity.

In this analysis, the study explores the biblical principles outlined in Deuteronomy 16:18-20, dissecting their relevance and application within African leadership, especially in Nigeria. From the imperatives of impartial justice and integrity to the empowerment of local governance structures, these verses offer a blueprint for fostering transparency, equity, and righteousness in the corridors of power. The diverse nature of African governance—navigating socio-political complexities, historical legacies, and contemporary challenges—requires a proper understanding deeply rooted in proper foundations.

Moreover, applying these biblical principles in Africa necessitates a dialogue acknowledging these tenets' universality and cultural specificity. The richness of African traditions and the moral compass embedded in Deuteronomy converge to chart a course toward a governance framework that reveres the dignity of every citizen and upholds the principles of justice and fairness. Through a meticulous examination of Deuteronomy 16:18-20, the study aims to unravel the inherent wisdom within these verses, extracting actionable insights that can serve as a

compass for contemporary African leaders. This exploration seeks to illuminate the path to effective governance and ignite a discourse that amalgamates biblical wisdom with contemporary realities, fostering a governance ethos that reflects the aspirations and values of the diverse African quests. This paper contributes to the discourse on decent leadership and effective governance, offering a holistic lens through which African leadership can be guided and evaluated.

Pre-colonial Historical African Governance Structures

Ian Taylor states that pre-colonial Africa was characterised by various societies based on communal values and autonomous units. Land was communally owned, and agriculture was well-adapted to soil and weather conditions. Iron was widely employed, and bronze and brass casting thrived in West Africa.[1] Societies were stratified, with farmers producing enough food to maintain skilled workers who provided tools, weapons, and clothing. Pre-colonial Africa had a wide diversity of politics and government, all related to the economic systems practised. Hunter-gatherers practised primitive communism, while three broad systems were identified: large centralised kingdoms and empires, centralised mid-sized kingdoms, and widely scattered chiefdoms. Centralised kingdoms were ruled by monarchs with absolute power, while centralised mid-sized kingdoms were organised into city-states with authority structures.[2]

Widely scattered polities were acephalous communities with well-organised governance systems and a strong emphasis on communal decision-making. Most influence at the local level lay in family or kinship bonds, with political and social identities more related to affiliations than being an inhabitant of a particular territory. Trade between coastal cities and interior regions developed, and shared religions, commercial ties, and military authority united various African peoples.[3]

According to Amadu Sesay, Africans had different government systems before the colonial era. These systems involved councils or assemblies composed of elders, influential community members, or representatives of different clans or lineages, which played a pivotal role in decision-making, governance, and conflict resolution. Pre-colonial governance systems in Africa were diverse, reflecting each society's unique cultural, social, and historical contexts. These systems included kingdoms and chiefdoms led by monarchs or chiefs, council-based governance, segmentary systems, and democratic elements.[4]

Chiefs or monarchs held significant influence and authority, but their governance often involved collaboration with councils or advisory bodies. Elders, revered for their wisdom and experience, played crucial roles as custodians of tradition and mediators in conflict resolution. Their knowledge and guidance were highly respected in decision-making processes. Dispute resolution was a vital aspect of these governance structures. These structures served as platforms for resolving disputes through mediation, arbitration, or customary laws, often employing restorative justice principles, focusing on reconciliation and community harmony.[5] Understanding these diverse traditional governance systems and the pivotal roles played by councils, chiefs, and elders provides insights into the communal and consultative nature of decision-making and conflict resolution in pre-colonial African societies.

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[1] Ian Taylor, *African Politics: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 9-11.

[2] Taylor, *African Politics: A Very Short Introduction,* 13.

[3] Taylor, *African Politics: A Very Short Introduction,* 13-14.

[4] Amadu Sesay, "African Governance Systems in the Pre and Post-Independence Periods: Enduring Lessons and Opportunities for Youth in Africa," *Mandela Institute For Development Studies* (MINDS), (2012): 8-12.

[5] "Relevance of African Traditional Institutions of Governance," (2007): 2-8. sdgs.un.org › publications › 2007-relevance-african-traditional-instituti... Accessed 24/11/2023

Traditional African norms emphasise fairness, equity, integrity, and impartiality in governance. They value the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities to leaders who exhibit honesty and transparency. The systems often emphasise consensus-building and community involvement in decision-making, promoting fairness and justice within communal values. Elders and community leaders are respected as custodians of tradition, arbitrators in disputes, and guardians of justice. Many African traditions prioritise restorative justice, focusing on healing and repairing relationships within the community. Indigenous African concepts emphasise community-centred governance, with leaders accountable for the community's well-being. These diverse values help integrate strong traditions into a more holistic approach to governance in African contexts. Despite this contributory role, M. Tshitangoni and J. Francis opine that "the tensions and conflicts that often exist between traditional and elected leadership institutions reduce their effectiveness in contributing to rural development."[6]

African societies are deeply rooted in core values and norms that promote interconnectedness, empathy, and community welfare. These principles are transmitted through oral tradition and customary law, reinforcing proper conduct and impartiality, focusing on healing relationships, fair judgment, and avoiding corruption. These timeless principles allow for adaptability within diverse cultural contexts. The resonance of these principles within African societies lies in their alignment with deeply ingrained cultural values and norms, providing a moral compass for good governance that resonates with the communal ethos and spiritual underpinnings. Understanding this resonance helps contextualise these principles within African societies, fostering a framework for governance that harmonises traditional values with universal ethical standards.

Colonialism

Furthermore, Taylor states that colonialisation in Africa began in the late 19th century, with European countries controlling enclaves in western and southern Africa. The aim was to exploit and extract the territory's physical, human, and economic resources to maximise benefits for colonisers. European countries converted African economies into commodity-based trading systems, exporting Africa's natural resources to metropoles for production and importing goods made in Europe back to the colonies. This led to a dependency relationship with Europe, where African economies became subordinated to the needs and interests of the colonising nations.[7] The Treaty of Berlin of 1885 established Africans in the hinterland under European rule, with 44% of colonial borders being straight lines. Colonial rule in Africa was characterised by shoestring living conditions, food insecurity, and restricted imports and exports. Different types of colonialism, such as assimilation and indirect rule, led to political division, weakening native institutions, and discrimination against the indigenous population.[8] Colonialism significantly transformed African political, economic, and social structures, deprived Africans of education and denied equal treatment.

Decolonisation was considered an option after the Second World War, but it was too late for the rapidly growing calls for decolonisation. The decolonisation of Africa during the Cold War led to the creation of artificial states with weak internal legitimacy and economic bases, which

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[6] M. Tshitangoni and J. Francis, "Relevance of Traditional Leadership in Rural Community Development amidst Democratic Institutions in Southern Africa: A Critical Review," *Stud Tribes Tribals*, 15, 2 (2017): 70-83.

[7] Taylor, *African Politics: A Very Short Introduction,* 16-17.

[8] Taylor, *African Politics: A Very Short Introduction,* 17-18; Sesay, "African Governance Systems in the Pre and Post-Independence Periods: Enduring Lessons and Opportunities for Youth in Africa."

needed to be more conducive to nation-building. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) recognised the principle of the inviolability of existing colonial borders in 1963, but few African leaders sought to challenge this reality.[9] Taylor further asserts that the continent's underdevelopment since independence is primarily due to the asymmetry between its role in the global economy and its penetration into the world. This is due to weak infrastructure, limited access to technology, entrenched positions of industrialised nations, limitations of domestic markets, and policies in the North that prevent African manufacturers from entering foreign markets.[10] Many African states are considered weak, with better governance and adequate control over territories outside urban centres. Different ideological visions for independent Africa emerged during independence, with most new rulers supporting continued economic and political relations with the metropoles.

Challenges in African Leadership
According to the World Bank in Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is a diverse region with rich natural resources, the world's largest free trade area, and a 1.2 billion-person market. However, the region faces several development challenges, including slowing growth to 2.5% in 2023, rising conflict and violence, and climate shocks. Around 462 million people in the region still live in extreme poverty. The region faces high debt distress risks, with 21 countries at high risk. Growth is uneven across the continent, with East Africa recording 1.8% growth and West Africa at 3.3%.[11]

Taylor states that the 21st-century relationship between the world and Africa continues to be primarily one of exploitation, with African leaders actively conniving themselves. The more negative aspects of politics in Africa are symptoms of deeper problems, central to which is the failure of most states to promote broad-based development. Core concepts for understanding African politics include clientelism and patronage politics, based on personal loyalty paid to individual leaders.[12] Political elites have consolidated their hold on power since independence, systematically weakened their opponents' potential, and constructed complex systems of governance that retard the development of a modernised bureaucratic state.

Taylor further explains that Africa's developmental predicament is primarily due to historical factors, the global system structure, and the failure of many African leaders to execute economic and political reforms. Many leaders continue with clientelistic politics, which safeguard their advantaged positions and provide access to resources, while development remains trapped and the broad masses suffer. The political terrain of many African countries is dominated by a narrow group of elites who have been at the apex of the system for years, often since independence. The logic of politics in many African countries is primarily based on and directed by the imperatives of patronage, with long-term development and broad-based inclusivity being more or less off the agenda in many countries.[13]

Zamokuhle Mbandlwa enumerates several challenges after African nations gained independence in the 1950s to 1960s; they faced numerous governance challenges, including corruption, which undermined effective governance and diverted resources from public welfare. Corruption exacerbates inequality by favouring a select few and perpetuating poverty, particularly

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[9] Taylor, *African Politics: A Very Short Introduction,* 30.
[10] Taylor, *African Politics: A Very Short Introduction,* 39-42.
[11]World Bank Group, "Africa Overview: Development News, Research, Data" (Oct. 5, 2023). *https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/afr/overview*
[12] Taylor, *African Politics: A Very Short Introduction,* 39-42.
[13] Taylor, *African Politics: A Very Short Introduction,* 51-53.

in marginalised communities.[14] This weakens the rule of law, leading to impunity and entrenching corrupt practices. Fragile institutions and weak enforcement of the rule of law also hinder effective governance. Inadequate legal frameworks and weak judicial systems compromise justice and fairness, leading to ambiguity and inconsistencies in law application. Limited access to justice is another issue, with slow court proceedings, inadequate legal representation, and high costs restricting individuals' ability to seek recourse. According to Mbandlwa, "The rule of law does not apply the same to all African people; leaders are seen as immune people to the system."[15]

Other leadership challenges include ethnic diversity, which leads to political fragmentation, prevents cohesive governance and weakens national unity and identity.[16] Economic inequality and poverty hinder socio-economic development, particularly in marginalised communities.[17] Healthcare inequalities result from inadequate services, leading to health outcomes disparities, untreated preventable diseases, high maternal and infant mortality rates, and impacted life expectancy. High youth unemployment rates contribute to social unrest and economic stagnation, leading to frustration, crime, and the potential increase in crime rates.[18] Inadequate infrastructure and inefficient service delivery systems also hinder development, affecting human health, education, and overall quality of life. Rural-urban disparities in infrastructure, insufficient energy supply, and water and sanitation issues also pose significant challenges to stability and development. Building resilient and inclusive societies is crucial for preventing conflicts and ensuring sustainable development in African nations.

Methodology

The study employed discourse analysis, which examines language use to understand how language shapes and reflects social reality. It is applied to studying biblical principles in governance by Deuteronomy 16:18-20 and breaking it down into smaller units for in-depth analysis. Discourse analysis is a methodology used in various fields, including linguistics, sociology, anthropology, and communication studies, to study language use in its social context. It aims to uncover the underlying structures, patterns, and meanings within texts or spoken language. In analysing biblical principles of good governance in Deuteronomy 16:18-20 for African leaders, discourse analysis provides insights into how these principles are articulated, interpreted, and applied within a specific cultural and political context.

Proponents of discourse analysis come from various academic disciplines, each offering its approach to studying discourse. Some prominent proponents include Michel Foucault,[19] Judith Butler, Norman Fairclough,[20] Teun A. van Dijk,[21] and Deborah Tannen. Each scholar brings unique perspectives and methodologies to the field, but they generally share a focus on power

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[14]Zamokuhle Mbandlwa, "Challenges Of African Leadership After The Independency," *Solid State Technology,* Vol. 63, No. 6 (2020): 6769.

[15]Mbandlwa, "Challenges of African Leadership After The Independency," 6771.

[16]W. Isaacs-Martin, "Political and ethnic identity in violent conflict: The case of Central African Republic,"*International Journal of Conflict and Violence* (IJCV), 10 (2016): 25-39.

[17]C. Boone, "Sons of The Soil Conflict in Africa: Institutional Determinants of Ethnic Conflict Over Land," World Development, 96 (2017): 276-293.

[18]E. Atti and G. Gulis, "Political determinants of progress in the MDGs in SubSaharan Africa,"*Global public health*, 12, 11 (2017): 1352.

[19] M. Foucault, "The order of discourse," In M. Shapiro, ed., *Language and Politics* (London: Blackwell, 1982), 108-138.

[20] N. Fairclough, *Language and Power* (London: Longman, 1989).; N. Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992).

[21] T.A. van Dijk, *Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (New York Academic Press, 1987).

relations, social structures, and the construction of meaning through language. The study adopted a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach. Critical discourse analysis, developed by scholars like Norman Fairclough[22] and Teun A. van Dijk,[23] focuses on the relationship between language, power, and ideology. It seeks to uncover how language reflects and reproduces social inequalities and power dynamics. Given the topic's focus on governance and leadership, a critical approach was particularly relevant for examining how biblical principles are interpreted and applied within African leadership.

This study analysed Deuteronomy 16:18-20 to understand the interpretation and application of biblical principles of good governance in African leadership. It focused on the text's linguistic features, historical, cultural, and political context, and how language constructs and reinforces governance, leadership, authority, and justice ideologies. The study also investigated power relations within reasonable governance discourse, examining who can interpret and enforce principles and how power is distributed and exercised. The study considered the practical implications of the discourse on governance for African leaders and society, examining how interpretations of biblical principles influence policies, practices, and societal attitudes toward governance and leadership. By adopting a critical discourse analysis approach, the study provides an understanding of how biblical principles are applied within African leadership's specific socio-cultural and political context, contributing to broader discussions on governance, leadership, and social change in Africa.

Deconstruction of Deuteronomy 16:18-20
Deuteronomy 16:18-20 shows the transition of the Israelites from a nomadic lifestyle to a settled agricultural life among the Israelites. Laws and norms became essential for maintaining order and resolving disputes within these communities. The Book of Deuteronomy is attributed to Moses, with which this paper agrees,[24] but modern scholarship suggests a more complex process of authorship known as the Documentary Hypothesis. It is believed to be composed of four primary source documents: Yahwist (J), Elohist (E), Deuteronomist (D), and Priestly (P). The core of Deuteronomy is often attributed to the "Deuteronomist" source, written during the late monarchic or post-exilic era, emphasising religious reforms, covenantal theology, and centralisation of worship.[25]

The governance of ancient Israel was deeply intertwined with religious beliefs, forming a unique form of governance known as theocracy. Judges were responsible for interpreting and upholding religious laws, serving as moral compasses and ensuring adherence to religious principles and good conduct. The principles of impartiality and fairness in legal proceedings were rooted in Israelite culture and reflected moral standards. Deuteronomy's laws significantly shaped the Israelites' journey and settlement in the promised land, establishing a structured legal system to ensure stability during the transition from nomadic to settled society. These foundational

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[22] N. Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis* (London: Edward Arnold, 1995). N. Fairclough, "Political Discourse in the Media: An Analytical Framework," In A. Bell and P. Garrett, Eds., *Approaches to Media Discourse* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998).

[23] T.A. van Dijk, "Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis," *Discourse and Society* 4,2 (1993): 249-283.; T.A. van Dijk, "Multidisciplinary CDA: A Plea for Diversity," *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, Eds. Ruth Wodak and Micheal Meyer (London: Sage Publications, 2001), 95-120.

[24] J.A. Thompson, "Deuteronomy," *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries* (Leicester: IVP., 1974), 49-50.

[25]Gordon Wenham, "The Date of Deuteronomy: The Linch-pin of Old Testament Criticism, Part One," *Themelios*, Vol. 10, 3 (1985): 15- 20.

principles laid the groundwork for good governance and justice systems, emphasising justice, moral conduct, and religious identity.

Text and Translation

[18]שֹׁפְטִים וְשֹׁטְרִים תִּתֶּן־לְךָ בְּכָל־שְׁעָרֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נֹתֵן לְךָ לִשְׁבָטֶיךָ וְשָׁפְטוּ אֶת־הָעָם מִשְׁפַּט־צֶדֶק:

[19] לֹא־תַטֶּה מִשְׁפָּט לֹא תַכִּיר פָּנִים וְלֹא־תִקַּח שֹׁחַד כִּי הַשֹּׁחַד יְעַוֵּר עֵינֵי חֲכָמִים וִיסַלֵּף דִּבְרֵי צַדִּיקִם:

[20] צֶדֶק צֶדֶק תִּרְדֹּף לְמַעַן תִּחְיֶה וְיָרַשְׁתָּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נֹתֵן לָךְ: ס

18 "You shall appoint judges and officials for you in all your *towns* that Yahweh your God *is* giving to you throughout your tribes, and you shall render *for* the people *righteous judgments*. **19** You shall not subvert justice; you shall not *show partiality*, and you shall not take a bribe, for the bribe makes blind *the* eyes of *the* wise and misrepresents *the* words of *the* righteous. **20** *Justice, only justice* you shall pursue, so that you may live, and you shall take possession of the land that Yahweh your God *is* giving to you.[26]

Deuteronomy 16:18-20 provides a foundational framework for good governance, emphasising principles crucial for just and effective leadership. The critical elements of this passage are:

1. **Establishment of Courts and Just Judges (Verse 18)**

In this verse, the emphasis is on establishing a system of justice within the community. The use of "judges" (שֹׁפְטִים) and "officers" (שֹׁטְרִים) implies the need for both judicial and executive bodies responsible for upholding and enforcing the law. The phrase וְשָׁפְטוּ אֶת־הָעָם מִשְׁפַּט־צֶדֶק:"they shall judge the people with righteous judgment" highlights the requirement for fair and just decisions.[27] The term "צֶדֶק" translated as "righteous," underscores the idea of justice based on principles and moral integrity. תִּתֶּן־לְךָ בְּכָל־שְׁעָרֶיךָ "You shall appoint in all your towns" - This system is to be implemented in every town or city within the community. לִשְׁבָטֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נֹתֵן לְךָ "That the Lord your God is giving you, according to your tribes" - The directive is given within the context of the land that God is granting to the tribes, emphasising the importance of establishing a just and fair legal system within the allocated territories. This instruction emphasises the importance of establishing a formal legal system and competent authorities responsible for dispensing justice. It emphasises the importance of a structured legal system and the appointment of impartial judges or officials within every community.[28] This directive establishes a systematic legal framework, formalising the justice process and ensuring equitable treatment for all individuals, regardless of their social status, wealth, or influence.

Community access to justice is ensured by advocating for judges or officials in every town, fostering trust in the legal system and providing recourse for individuals seeking resolution to disputes. Establishing courts and appointing just judges contributes to maintaining societal order, resolving conflicts peacefully, preventing internal discord and fostering a sense of stability within the community. Good governance is also emphasised, with the directive setting a precedent for good conduct among leaders and officials. This directive serves as a cornerstone for establishing

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[26] The translation is adapted from *Lexham English Bible* (LEB) (Logos Bible Software, 2012).

[27] P.T. Vogt, *Deuteronomic Theology and The Significance of Torah: A Reappraisal*, (Winona Lake, IN.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 210.

[28] Albert J. Coetsee, "By Everyone and for Everyone: The Principles Underlying 'Justice' in Deuteronomy 16:18–20," *In die Skriflig* 55, 3 (2020): 1-11.

governance structures that prioritise justice and contribute to the stability and well-being of the community.

2. Impartiality and Fair Judgment (Verse 19a)

Verse 19a underscores the necessity of impartiality in judgment, stating, "לֹא־תַטֶּה מִשְׁפָּט" "You shall not subvert justice." This is a direct command to maintain integrity in delivering justice. It emphasises the importance of upholding fairness and impartiality in legal matters. "לֹא תַכִּיר פָנִים"you shall not *show partiality*"- This part stresses the prohibition against favouritism or bias in judgment.[29] Judges are instructed to be impartial and not show favouritism based on personal inclinations or relationships. It emphasises that personal biases, wealth, or social status should not influence justice. Fairness and equity in judgment are crucial, irrespective of the parties involved. The directive against "twisting justice or showing partiality" emphasises the importance of judges remaining objective and impartial in their decisions, avoiding personal biases or prejudices that could skew the administration of justice.[30]Also, equitable treatment for all ensures that all individuals are treated equally under the law, regardless of their background or social standing. Emphasising fairness and equity in judgment strengthens the rule of law, ensuring legal decisions are based on merit, evidence, and the law itself rather than external influences or subjective considerations. Impartiality fosters trust in the legal system, enhancing confidence in the justice system's integrity and reliability. Ensuring impartiality safeguards the fundamental principles of justice, upholding the integrity of legal proceedings and preventing unjust or discriminatory outcomes, contributing to a more just and equitable society.

3. Avoidance of Corruption and Bribery (Verse 19b)

Verse 19b explicitly warns against taking bribes, which distort judgment and pervert justice. "וְלֹא־תִקַּח שֹׁחַד "You shall not take a bribe." This part of the verse addresses the prohibition of accepting bribes. Bribes can corrupt judgment and lead to unfair or biased decisions, undermining justice. כִּי הַשֹּׁחַד יְעַוֵּר עֵינֵי חֲכָמִים "For a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise" This phrase highlights how a bribe can blind even the wise or knowledgeable individuals.[31] It implies that bribery does not just affect the judgment of the corrupt but can even sway those who are otherwise wise and just. וִיסַלֵּף דִּבְרֵי צַדִּיקִם: "And subverts the cause of the righteous" This part emphasises that accepting bribes distorts the words or judgments of the righteous, causing them to deviate from their path of justice and righteousness.[32] This verse emphasises the importance of impartiality, integrity, and justice in governance, legal proceedings, and decision-making. It warns against the corrupting influence of bribery, stating that it does not just affect the corrupt but can also sway the wise and derail the righteous from their just causes. It is a moral and ethical guideline advocating fairness and righteousness in all dealings and decision-making processes.

This principle underscores the need for leaders and judges to maintain integrity, refusing any form of unethical influence or corruption. The verse emphasises preserving judicial integrity, upholding impartiality, ensuring fairness and equity, and prescribing against corruption. It emphasises the detrimental impact of corruption on the administration of justice and the need for

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[29] D.I. Block, *Deuteronomy: The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2012), 403.;C.J.H. Wright, *Deuteronomy: New International Biblical Commentary*(Peabody, MA.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 204.

[30] E.H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy: The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN.: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 258.

[31] Michael A. Grisanti Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, eds., *Deuteronomy: The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Revised Edition) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2012), 264-266.

[32] Walter Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 179-180.

judges to remain unbiased and make decisions based on merit, evidence, and the law. The directive also serves as a moral prescription against corrupt practices, setting a standard of behaviour for leaders and judges. Avoiding bribery safeguards the legal system's credibility, enhancing public trust in the fairness and reliability of judicial decisions. It also promotes ethical leadership by explicitly prohibiting bribery, setting a standard for leaders to act with integrity and avoid personal gain or external inducements.

4. Pursuit of Justice (Verse 20)

Verse 20 concludes that justice must be pursued diligently, ensuring the innocent are not wrongly condemned, and the guilty are not acquitted, which forms the foundation of a just legal system. - צֶדֶק צֶדֶק תִּרְדֹּף "Justice, justice you shall pursue" - This repetition of "justice"emphasises the utmost importance of actively seeking and pursuing justice.[33] It stresses ensuring fairness, righteousness, and conduct in all aspects of life and governance. לְמַעַן תִּחְיֶה "So that you may live" - Pursuing justice is linked here to the concept of life and livelihood. It suggests that pursuing justice is not merely a moral imperative but also essential for the well-being and prosperity of individuals and the community.[34] וְיָרַשְׁתָּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נֹתֵן לָךְ "And possess the land that the Lord your God is giving you" - This links the pursuit of justice with the inheritance or possession of the promised land.[35] It implies that the ability to dwell securely in the land allotted by God is contingent upon establishing a just and righteous society. It emphasises the overarching principle of righteousness, guiding the actions of leaders in upholding fairness and truth. It also emphasises the guardianship of truth and fairness, requiring leaders and judges to maintain fairness and avoid miscarriages of justice. The pursuit of righteousness also extends to protecting the vulnerable, ensuring fair treatment and protection from unfair targeting by the legal system. The directive calls for leadership committed to upholding fairness, integrity, and truthfulness in governance. Righteousness serves as a foundational principle for governance, guiding leaders in crafting policies and decisions that align with moral values. Pursuing righteousness sets a moral compass for society, reinforcing the importance of good conduct and fair treatment for all community members, fostering a just and harmonious society.

Application for Good Governance in Africa

Unpacking the moral imperatives behind the principles outlined in Deuteronomy 16:18-20 reveals foundational values crucial for good governance. The principles hold significant relevance and adaptability within modern African governance contexts especially Nigeria which has three systems of government (the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary). Therefore, integrating these principles into contemporary Nigerian governance structures involves several strategic steps to ensure their practical application and implementation:

The Need for Justice and Fairness

Justice and fairness are fundamental principles to modern Africa, promoting equal treatment under the law for all citizens, regardless of their background. This principle requires consistent application of laws, ensuring impartiality and neutrality. Judges and leaders must set aside personal biases and base judgments solely on the merits of the case and the law. Equal access to justice is

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[33]J.G. McConville, *Deuteronomy: Apollos Old Testament Commentary* (Leicester: Apollos, 2002), 287.

[34]F. Brown, S.R. Driver and C.A. Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 922.

[35] Brown et al. *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* 922.

crucial, ensuring marginalised or disadvantaged individuals have equal opportunities to seek justice. Protection of rights is another essential duty, preventing unfair deprivedness or discrimination.[36] Upholding justice and fairness fosters social cohesion and trust in the legal system, reinforcing trust in societal institutions. These principles guide efforts to combat corruption and ensure legal decisions are based on merit, fostering trust in governance institutions. They would strengthen governance integrity in Nigeria by establishing fair and transparent processes, enforcing anti-corruption measures, and holding individuals accountable for corrupt practices.

The Need for Impartiality and Integrity

The moral imperative of impartiality and integrity in governance is crucial for leaders and judges to resist external pressures and ensure decisions are based on merit and moral rectitude. These principles include honesty in decision-making, resistance against corruption, consistency and objectivity, guardianship of public trust, accountability and transparency in leadership. Honest decision-making prioritises truth and fairness, while leaders and judges must resist corruption and unethical influences. Consistency and objectivity are essential, as judgments should be based on facts, evidence, and the law rather than personal inclinations or external agendas. Upholding impartiality and integrity safeguards public trust in governance institutions, establishing the moral obligation of leaders and judges to act responsibly.

The Need to Vehemently Reject Corruption

The imperative against bribery and corruption is a moral duty that emphasises the responsibility of leaders to maintain purity in their decision-making processes, ensuring justice prevails without compromise. According to Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, corruption has to be understood with its fundamental focus, such as lack of transparency, weakness of institutions, and the pervasiveness of impunity.[37] Therefore, rejecting corruption protects the public by safeguarding resources, decisions, and policies from personal gain or motives. Rejecting corruption fosters a culture of accountability and transparency within governance, enhancing the credibility of leaders and institutions and fostering trust among citizens. It sets a moral leadership standard, emphasising the duty of leaders to lead with integrity and honesty. It sets an expectation for leaders to exemplify good behaviour and refuse any form of unethical influence. The imperative against corruption signifies a moral commitment to uphold the highest standards of integrity and conduct within governance, contributing to a just, fair, and transparent governance framework.

The Need to Pursue Righteousness

Pursuing righteousness is a moral principle emphasising truth, fairness, and moral goodness in governance. Leaders must prioritise these principles in decision-making and actions, ensuring they are grounded in equity and justice. They must protect the innocent from unjust treatment and ensure legal proceedings safeguard their rights. Leaders are responsible for upholding righteousness within governance, aligning actions with moral values and fostering a society governed by justice and ethical principles. Pursuing righteousness creates a just and equitable society, prioritising the well-being of all community members.

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[36] P. Madhu,"What Is Good Governance?" *SSRN Electronic Journal*(February 2011): 4. DOI:10.2139/ssrn.1766267.
[37] Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, "Strategies for Winning the Figth Against Corruption," *Brookings* (January 15, 2019).*https://www.brookings.edu/articles/strategie… accessed 25/11/2023.*

The Need to Protect the Vulnerable

The moral obligation to protect the vulnerable and marginalised in society is a fundamental duty that ensures justice is not unfairly applied to those lacking power or influence. This includes advocating for social justice and fairness in governance, safeguarding the rights and interests of marginalised groups, and preventing discrimination. Empathy and compassion are guiding principles in governance, requiring leaders to approach decision-making compassionately. Also, empowerment and support are essential for protecting the vulnerable, ensuring their voice in governance processes, and addressing systemic inequalities. The Nigerian government must implement initiatives to promote citizen engagement and ensure transparency and accountability in governance,[38] including interactive forums, online platforms for citizen feedback, collaboration with civil society organisations, strengthening independent oversight bodies, and forming ethics committees to promote good behavior and investigate misconduct complaints.

The Need for Credible Leadership

Good and credible leadership is a moral obligation that requires leaders to uphold integrity, transparency, honesty, accountability, and commitment to conduct in all aspects of governance. It is guided by principles such as justice, fairness, and truthfulness. Credible leaders foster trust and credibility among citizens, inspiring confidence in governance institutions and ensuring their actions are for the common good. They are accountable for their actions, learn from mistakes, and align future actions with standards. They prioritise serving the community's interests and upholding justice, creating policies and initiatives that benefit society. They serve as role models, exemplifying behaviour and inspiring others within the governance structure.

In Nigeria, leaders must rebuild trust in governance institutions by instilling confidence in citizens and fostering greater trust in leadership and governance structures. They must cultivate a culture of integrities within the systems by promoting good behavior mechanisms to prevent unethical conduct.[39] Leadership is crucial in organisations, requiring leaders to embody desired and communicate a clear vision, provide leadership-specific training, ensure uniform application of guidelines, hold leaders accountable, maintain transparency, encourage open communication, and recognise leaders who consistently uphold good behavior.

Adaptability to Diverse Societies

Africa's diversity allows for integrating principles of respecting cultural values, harmonising traditional and modern systems, and cultural sensitivity in implementation. These principles emphasise justice and fairness in leadership, ensuring inclusivity and justice. Leaders must understand and navigate diverse cultural landscapes to ensure culturally sensitive governance policies and practices. This approach enhances the legitimacy and acceptance of governance systems, fostering ownership and buy-in from diverse cultural groups. Adapting these principles empowers local communities by allowing them to retain and practice their cultural norms within governance structures.[40] Deuteronomy 16:20 emphasises the pursuit of righteousness, promoting fairness and truth in governance, and fostering unity and justice despite diverse backgrounds. It

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[38]C. Mbah, "Leadership Question And Development Crises: The 21st Century Challenges In Africa And Quest For Change,"*Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 15,2 (2013): 142-153.

[39] Adeleke Adegbami and Banji Marcellinus Adepoju,"Good Governance in Nigeria: A Catalyst to National Peace, Stability and Development," *African Research Review* 11, 4 (2017): 147-149.

[40]K. Annan, "The Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa,"*African Renaissance*, 1 (2004): 9-43.

encourages leaders to bridge ethnic and political divides, promoting collective purpose and societal unity. Advocating for inclusive governance aligns with pursuing righteousness and promoting justice for all citizens. Aligning governance practices with righteousness and avoiding corrupt practices can lead to effective conflict resolution mechanisms and security measures, fostering peace, addressing underlying conflicts, and ensuring fairness and justice for all parties involved.

Capacity Building and Education

Leadership training and education programs can foster future leaders committed to good governance and societal well-being. These principles include leadership development, civic responsibility, awareness of governance principles, fostering a culture of integrity, leadership role modelling, community engagement, and empowering future change agents. These principles instil values of justice, fairness, integrity, and accountability in aspiring leaders, guiding their actions and decision-making. Education programs based on these principles promote transparency, accountability, and inclusivity, promoting good behaviour and responsible governance practices.[41] The principles of Deuteronomy emphasise the importance of equal treatment for all individuals, emphasising the need for policies that ensure equitable access to education and healthcare services without discrimination. The Nigerian government plans to revise its educational curricula to incorporate morality from various religious texts into social studies, civics, and religious studies. This plan encourages critical thinking, discussions on ethical dilemmas, moral reasoning, and applying principles in everyday life.

Strengthening Weak Institutions and Rule of Law

Deuteronomy 16:18 emphasises the importance of just judges in establishing a fair judicial system, which ensures the rule of law and fosters a society governed by equitable principles. To strengthen African nations' institutions and fortify the rule of law, the Nigerian government has to implement reforms, including training and appointments for judges, revising selection criteria, overhauling the justice system, and establishing ethical oversight committees. Institutional reforms include establishing ethics committees within government institutions to monitor the conduct and develop and implement codes of conduct for public servants. These committees review policies, guide decision-making processes, and conduct periodic audits to ensure compliance with guidelines.

The Nigerian government's anti-corruption efforts, such as the EFCC, should demonstrate the government's commitment to fighting corruption and upholding justice. High-profile cases, such as the investigation and prosecution of corrupt officials, should demonstrate the impact of these principles in governance. The EFCC's actions should act as a deterrent against corrupt practices, sending a signal that corrupt behaviour will face legal consequences.[42]

Judicial reforms in Nigeria should strengthen the rule of law, enhance the judiciary's independence, and promote fair and impartial justice. Appointing just judges has to signify a commitment to fairness and impartiality, ensuring equal treatment for all individuals. Reforms often include measures to promote accountability within the judicial system, aligning with principles of accountability and transparency in governance structures. Neglecting principles of righteousness and fairness in Nigeria's governance can significantly negatively impact the

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[41] I. Amundsen, *Good Governance in Nigeria A Study in Political Economy and Donor Support*(Oslo: Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, 2010).

[42] Nuru Ribadu,"Case studies on corruption and financial crimes," (2007). http://www.cenbank.org/OUT/PUBLICATIONS/TRANSPARENCY/2007/TRANSPAR ENCY2007.PDF

country's development and citizens' welfare. Therefore, upholding fairness, justice, and inclusivity fosters unity and promotes a harmonious and equitable society.

The Need for Economic Equality

The principles of justice and fairness in resource distribution are essential in addressing economic inequality and poverty. They promote equitable opportunities, ensuring marginalised communities have access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. This aligns with the principle of justice in resource allocation, which prioritises poverty alleviation and equitable economic development.[43]Good governance practices with the principles of righteousness and avoiding corruption can actively work towards reducing economic inequality and poverty. Through merit-based recruitment and equitable job creation initiatives, it promotes decent employment practices, fostering fair opportunities for all, including youth. By avoiding corruption within governance structures, barriers to employment can be mitigated, and fair labour practices are ensured through policies providing decent working conditions, fair wages, and equal career growth opportunities.

Conclusion

The study emphasises the significance of good governance in Africa and Nigeria, highlighting its impact on trust, stability, economic progress, social cohesion, and sustainable development. It also highlights the cultural integration of biblical principles with Nigerian values, ensuring their applicability. The transformative potential of embracing biblical principles in Nigerian governance is significant, as it can foster social harmony, economic advancement, and sustainable development. Good governance nurtures trust, credibility, and stability, laying the groundwork for a prosperous and equitable nation. The study suggests several recommendations for Nigerian governance, including integrating ethical principles, leadership training, strengthening institutions, establishing ethics committees, community engagement, transparency and accountability. These recommendations aim to foster integrity, fairness, and accountability by embedding biblical teachings into governance policies, implementing specialised training programs for good leadership, prioritising integrity in judicial selection and training, and involving diverse stakeholders in decision-making processes. Transparency and accountability are also emphasised through transparent processes, consistent enforcement of consequences for law violations, and regular evaluation of the effectiveness of implemented good practices. Good governance fosters confidence in governmental institutions, builds a positive reputation, and promotes political stability by minimising internal conflicts. It creates a conducive environment for local businesses, entrepreneurship and job creation. Adherence to the proper standards can significantly impact Nigeria by bolstering trust, attracting investments, and providing sustainable socio-economic growth and development opportunities.

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[43]D. Abdullahi, "Good Governance as Panacea to the Socio-Economic Crises in Nigeria. *Journal of Business and Management* 2, 3 (2012): 36-40.

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The Principle of Frugality in the New Testament: A Strategy for Navigating Difficult Economic Circumstances in Nigeria

Tom Udo Tom Ekpot (PhD)
School of Biblical Studies,
Bauchi Ring Road, Jos – Plateau State.
tom_ekpot@yahoo.com
+234-803-620-1648

Abstract
The present economic hardship is a matter of worry to many concerned Nigerians, as it is no longer easy for some to have even up to two meals a day. Yet spending habits on wants rather than needs continue to get enlarged. While the government is failing in its responsibility of planning for the teaming population, individuals have not considered what they can do to mediate the current economic hardship on many Nigerians. This paper therefore aimed at proposing the adoption of the principle of frugality as a means of navigating the present economic condition in Nigeria. The method adopted for this study was the qualitative research method, where secondary data is obtained from existing literature. In addressing the social and political aspects of frugality, this paper explored the teachings of the New Testament regarding frugality and applies them to the specific economic challenges faced by individuals and communities in Nigeria. The principle of frugality in the New Testament offers valuable insights for navigating difficult economic circumstances in Nigeria.

Keywords: Frugality, Strategy, Navigating, Economic Circumstances

Introduction

Currently, in Nigeria, promotions and other marketing activities continue to inundate people with slogans like "buy now pay at the end of the month," "buy two pay for one," "eat as much as you can," "upgrade your choice," and "add to your lifestyle things that will make your life better." The word "enough" does not therefore exist in the lexicon of consumerism.[44] With market mania, wants are tremendously exceeding needs and it has been widely observed that widespread consumerism has lured many people into dissipating their earnings at an alarming rate.[45] Indeed, the available evidence in extant studies suggests that despite the improvement in the general quality of life of a considerable number of individuals over the years, many individuals continue to aspire to higher levels of satisfaction in life and greater happiness.[46] Thus, the materialistic ethos has dominated the mentality of many, suggesting that consumers should be concerned with the acquisition of

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[44] Joseph Burridge. "Introduction: Frugality and Food in Contemporary and Historical Perspective." *Food and Foodways,* 20, (2012): 1, 1-7 *https://doi.org/10.1080/07409710.2012.652004* October 2, 2023.

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more goods and the maximization of pleasure.[47] This excessive consumption is claimed to have improvements in life satisfaction, psychological well-being, and public image management,[48] without concern about the effect on one's spiritual life. To worsen this enlargement for sensual pleasure, the difficult economic situation in Nigeria cannot sustain the increasing appetite for more. While the Nigerian Government is held responsible for the increasing poverty in the country,[49] because of their lack of planning to accommodate the teaming population, the uncontrolled demand for luxury and pleasure among many Nigerians, contributing to the poor financial situation has not been thought of as part of the reason many Nigerians are still in poverty. Consumerism and material greed, just the opposite of frugality, have become the basic drivers for increasing wealth and pleasure in Nigeria. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Nigeria was worth 477.39 billion US dollars in 2022, according to official data from the World Bank.[50] Unfortunately, this is rather leading to an erosion of the intrinsic and spiritual meaning of life.[51] It continues to create a vacuum of want for more in order that many people may remain in a state of need and poverty. Besides this, some Christians are not aware of the reality of the economic future in Nigeria and the available opportunities around them to create wealth out of their present resources,[52] to prepare for a better tomorrow.

In view of this, the current economic crisis has accentuated the need for the practice of the frugal principle in terms of prudent use of available resources if Nigerians will be able to manage their life through the present economic hardship.[53] Frugality and simple living have been recommended and praised by people with a reputation for wisdom for years now. There is no doubt that with the present downturn, Nigerian Christians can make their future more sustainable, economically feasible, and in line with natural growth characteristics through frugality. This is so because a careful and benevolent use of resources can result in great joy and peace for many children of God, thereby fostering peace in the Country. Conversely, reckless handling of financial resources can bring many others to painful ends filled with shame and remorse.[54] Nigeria is still languishing in poverty because of the wastage of resources. There is available literature on the effect of Government mismanagement of resources on the economy of the country, making people believe that the government alone is responsible for the economy of the country, and they are the ones alone to take Nigerians out of poverty. There are no reasonable studies done on the wastage attitude of individuals and its impact on the economy, and how Nigerians can navigate the difficult financial situation of Country using the frugality.

The last eight years (2015 - 2023), have seen an increasing economic challenge in Nigeria, where families are struggling to cope with daily needs. Many Nigerians therefore are living below

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[47] Godfred Matthew Yaw Owusu. "Predictors of financial satisfaction and its impact on psychological wellbeing of individuals." *Journal of Humanities and Applied Social Sciences*, 5 No. 1, (2023): 59.

[48] Rabia Bayer; Zeynep Gurhan Canli; Ceren Hayran. "Dimensions of Frugality." *Advances in Consumer Research,* 49, (2021): 95, *http://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/3000836/volumes/v49/NA-49.* October 2, 2023.

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[54] Jay Armstrong. "The Disciple and Money: A Lesson in Stewardship." *https://discipleship.org/blog/the-disciple-and-money-a-lesson-in-stewardship/.* Accessed November 25, 2023.

the poverty line. The austerity measure by the Nigerian Government against the consumer-prone society has not yielded the needed results to curb the suffering of Nigerians. Rather, Nigerians are plunged deeper and deeper into poverty. It becomes necessary to adopt the New Testament teaching in circumstances of economic challenges as experienced in Nigeria today. This paper aims to explore the significance of the principle of frugality in the New Testament and its potential as a means of handling economic crises in Nigeria. By examining the biblical principle of frugality and its relevance to contemporary economic challenges, this paper seeks to provide thoughtful insight into how individuals and communities in Nigeria can draw from this principle to address economic hardships and build resilience in the face of adversity.

To achieve this purpose, this paper delves into the biblical foundation of frugality, to offer a comprehensive understanding of its potential application in the country's economic landscape. Additionally, it explores practical examples and actionable steps that individuals, households, and communities in Nigeria can take to embrace frugality as a tool for financial stewardship and sustainability. This paper adopts a qualitative research method of study, where opinions and experiences of other scholars are explored on handling economic matters in a country like Nigeria. The paper reviews the existing body of literature in this regard and outlines what could possibly be the way the frugal principles are likely to be applicable to the Nigerian economy, more particularly in the context of poor economic development in Nigeria.[55] Through this exploration, this paper sheds light on the enduring relevance of timeless principles in addressing contemporary economic challenges and provides readers with insights that can inform their approach to financial management and decision-making in the present Nigerian context of economic hardship.

Nigerian Economy

During the early years of independence of Nigeria, agriculture was the mainstay of the Country's economy, providing food and employment for the populace, raw materials for the young industrial sector, and generating the bulk of government revenue and foreign exchange earnings. Following the discovery of oil and its exploration and exportation in commercial quantities, the fortunes of agriculture gradually diminished while crude petroleum replaced it as the dominant source of revenue and export earnings.[56] The complete dependence on oil at the detriment of the growth of agriculture brought the country to the brink of poverty. On the contrary, Soysa and Vadlamannati blame economic disorder on inadequate social protections and rising inequality for the breakdown of communitarian values, and increased political instability.[57] Nigeria has, by all accounts, amassed a large amount of money over the past four decades, largely through oil sales, but has failed to use this oil windfall to develop the infrastructure and economy of the country to the benefit

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[55] Ravichandran Ramadass; Preeti Kulshrestha; and Asha Nadig. "Frugal Innovation for Economic Development - A Perspective Study Introduction." *The Management Accountant Journal*, 1, (May 2022): 52, *DOI: 10.33516/maj.v57i5.53-57p* . Accessed 10th November, 2023.

[56] L. N. Chete, J. O. Adeoti, F. M. Adeyinka, and O. Ogundele. "Industrial Development and Growth in Nigeria: Lessons and Challenges." Learning to Compete. African growth Initiative, (2016): 1.

[57] Indra De Soysa and Krishna Chaitanya Vadlamannati. "Do We Need a Just Economy, or Just a Good One? Inequalities, Economic Freedom and Political Repression, 1975-2015." University Working Papers in Law, Criminology and Social Studies, No 8, (2019): 2.

of everyone. Instead Nigerian economy has remained mono-cultural,[58] now causing the nation to be considered the capital poverty of the world.[59]

This economic crisis affects everyone, especially the Nigerian youths who have to pick up their pieces in the future. Today an average Nigerian youth is seeking to leave the country. Dike observes that if Nigeria's economy were a sick patient it would require a strong dose of good medicine.[60] This statement suggests the level of the economic challenge confronting the nation.

Despite the fact that Nigeria is a country so blessed with abundant natural and human resources, disparities between the rich and the poor are on the increase. Fewer people are becoming increasingly wealthy, while a disproportionately large population is becoming even poorer. The existence of the middle class is gradually being removed. Ironically, all this is happening in Nigeria, a country God has blessed with abundance, enough to allow everybody in the country to have a decent and comfortable life. The inability of some people to come to terms with the present reality has led to rising cases of suicide even among young people.[61] Since Christians do not have control over the economic situation, what then does the Bible teach Christians how to cope with such a situation? The Bible encourages Christians to judiciously use what they have, and avoid wastage. This is demonstrated in the feeding of the five thousand by Jesus in John 6:1-15; Matthew 14:13-21 and Mark 6:30-44, a concept that is mainly known as frugality.

The Concept of Frugality
Frugality is the careful and wise use of money, resources and opportunities. Willard notes that it "… abstaining from using money or goods at one's disposal in ways that merely gratify our desires or our hunger for status, glamour, or luxury."[62] It is fundamentally about lifestyle choices and values. Knowledge, value orientations, preferences, emotional reactivity, practical abilities, and habits all play a part in being frugal. The agent is predisposed to act thrifty because of this combination. A thrifty agent can survive on less material resources just as well as a less thrifty one. This ability is combined with a consistent tendency toward minimal consumption.[63] It is the degree to which a person uses his money wisely and with self-control. Hence, a frugal person is one who exercises self-control or restraint on the quantity of food, drink and wears, in fact on his/her consumption or expenditure.[64] A frugal person, therefore, voluntarily limits his/her expenses as he/she adopts a simple lifestyle. He does not expand his/her circle of needs as he/she forgoes a higher standard of living to minimize expenses. Since a frugal person does not believe

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[58] Louisa Ngozi Amaechi. "Failed State and the Challenges of Economic Development in Nigeria."
University of Nigeria Journal of Political Economy 10, No. 13-24 (2020): 14
[59] Chimere O. Iheonu and Nathaniel E. Urama. "Addressing Poverty Challenges in Africa." *AfriHeritage Policy Brief*, No. 21, (July 2019): 1.
[60] Victor E. Dike. "Review of the Challenges Facing the Nigerian Economy: Is National Development Possible Without Technological Capability?" *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* 12, no. 5, (2010): 102.
[61] Tosin Philip Oyetunji, S M Yasir Arafat, Stephen Oluwaseyi Famori, Timilehin Blessing Akinboyewa, Michael Afolami, Moyo Faith Ajayi and Sujita Kumar Kar "Suicide in Nigeria: Observations from the Content Analysis of Newspapers." *General Psychiatry,* 34, (2021): 1, *doi:10.1136/gpsych-2020-100347,* Accessed October 13, 2023.
[62] Dallas Willard,*"The Spirit of the Disciplines – Understanding How God Changes Lives,"*(Harper Collins,1995), 168
[63] John White. "The Frugal Life And Why We Should Educate for it." *London Review of Education*, 19, Num 1, (2021): 2, https://doi.org/10.14324/LRE.19.1.13. Accessed October 13, 2023
[64] Antonio Argandona. "Frugality." (Working Paper 2010. IESE Business School of Narvarra, University of Navarra. 2010): 5. The rising interest in material possession indicates the absence of God in the life of people. And the two cannot go together (Matt. 6:24). Simple love of Christ eliminates the love of material possession, and helps in the right placement of values.

in waste, he/she properly manages the resources available to him/her to promote a better tomorrow. Lastovicka, et al, add another dimension to the definition of frugality as "a unidimensional consumer lifestyle trait characterized by the degree to which consumers are both restrained in acquiring and in-resourcefully using economics goods and services to achieve longer-term goals."[65] Frugality is thus a quality, attitude, and culture of an individual who does not create need and possess more than is necessary. It does not stem from a mere lack of resources, but it is a voluntary attitude of minimizing wastage. The manifestation of frugality is seen in the moderate level of consumption of a small portion of one's income or the reduced rate of growth of consumption relative to the growth of income.

A frugal economy makes an effort to maximize the use of all available resources while concurrently producing greater economic, social, and ecological value.[66] As Epicurus taught it, frugality is a rational virtue. Activities and needs should be ordered in such a way as to lead to maximal pleasure in the long term and a proper balance among the various sorts of needs in the present.[67] There is mounting evidence that this problem is spreading throughout developed and industrialized nations, which may have an impact on the long-term productivity and competitiveness of those nations' businesses on a national and worldwide scale.[68]

Importance of Frugality

There is growing evidence that this phenomenon is gaining space in developed and industrialized countries, potentially affecting the long-term competitiveness of their companies, both nationally and internationally. Frugality helps one reduce expenses, save more money, and invest wisely, ultimately leading to financial security and wealth building. Orhun and Mike suggest that buying cheaper brands or lower-priced produce can help manage one's resources wisely.[69] Some people have the mentality that the more costly a product, the more important it will be. But that is no guarantee of such a conclusion. These scholars also mention the idea of buying things in bulk.[70] The major problem with this is that low-income earners are likely not to be able to achieve this strategy since their meager income may not even suffice for daily buying. However, they can adopt the principle of buying less.

By living frugally, one can pay off debts and achieve financial freedom. Frugal living is a careful lifestyle related to the Financial Independence Retire Early (FIRE) Movement. So, the concept of a frugal lifestyle is different from minimalism.[71] Many people think that frugal living is the same as a stingy lifestyle. This happens because the concept of life applied is the same: setting aside money and avoiding buying useless things so that it is not wasteful. A lifestyle that

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[65] J. L. Lastovicka, L. A. Bettencourt, R. S. Hughner, and R. J. Kuntze. "Lifestyle of the tight and frugal: theory and measurement", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 26 No. 1, (1999):88.

[66] Y. Bhatti, T. Andrea, H. Matthew, W. Hester; E. Erin, P. Matt, P. Hannah, W. C. Alexander; G. Parston and W. D. Ara, Global Lessons in Frugal innovation to improve health care delivery in the United States. Health Affair. (2017), 36,

[67] Luk Bouckaert, Hendrik Opdebeeck and Laszlo Zsolnai. *Frugality - Rebalancing Material and Spiritual Values in Economic Life*. (Peter Lang Academic Publishers, Oxford, 2007), 8.

[68] Graziele Ventura Koerich and Éverton Luís Pellizzaro de Lorenzi Cancellier. **"Frugal Innovation: Origins, Evolution and Future Perspectives."** *Cad. EBAPE.BR*, 17, no 4, (Oct./Dec. 2019): 1080. Translated Version

[69] Yesim Orhun and Mike Palazzolo. "Frugality is Hard to Afford." *Journal of Marketing Research.* 56, no 1, (2019):1, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022243718821660. Accessed on October 4, 2023

[70] Orhun and Palazzolo. "Frugality is Hard to Afford." *Journal of Marketing Research.* 56, no 1, (2019): 2, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022243718821660, Accessed on October 4, 2023.

[71] Prita Ayu Kusumawardhany. "Frugal Lifestyle Trend Among Generation Z How Do They Spend Money?" *AEBMR*, (2023): 331–338, *https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6463-008-4_43*, Accessed on October 4, 2023

is connected to the idea of conscious spending is frugal living. Minimal consumption is the most fundamental form of frugal living. A further aspect of frugality is appreciating and favoring this style of living. In order to preserve their ability to enjoy life, frugalists or frugal consumers will decide what is most important when it comes to money.[72]

Frugality promotes a value-oriented mindset, helping one appreciate what he/she has and what he/she has done to attain it. The Bible commands Christians to be content with what they have. A content person appreciates what he has, and would not put his mind into what belongs to others. In addition to this. Frugality alleviates day-to-day stress about money, as it encourages one to focus on his/her priorities and avoid unnecessary purchases. Thus, it helps people to identify their true priorities and eliminate distractions, allowing them to focus on what truly matters in life. Frugal living is a lifestyle related to the concept of mindful living on expenses. A little consumption is the most basic type of frugality. Another feature of frugality is valuing and preferring such a way of life. Frugal consumers or frugalists will determine the priority of the money they want to use so that they can still enjoy life.[73] True priority helps one to budget his/her income, and plan his expenses. [74]This in a way avoids unnecessary purchases. This in a way helps one to have the financial capacity to manage crises and seize opportunities, providing a sense of security and freedom.

Principle of Frugality

The principle of frugality involves being intentional about how and when one spends money, making wise purchasing decisions, and economising to save against the future. It is about matching one's money with his values, seeking quality over quantity, and focusing on needs rather than wants. Frugality is not about accumulating money for the sake of having more, but about saving and spending wisely now to be able to spend on the things valued most later. It also involves accomplishing more with less, overcoming limitations, and managing resources optimally. Frugal living means using resources efficiently, making do with what one has, and avoiding unnecessary expenses. It does not mean settling for inferior quality, but rather planning and shopping wisely. Frugality intersects with minimalism, encouraging the practice of using up, wearing out, making do, and doing without. In general, the frugality concept stresses being resourceful, independent, and making prudent financial decisions in order to attain a stable and satisfying financial existence.

Generally speaking, there are two competing schools of thought on frugal living: positive and negative. In the context of the economy, frugal innovations are commonly defined as low-cost and effective, newly created or modified goods (or services), typically arising from institutional gaps and resource limitations and entailing the inventive use of already-existing resources.[75] Due to the effect of COVID-19, resource scarcity is becoming an increasingly pressing issue.[76] Coupled with the increasing insecurity in Nigeria, food scarcity has become a real concern. Some people

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[72] D. Zwarthoed. "Creating Frugal Citizens: The Liberal Egalitarian Case for Teaching Frugality." *Theory and Research in Education, 13*, no 3, (2015): 290, 286–307. *https://doi.org/10.1177/147787 8515606620.* Accessed November 5, 2023.
[73] Zwarthoed. "Creating Frugal Citizens: The Liberal Egalitarian Case for Teaching Frugality." 291.
[74] M. Hossain. "Frugal Innovation: A Review and a Research Agenda." *Journal of Cleaner Production, 182*, (2018): 926, *https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2018.02.091.* Accessed November 5, 2023.
[75] S. Sarkar. "Breaking the chain: Governmental frugal innovation in Kerala to Combat the COVID-19 Pandemic." *Government. Information Quarterly*. (2021): 38.
[76] E. Hysa, A. Kruja, N. U. Rehman, R. Laurenti. "Circular Economy Innovation and Environmental Sustainability Impact on Economic Growth: An Integrated Model for Sustainable Development." *Sustainability*, (2020): 12.

are finding ways to "do more with less" by trying to maximize the value of the existing resources and food available to them.[77] This is the positive side of frugality.

On the other side, the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic and the increasing insecurity in Nigeria is having a serious negative influence on finances on both, micro and macro levels. At the micro-level, people who have been directly affected by COVID-19 or the rising insecurity causing displacement of individuals and communities are trying to find ways to spend less money, pushing them to a forced frugality approach.[78] In frugality, one may decide to spend less or better, but on what is needed only. It is true that spending better may mean different things to different people, but it basically involves considering a broad range of effects the action of the person may have on himself as a decision-maker, on others and on the environment.[79]

The Relevance of the Principle of Frugality in Economic Matters in Nigeria
The principle of frugality is highly relevant to navigating difficult economic circumstances in Nigeria. Given the challenging economic situation, characterized by lowered growth projections, income inequality, insufficient infrastructure, and low public spending, embracing frugality can be instrumental in addressing these issues. Frugality as earlier noted involves the prudent use of scarce resources to achieve practical ends, selecting low-cost and good-enough solutions to overcome local constraints, and avoiding waste or the use of nonessential items. In the context of Nigeria, where spending is low and social sectors receive very little allocation,[80] frugality can help maximize the impact of limited resources and promote efficient expenditure. Embracing frugality can also support businesses in navigating conditions of scarcity and resource constraints, which are prevalent in the country. Therefore, integrating the principle of frugality into economic policies and business practices can contribute to mitigating the challenges posed by the difficult economic circumstances in Nigeria.

Frugal living is lifestyle-related to the concept of mindful living on expenses. A little consumption is the most basic type of frugality. Another feature of frugality is valuing and preferring such a way of life. Frugal consumers or frugalists will determine the priority of the money they want to use so that they can still enjoy life.[81] Kapitan, et al. mention five (5) dimensions from consumer interviews that are frugal: budgeting and control, functional necessity or utility, deals as temptations, desire to look for a good deal, and the success of a good deal.[82] On the other hand, Costa, et al, proposed incorporating another element, such as durability, to further examine consumers' intentions to purchase things.[83]

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[77] Otilia Manta, Eglantina Hysa and Alba Kruja. "Finances and National Economy: Frugal Economy as a Forced Approach of the COVID Pandemic." *Sustainability* (2021): 13, *https://doi.org/10.3390/su13116470.* Accessed November 5, 2023

[78] Manta, Hysa and Kruja. "Finances and National Economy: Frugal Economy as a Forced Approach of the COVID Pandemic." *Sustainability* (2021): 2, *https://doi.org/10.3390/su13116470*

[79] Antonio Argandona. "Frugality." Working Paper 2010. IESE Business School of Navarra, University of Navarra

[80] Sylvester Ohiomu and Sunday Ade Oluyemi. "Resolving Revenue Allocation Challenges in Nigeria: Implications for Sustainable National Development." *The American Economist*, Vol. 64, no. 1, (2019): 143, *DOI: 10.1177/0569434518775324.* Accessed November 5, 2023.

[81] Zwarthoed, Creating Frugal Citizens: The liberal egalitarian case for teaching frugality.286–307.

[82] S. Kapitan, S. Mittal, J. M. Sundie and D. B. Beal. "What a Great Deal… I Need That! Updating Need Drives Frugal Consumers' Responses to Deep Discounts." *Journal of Business Research, 134*, (2021): 469. *https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.05.053.* Accessed November 8, 2023.

[83] S. Jagannathan, A. Bawa and R. Rai. "Narrative Worlds of Frugal Consumers: Unmasking Romanticized Spirituality to Reveal Responsibilities and Depoliticization." *Journal of Business Ethics, 161*, 1, (2020): 160.

A person's knowledge, attitudes, tastes, emotional responses, practical abilities, and habits all play a role in being frugal. This combination induces frugal behavior in the agent. Together with this capability, it is positioned steadily for minimal consumption.[84] Frugality is a trait that balances spending restraint and exuberant exploitation of bargain opportunities.

New Testament Foundation for Frugality

The principle of frugality in the New Testament is rooted in the teachings of the Bible on money, stewardship, and contentment. The New Testament emphasizes the importance of being content, avoiding the love of money, and being generous to others. Frugality is seen as a way to avoid the pitfalls of greed and materialism, and to focus on the eternal rather than the temporal. Jesus practically demonstrated frugality in John 6:1-15 in the sign of the feeding of five thousand men.[85] He showed the attitude Christians should have toward things when he shared the food of a little boy in the feeding of five thousand men. Subsequent to that, he ordered the gathering of the crumbs. In the first instance, Jesus demonstrates that even a little with God can be satisfying. The food he shared was a little boy's food (five small loaves of bread and two small fish). In the second place, he ordered the gathering of the crumbs to show that wastage is not economical. People sometimes tend to treat common things they did not spend their money on. Jesus teaches that there should be no wastage. Food should be used, and not abused. Much of it is now absolutely wasted and abused,[86] especially during ceremonies. The natural tendency for man is to eat more when he sees free food. The sharing of food according to the needs of the people reminds Christians that little food that is provided by God is more than plenty without God. In the third instance, the sense of community living is promoted with the sharing of the five loaves of bread and two fishes of the small boy. Jesus promotes the idea that one's possession is not for him alone, but for all. This inclusiveness is exemplified particularly in John's detail of the boy willing to give his food for all to share.[87] This is at variance with the attitude of the "Rich Fool." His behavior is discussed in the next section.

While frugality is seen as a Christian virtue, it is also important to balance it with generosity and to avoid making it the primary aim to restrict the outflow of resources. In Luke 12:16-20, Jesus tells a parable of "Rich Fool" as he warns his listeners on the danger of greed. The theme is found in the wisdom literature of the Hebrew Bible. Psalm 39:6 and Ecclesiastes 2:18-19 warn the wealthy that all their "stuff" will be left to others to argue over at their deaths.[88] It seems the idea that wealth can seduce a man to embrace a false sense of security only to be thwarted in the end by "the great equalizer," death, was widely traveled, both in the Greek and Jewish worlds. The farm of the rich man produced plenty, to the end that there was no space to store the farm produce. The only thing that the man could say was that his soul should relax because he has enough food to eat. He forgot that the desire for more without reference to the needs of others is greed. He also forgot that he was a steward of whatever was given to him. Unfortunately, he felt his bountiful harvest was only for his comfort, to the end that he felt his soul should relax and enjoy the material

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[84] L. Costa, A. Teixeira and A. Brochado. "Determinants of Consumers' Frugal Innovation Acceptance In A Developed Country." *Young Consumers, 22, no* 2, (2021): 185–201. *https://doi.org/10.1108/YC-10-2020-1223,* October 10, 2023.

[85] This story is reported in the four Gospel Narratives - Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44, and Luke 9:10-17

[86] Lindsay Middleton. "Frugality and Economy are Home Virtues: Thrift in the Textual Space of the Nineteenth-century Recipe." *Global Food History.* 9, Issue 3, (2023):270.

[87] Collin Scott. "Feeding the Five Thousand in the Gospel of John." *WBC Journal,* 1, (2015): 35, 33-40

[88] Stacy, R. Wayne, "Luke 12:13-21: The Parable of the Rich Fool." *Faculty Publications and Presentations,* (1997): 287. *http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/lts_fac_pubs/321* October 10, 2023.

things. On that account, Jesus condemned his attitude towards material things. Should he have remembered that his wealth was not for him alone, he would not have thought about where to store material goods for his soul to relax and eat, as if that was the essence of his living. The idea of community welfare would have reminded him to share with others.

However, in Luke 15:11-32, Jesus told a parable of the prodigal son who gathered all he had and went away from his father's house. Notice here that prodigality is the opposite of frugality. Here in the parable, Jesus explains the danger of prodigality when the young man wasted all in his possession in wild living.[89] While he might have been sharing with others, he was not conscious of the concept of frugality, which requires not using money or goods at one's disposal in ways that merely gratify his/her desires or his/her hunger for status, glamour, or luxury. Though he was initially rich, the young man became objectively poor. Frugality ensures one manages what he has meeting his needs, and if possible that of others also. In Philippians 4:12, the apostle writes, "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: Everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need" (KJV).

The writer of Hebrews 13:5, succinctly writes, "Keep your life free from the love of money, be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never fail nor forsake you," and the writer of 1 Timothy 6:10 adds, "The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil." This is because the affective component of money attitude is associated with deviant behaviours and unethical intentions.[90] The Bible's warning is based on the understanding that moral virtues can be destroyed by the deficiency of a certain virtue as well as the excess of it.[91] The Bible warns against excess consumption associated with gluttony, as it promotes frugality.[92]

How the Principle of Frugality Can Be Applied to the Economic Crisis in Nigeria
The frugality principle can be applied to economic crises in a number of ways, providing insightful advice and practical solutions for people who are struggling financially. This principle is helpful in resource optimization. Adopting frugality entails using resources as efficiently as possible to produce greater value on the social, ecological, and economic fronts all at once. This strategy can maximize value for all stakeholders by assisting people and communities in making the most of their current resources, particularly in challenging times financially. There is a need to seek alternative means of income as one has opportunity. Working for a salary should stop one from engaging in small farming to augment one's fixed income. While trying to make the most of the moment, there is need also to consider the preservation of the ecological system.

There is a need for Christians to understand the concept of 'saving for a rainy day.' Households could practice frugality during economic downturns by saving more money and accumulating assets against the rainy day. This strategy can assist the slow buildup of savings and help stabilize household finances, both of which can aid in the restoration of business net worth and capital investment capability. In the past, parents invested in their children as a means of social security against their old age. With the nature of the economic downturn in Nigeria, where children

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[89] William Dwight Winters and S. H. Mathews. "A Moral and Relational Interpretation of the Parable of the Prodigal Son: Luke 15:11-32." Accessed 25th November, 2023.
https://www.biblicaltheology.com/Research/MathewsSH03.pdf
[90] T. L. P. Tang, R. Luna-Arocas, I. Quintanilla Pardo and T. L. Tang. *Materialism, the love of money, and consumer optimism in Spain*. Paper presented at the 12th European Congress of Psychology, Istanbul, Turkey 2011, July 4-8.
[91] Volker Kessler. "Virtues and Devices Amount Money." *Scriptura.* 111, 3, (2012): 533. 531-543.
[92] L. R. Flynn, L. R. and R. E. Goldsmith. "Introducing the Super Consumer." *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 15, No. 3, (2016): 201-207.

do not get jobs long after graduation, frugality of resources becomes a better means of social security.

Being frugal promotes sustainable consumption habits, which are especially important in the current Nigerian economic environment. Adopting frugality can result in more conscientious and sustainable spending habits, which are in line with the necessity of conscientious resource usage during economic meltdowns. The time for the wastage of food and resources is long gone. Resources should be spent on needs. The idea of living is not consistent with the current reality. The right amount of food should eaten without wastage in gluttony.

The idea of frugal innovation, which entails using cutting-edge but low-resource products and solutions, may be a disruptive and constructive force in social contexts, adding value even in situations where resources are few. Depending on locally manufactured items will help save money. There is no wisdom in believing that foreign-made things have a higher value than locally manufactured products.

It is important to call to mind what John the Apostle writes, *"But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?"* (1 John 3:17). When Christian love God and love people, then they are freed from the love of money. There are some people who are not greedy for people's things, yet would not share their blessings with others. Aristotle observes "Also it is easier not to take than to give: men are more reluctant to give away what belongs to them than to refrain from taking what belongs to someone else."[93] There are people who are not greedy for more riches but are mean about the belongings they have already attained. Actually, it is a view of this researcher that within the well-to-do Christian community in Nigeria, meanness is more common than greed. These people cannot be accused of being greedy, since they never yearn for more outside their reach. But they are not willing to share those things already belonging to them.

Frugality grants individuals the financial ability to manage crises with ease and seize opportunities that come their way. It provides the capacity to cope with unexpected events, such as job loss or medical expenses, and offers liberation from day-to-day financial anguish, contributing to overall financial resilience.

Conclusion

Nigerians have struggling to survive since 2015 till date. Some people who are afraid of facing their failures have committed suicide. The solution to Nigeria's economy is not in sight in view of some of the inhuman policies in the recent past in the country. Since Christians cannot change the situation in the country, there is a need to develop an adaptive attitude. In this light, the principle of frugality offers a multifaceted approach to addressing economic crises, encompassing resource optimization, savings, sustainable consumption, innovation, and financial resilience. By embracing frugality, individuals and communities can navigate economic challenges with greater resilience and resourcefulness. Application of such principles will not only help in maneuvering through the present situation but will help the young ones coming behind to have hope of survival in the Country.

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[93] Volker Kessler. "Virtues and Devices Amount Money." *Scriptura* 111, 3, (2012): 535.

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http://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/3000836/volumes/v49/NA-49

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https://doi.org/10.1080/07409710.2012.652004

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Political Stability as Impetus for Economic Well-Being: Theological Talking Points from West Africa

Julius Ndishua (PhD)

Cameroon Baptist Theological Seminary, Ndu, Cameroon
ndishuajulius@gmail.com
+237670293377/+237677491537

Abstract
Political stability remains an inestimable core value in every society. It promotes an atmosphere that boosts the economic well-being of the masses in any nation. Political stability during the monarchical era in Israel was a booster of the economic well-being of the Israelites. The nexus between political stability and economic well-being in Israel's economy probably came from their understanding of the Torah. However, the recurrent disrespect to constitutional values, coup d'états, civil disobedience, kidnapping and terrorism in West Africa create unfavourable political stability and economic growth climate. This paper argued that the political instability affecting West African nations' economic well-being will improve, provided the various stakeholders prioritise constitutional values and the interests of their subjects. The paper used the narrative approach. The findings reveal that political stability is a crucial component of economic stability in West Africa. The political elites should uphold the rule of law to promote peace and stability.

Keywords: Africa, economic well-being, impetus, political stability, theological

Introduction
In African society, political stability continues to be a topic of lively conversation. For example, regional cooperation, democratisation, and economic development are significant concerns in West Africa. Concerns have been expressed over how these problems will change in the future due to the current upsurge in extremism, drug trafficking, piracy, violence, and war. On the other hand, efforts to avoid conflict have also improved, contributing to the overall stability of the situation.[94] However, political stability is still a vital core value in all societies. In any country, it fosters an environment that improves the general populace's economic well-being. For the Israelites, economic prosperity rested on political stability during the monarchical era, especially under King Solomon's rule in Israel. Israel's interpretation of the Torah likely led to the connection between political stability and economic prosperity in the country. Despite this, West African political instability and economic progress are adversely affected by the region's ongoing disregard for constitutional ideals, coup d'états, civil disobedience, kidnapping, and terrorism. In this study, the researcher posits that if the different stakeholders prioritise the interests of their people and constitutional values, the political instability undermining the economic well-being of West African states will improve. Specifically, the critical analysis of this subject will be done using the narrative approach.

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[94] Alexander Marc, et. al., "The Challenge of Stability and Security in West Africa," *Africa Development Forum*, http://www.worldbank.org>publication, accessed on November 5, 2023.

Research Methodology

The researcher applied a narrative approach in this article, particularly critical analysis. According to Muhammad Hasan, this analysis entails challenging a narrative's underlying presumptions and ideals while examining its political, social, and ideological ramifications. Scholars might study how a narrative challenges or subverts dominant power structures or reflects or supports them. Understanding the influence of narratives on social and cultural norms can be aided by critical analysis.[95] Critical analysis scrutinises the underlying presumption and value to challenge the status quo or support the social norm. To question the political instability and economic well-being in West Africa, the researcher critically analysed the political stability and indicators of the Israelites' economic well-being during the monarchical period.

Fundamentals of Political Stability during the Monarchical Period

Israel's relationship with God possibly informed their political and social interactions with their neighbours. Daniel J. Elazer notes that the political experience of ancient Israel, as recounted in the Bible, laid the foundations of the Jewish political traditions in all their aspects. The Bible's concern with teaching humans, particularly Jews, the right way to live in this world gives its political dimension particular importance. The highly social character of biblical concern with achieving the good life emphasises the good commonwealth.[96] The biblical account of the history of the Israelites can be seen in that light. The political experience of ancient Israel remains the foundation of the Jewish political worldview, particularly concerning the organisation and government of the Jewish people. A critical aspect of the political stability in Israel, especially during the monarchical era, is that Judaism itself was essentially a theopolitical phenomenon, a means of seeking salvation by constructing God's polity, the proverbial "city upon a hill," through which the covenantal community described intakes on meaning and fulfils its purpose in the scheme of things.[97] The biblical story of the Jewish people's origins displays a combination of consent and kinship, producing a unique political culture and a range of domestic institutions. A family of tribes became a nation by consenting to a common covenant with God and each other in Israel. This bonding with God and each other generated well-defined rules and religious practices that informed the way of life among the Jews in the public square and within political circles.[98]

The establishment of the kingship opened a new constitutional epoch in Israelite history, one marked by the institutionalisation of a limited monarchy and the struggle over the means to ensure its limitation. David can be considered the first true King of Israel, with Saul a transitional figure who was part of the older federal republican tradition. At the same time, the struggle between Samuel and Saul set the stage for the character of the political battle in the monarchic period. As Saul was endowed with increasingly monarchic powers, Samuel transformed his role from judge to that of *Navi* "prophet", whose main task was to keep the monarch within the limits of the constitution in the largest. To that end, he introduced the *mishpat hamelukhah* (the law of the kingdom) as the framework for the limited kingship. The tension between the king and prophet was the primary constitutional feature of the second constitutional epoch. During most of that

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[95] Muhammad Hassan, "Narrative Analysis-Types, Methods and Examples," researchmethod.net accesed November 29, 2023.

[96] Robert Gordis, "Democratic Origins in Ancient Israel: The Biblical Edah," The Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume (New York, 1967), Accessed on November 5, 2023, http://www.jcpa.org.

[97] Daniel J. Elazar, ''Kinship and Consent in Jewish Community : Pattern of Continuity in Jewish Communal Life,'' Tradition, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Fall 1974), 63-79.

[98] Elazar, ''Kinship and Consent in Jewish Community : Pattern of Continuity in Jewish Communal Life,'' 63-79.

period, the prophets functioned to direct and restrict kingly actions and powers.[99] David was the first to assume the mantle of kingship formally. Like Saul, he did so through divine designation (anointment by a prophet) and popular consent (covenant with the elders of Judah and Israel). He established most of the fundamental powers of the king during his reign, including the power of hereditary succession within his "house." However, when Rehoboam attempted to extend further and intensify the actions of his father and grandfather and impose burdens on the Israelite public that were taxing and visibly arbitrary, the major prophetic leadership deserted him. It fostered a revolution which led to the division of the kingdom into two.[100]

The fundamental principles for political stability during the monarchical era animating government and politics in ancient Israel may be said to be theocratic, federal, and republican. The theocratic principle underlies all of Israel's political institutions. God is perceived to be directly involved in governance. During the first constitutional epoch, He is accepted as the great governor of the nation. Under the two constitutional periods in which the kingship existed, He was perceived to have, in effect, delegated that direct rule to kings and finally, in the fourth constitutional epoch, He was viewed as having resumed that role, although in ways which were at once better institutionalised and more obscure than in the first period. The theocratic principle had two immediate consequences in shaping the Israelite conception of politics. Politics or the governance of the state was not an end in the Israelite scheme of things but rather a valuable way of serving a divine purpose.[101] This meant that the nation did not exist as an end in itself. Therefore, those who came into power were to allow God to use them indirectly to lead his people. Those kings who came and respected this important principle did not place the nation into an unstable state.

The idea that the power of the crown is linked to "the way the world is built" is not new to biblical scholars. For example, Stuart Lasine points out that an essential function of royal ideology is to sell the idea of the king's central role in the cosmic order.[102] Thus, if the king does not neglect God in his leadership, the people he leads will enjoy political and economic stability.

Indexes of Economics Well-Being during the Monarchical Age

It must be noted the relationships under discussion in this work; the political state of any given country, state, or region is a vital factor, especially when it comes to that nation's growth in almost every aspect. This influence of a peaceful and stable state also affects the economic well-being of that nation. The political state of any nation directly impacts its economic state. Ari Aisen and Francisco Jose Veiga indicate that in a state of political instability, a strong relationship affects economic growth in any nation. According to these scholars, economists regard political instability as a profound malaise harmful to economic performance.[103] One may not be wrong to observe that a good and stable political state is a booster of any nation's economic growth.

Economic growth is a thing within a nation that can be seen, described, and qualified; therefore, there are indicators and qualifiers to which observations can be made and conclusions

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[99] J. Muilenberg, "The Office of the Prophet in Ancient Israel," J.P. Hyatt, ed. The Bible Modern Scholarship (1966), 79-97.

[100] Daniel J. Elazar, ''The Polity in Biblical Israel: Authority, Power and Leaership in the Jewish Polity,'' The Jerusalem Center for Public Affair, http://www.jcpa.org, accessed on 6 November 2023.

[101] Elazar, ''The Polity in Biblical Israel: Authority, Power and Leaership in the Jewish Polity,'' The Jerusalem Center for Public Affair, http://www.jcpa.org, accessed on 6 November 2023.

[102] Stuart Lasine, Knowing Kings : Knowledge, Power, and Narcissism in the Hebrew Bible (Alanta, Georgia : Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), 22.

[103] IMF Working Paper, *How Does Political Instability Affect Economic Growth?* Ari Aisen and Francisco Jose Veiga, No 043, (January 2011), 1-29.

drawn, patterning the progression or decline of the economic state of a given nation. To get an elaborate understanding of economic growth, there is a need to sample what a scholar has said about the definition of economic growth. According to Mladen M. Ivic, economic growth "includes changes in production during a relatively short period."[104] Qualitative features like shifting the economic structure, emerging industries and sectors, employment created, etc., are included in their conception. In considering the economic growth of a particular nation per time, it is essential to consider both the economy's qualitative and quantitative aspects. This is a general phenomenon that dates back to Israel's monarchical era. The periods of the monarchy (the united and the divided monarchy) all had indicators that could be observed, and conclusions were drawn on whether they were experiencing economic growth or decline.

The monarchical period in Israel started when the people demanded a king from God. They desired the leadership of a human king to a theocracy (having God as their one true king). This is reflected in the Old Testament (1 Sam. 9-2 Sam. 5). The monarchy started under the leadership of Saul, who God later rejected as king over His people. Despite Saul's pivotal role in Israel's social and political development, he was regarded as a failed king whom God rejected because of his consistent disobedience to God's commands.[105] Urbanisation during this period was boosted due to getting into a monarchy. It resulted in clustering settlements in the central Negev highlands in a concerted scheme, thereby creating an enclose that regulated the passing trade routes. These settlements suggest a more centralised authority, spatially organised into districts, as reflected in 1 Kings 4:7-19.[106] This encouraged and upgraded many other aspects of the economy, such as the regulation of factors of production, most notably land and labour; this has been illustrated or can be seen in the various vocations and hierarchical social groups within the framework of the unfavourable perception of the monarchy.[107]

In the light of kings in the united monarchy who flourished and made significant progress in developing Israel's social and economic state, Solomon is seen as one of the kings who reigned from about 977 to 937 B.C. According to Lewis B. Paton, he was a turning point in the economic life of Israel. He further states that the reign of Solomon marks the summation of the term in Israel, where they were transformed from a pastoral people to an agricultural people and the beginning of the process in which they became an industrial and a commercial people.[108] The transition encompassed significant changes in the aspects of life such as food items, clothing, habitation and commercial life. Some other key points that indicated the influence of the monarchy were the introduction of large cities, which encouraged the growth of new industries in the influx of material advantages and the undermining of Israel's ancient tribal organisation. However, the changes were gradual and significant changes in the jurisdiction of the king's authority. These were vital developments under the reign of Solomon.[109]

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[104] Mladen M. Ivic, Economic Growth and Development, *Journal of Process Management-New Technologies International (JPMNT),* Vol. 3. No. 1. (2015). 55-62.

[105] Dawn Maria Sellars, The Leadership of Saul, (University of Sheffield, December 2003), Accessed on November 25 2023.

[106] Roger S. Nam, "Israelite and Judean Society and Economy" The Oxford Handbook of the Historical Books of the Hebrew Bible, ed., Braid E. Kelle and Brent A. Strawn (Portland: George Fox University, 2020), Accessed on November 25, 2023, https://www.digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/gfe.

[107] Nam, "Israelite and Judean Society and Economy."

[108] Lewis B. Paton, "The Social Industrial, and Political Life of Israel Between 950 B.C and 621 B.C, Accessed on November 25, 2023.

[109] Paton, "The Social Industrial, and Political Life of Israel Between 950 B.C and 621 B.C."

Nexus Between Political and Economic Well-Being during the Monarchical Era
Before considering the linkage between the political and economic well-being of the monarchical era, it will be good to vividly consider the structure of Israel's monarchic polities' development. From 930 B.C., two monarchic polities developed out of whatever arrangement had earlier governed the peoples of Palestine. The dominant ethnicity was now the people of Yahweh. These were clans and tribes associated with each other through cultural and linguistic similarities, political interactions involving Saul, David, and Solomon, and the worship of a typical national God.[110] Judah consisted of tribal Judah (incorporating subsidiary kinship groups such as Simeon and Caleb) in affiliation with the ancient city of Jerusalem and its surrounding economic zone. Israel suffered dynastic instability until the rise of Omri, who built Samaria as his capital and was the real founder of the Israelite state. Omri established a long-running dynasty and was able to occupy territory claimed by Moab.[111] From this point on, Judah remained a junior partner in a usually peaceful relationship. Omri's son Ahab was the first king of Israel to face an expansionistic Assyria in the form of the numerous Western campaigns of Shalmaneser III. Ahab fought as a major coalition partner in an engagement that stopped an Assyrian advance at Qarqar in 853. Later, King Mesha of Moab regained its territory from Israel, probably in the time of Omri's grandson Jehoram.

Whereas the social structure and economy of early (premonarchic) Israel have been extensively analysed recently, relatively little attention has been given to the monarchic period. Moreover, those studies that have addressed this period rarely link social structure and economy within their analysis; they usually treat these features as independent variables or distinct institutions. Ronald A. Simkins argues that the multiple economies of monarchic Israel were embedded in the political and kinship structures of the period, and the dominant political economy structure was patronage.[112] Political analysis of the monarchy has generally operated with several presuppositions that cry out for reexamination. Among the assumptions with the widest currency are the following: that the impetus to kingship was largely or entirely due to outside forces, that the transition from tribal order quickly disintegrated in the face of the state apparatus, and that the polarity of charismatic vs. dynastic leadership adequately frames the dynamics of the transition to statehood.[113] Customarily, the superior political and military organisation of the Philistines is credited as the primary factor in Israel's move to monarchy. Notwithstanding, this tremendous political transition had a linking effect on Israel's economy.

Roger S. Nam unfolded an exciting discussion in his article "Israelite and Judean Society and Economy." In this article, he studies the econometric realms that match up with the historical texts of the Hebrew Bible, from the conquest to the exile and back. Israel and Judah underwent a transition at this time from tiny, subsistence-based tribal economies to more centralised organisations, at least in part because of military challenges from the outside. The invasion of Canaan, as well as subsequent settlement, monarchy, division, exile, and return, are all covered chronologically in the historical books of the Hebrew Bible over several centuries. However, historical books primarily devote themselves to a theological interest; depicting and illustrating history necessitates certain assumptions regarding society and the economy, and these assumptions

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[110] Richard D. Nelson, Historical Roots of Old Testament (1200-63 BCE) (Alanta: Society of Biblical Literature,2014), 82.

[111] Nelson, Historical Roots of Old Testament, 83.

[112] Ronald A. Simkins, ''Patronage and the Political Economy of Monarchic Israel'' Society of Biblical Literature. Accessed on November 22, 2023, http://www.go.gale.com>i.do

[113] Norman K. Gottwald, "The Rise of the Israelite Monarchy—A Sociological Perspective" The Hebrew Bible in its Social World and in Ours (Alanta, Georgia: Scholar Press, 1993), 131-32.

are largely unstated.[114] A close look at the economy and society of Israel could be traced from biblical texts, extra-biblical texts and archaeology. According to the Hebrew Bible's historical books, the people entered the promised land sometime between 1200 and 1000 BCE, moved to the judges' period and settlement, formed a united monarchy, split up afterward, were exiled to Babylon, returned to Jerusalem, and rebuilt the Second Temple during the Persian era (515 BCE).[115]

This cultural transition from the tribal government of the Judges to monarchical authority is the subject of concern in the books of 1 and 2 Samuel. It starts with Saul, who establishes Israel as the first king and the last judge. Based on the archaeological record, the biblical assertion that a centralised monarchy was established at the start of Iron Age II (1000–586) might have some validity. With the establishment of the unified monarchy, Israel advanced toward a complex social structure and centralised administration. The distribution of production elements, in particular labour and land, was managed by the monarchy. Specialisations arose in contrast to the Iron Age I subsistence economies' diverse labour structure to generate surpluses to support a bureaucratic class. Given the poor evaluation of monarchy, allusions to various professions and stratified social classes in 1 Samuel 8:11–17 may represent the labour pattern for such a society. Archaeologist Levantine subscribes to the high chronology, which supports a generally positive assessment of the historicity of the biblical description of the early monarchy. This review states that many traditional Iron IIA structures are legitimate products of a centralised royal building plan and that a single royal house consolidated land. The central authority had to implement a system of bureaucracy and ways to collect different kinds of labour and goods. There is no question that a general pattern of governmental centralisation was present in the early Iron Age II, which is frequently linked to the established monarchy. However, it was modest compared to when Israel divided into northern and southern kingdoms.[116]

Following the end of Solomon's rule, the united monarchy divided along tribal lines into the kingdoms of Judah in the south and Israel in the north. Interpreting the depiction of the split monarchy requires understanding the distinctions between the two states. There were far more developed and organised economic structures in Northern Israel. Their agricultural potential and natural resources were far more significant. There is ample evidence from material culture that Northern Israel's economy was far more vigorous. A close examination of 1 and 2 Kings was inspired by the fact that this economic prosperity was unquestionably one of the leading causes of the political unrest in the northern kingdom. Even though it did so at a far slower pace, Judah's settlement size and architectural sophistication continued to rise in line with the northern kingdom's urbanisation trend. The divided kingdom era maintained a socially embedded economy despite progressing. In social relations, kinship—whether real or imagined—ruled. Most economic activity depictions show symmetrical or reciprocal trading to maintain and strengthen existing social bonds. A good illustration is Solomon and Sheba's conversation in 1 Kings 10.

Identifiable Factors of Political Instability in West Africa
West Africa has recently experienced political instability with adversative effects on the economy and the well-being of the people. The continuous political instability is possibly a significant hindrance to the economic growth of the sub-region. One may not be wrong to observe that these proliferations of political instability emanate from disrespect of the constitution by some political

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[114] Nam, "Israelite and Judean Society and Economy."
[115] Nam, "Israelite and Judean Society and Economy," 7.
[116] Nam, "Israelite and Judean Society and Economy," 8.

elites, especially to democratic values. The collapse of democracy possibly promotes anarchy and abuse of the rule of law. The disregard for the rule of law in some contexts is observed with the supplies of weapons, drug trafficking, doggery, and civil disobedience that are on the rise among some West African member states. Also, the struggle of "ethnicity and ethnic fragmentation", alongside bad governance and reckless military spending, are equally some setbacks to the economic well-being of the people of the sub-region.

It is generally believed that "ethnicity and ethnic fragmentation" are one of the possible causes of violent conflict in Africa, especially in the West African sub-region. The recurring "ethnicity and ethnic fragmentation" affect governance in the West Africa sub-region. Alhaji Ahmadu Ibrahim and Lawan Cheri note that interethnic conflicts are frequent in Nigeria's unstable Niger Delta region, where access to oil wealth frequently catalyses violence. Poor people often damage pipelines and endanger their lives by stealing petroleum. Another primary source of concern is the ongoing insurgency in northeastern Nigeria. Hundreds of lives are lost in the skirmishes, and property valued at billions of naira is damaged.[117]

Ethnic fragmentation remains a threat to the internal security of member states; crime and illicit trading and smuggling across the borders have become the norm. The prevalence of illicit crimes affects the economy's growth and, hence, the people's well-being. The porous nature of the borders within the sub-region endangers the internal security of the respective member states of the sub-region. The continuous tussle between government forces and local militias, rebel and extremist groups is increasing in the sub-region. These crises have led to the loss of life and property in the West Africa sub-region.

Implications of Political Stability and Economic Well-Being for the West African Nations
Political stability boosts good governance, and economic growth in the sub-region will attract investors. The influx of persons and goods will improve member states' internal revenue and promote free trade of goods and services across the sub-regions. Ibrahim and Cheri suggest that a genuine democracy may address underdevelopment, political instability, and crisis. The only prerequisite is that democracy be exercised following its fundamental principles of openness, justice, and fairness; this includes ensuring the people's right to choose freely and to alter their government regularly; the freedom of association, particularly concerning establishing political parties; the significance of the rule of law; the freedom of expression and speech; and the ongoing responsibility of governments to their constituents, and not the modern methods carried out in the name of democracy in the majority of African nations.[118]

West African member states with favourable political and economic openness attract higher levels of foreign direct investment. Besides, political and economic stability breeds a favourable ground for the education of pupils and students. It is generally believed that students often suffer due to the lack of economic stability and social security. Thus, a solid and ever-ready state with a promising apparatus to aid education will produce intellectuals with the zeal to contribute to the development of society.

Conclusion
This research has examined the political stability—theological talking points from West Africa—as a catalyst for economic prosperity. The researcher employed narrative analysis to explore the

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[117] Alhaji Ahmadu Ibrahim, and Lawan Cheri, "Democracy, Political and the African Crisis ofUnderdevelopment." *Journal of Power, Politics and Governance,* Vol. 1, no. 1 (December 2013): 66
[118] Ibrahim and Cheri, "Democracy, Political and the African Crisis ofUnderdevelopment," 66.

foundations of political stability, economic well-being indices, and the relationship between political and economic well-being during the monarchical era. The researcher also examined the distinguishable elements of political stability in West Africa and made some inferences about the relationship between political stability and economic prosperity for the countries in the West African sub-region. The findings reveal that political stability is a crucial component of economic stability in West Africa that cannot be overstated. The researcher recommends that the political elites should uphold the rule of law to promote peace and stability in the West African sub-region. Also, the church is seemingly the only reliable instrument of God saddled with the responsibility to model justice and righteousness in all its facets in life. Thus, every potential Christian farmer, politician, businessperson, or civil servant must seek to represent God in society.

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Leadership Above the Line: Comparing Biblical Good Governance to the UN Concept for African Leadership

Emmanuel Foster Asamoah

Stellenbosch University, South Africa, and Pentecost University, Ghana.
Email: efasamoah@pentvars.edu.gh

Abstract

African leadership continues to face persistent and varied challenges, remaining a central topic of extensive discussion and genuine concern. This research delves into the intriguing realm of African leadership by undertaking a comparative analysis of leadership principles as delineated in the Bible and the United Nations (UN) guidelines for good governance.Employing a comprehensive array of research methods, including inductive, biographical,and phenomenological approaches, this research examines the similarities and differences between these two sources of leadership guidance, with a focus on their application by African leaders. In a continent where good governance is often a formidable challenge, this research holds significant implications. It emphasises the urgent need for African leaders to embrace and implement principles of good governance, drawing lessons from the Bible's timeless wisdom. By doing so, leaders can contribute to alleviating the plight of their citizens and work towards improving the overall quality of life for their constituents. This comparative analysis offers fresh insights into the multifaceted field of leadership, providing a unique perspective on how African leaders can enhance their governance practices and, consequently, the well-being of their nations.

Keywords: Good Governance, Bible, United Nations (UN), African Leadership

Introduction

African leadership remains a focal point of extended discourse and genuine concern due to its enduring and diverse challenges. This is corroborated by Gomes, who elaborates that the persistence of problems in African leadership is evident, as it continues to be characterised by a range of perspectives and representations from both internal (emic) and external (etic) viewpoints.[119] These challenges collectively carve out a multifaceted landscape for leaders across the continent, profoundly influencing the context in which they operate and make pivotal decisions. Two of the foremost challenges confronting African leaders are political instability and corruption.[120] Political instability, characterised by a history of coups, civil wars, and frequent leadership changes as witnessed in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Guinea, not only disrupts long-term planning and development efforts but also introduces pervasive uncertainty and instability for the populace. Concurrently, corruption, a pervasive issue, diverts valuable resources away from

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[119] Ana Célia Calapez Gomes, "Organizational Leadership in Mozambican Businesses: Some Considerations Based on a Hermeneutical Analysis of Direct Discourse," *Gestão E Desenvolvimento*, n. 15-16 (2008): 21. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.7559/gestaoedesenvolvimento.2008.120 on November 12, 2023.

[120] Francis O. C. Nwonwu, "The paradox of natural resource abundance and widespread underdevelopment in Africa," *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies - Multi-, Inter- and Transdisciplinarity*, 11 (2016): 52 - 69. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1080/18186874.2016.1246512 on November 12, 2023.

essential public services, infrastructure development, and poverty alleviation.[121] This not only impedes economic progress but also corrodes public trust in leadership.

Economic disparities and social injustices further compound the challenges faced by African leaders.[122] Economic disparities have led to a substantial gap between the affluent and impoverished segments of society, generating social tensions, hindering social mobility, and perpetuating poverty—a significant hurdle for leaders aiming to foster inclusive economic growth. Simultaneously, social injustice, manifested in discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, or social status, has resulted in marginalisation and unequal access to opportunities and services. Leaders in Africa face the daunting task of addressing systemic injustices for the equitable distribution of basic rights and privileges, impacting citizens' access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Navigating this intricate landscape requires a commitment to good governance, transcending legal compliance.

This study seeks to compare the UN framework for good governance with leadership principles derived from the Bible, for African leadership. The goal is to contribute insights that enhance governance practices, fostering a more ethical, effective, and inclusive leadership paradigm for a prosperous and equitable future.

Literature Review
Leadership above the line

According to Carey, "Leadership above the line" is a transformative concept that elevates leadership to a profound moral and ethical standard, surpassing mere adherence to legal and regulatory requirements.[123] Rooted in the principles of ethical leadership, it represents an aspiration to lead with the utmost integrity, moral character, and selflessness.[124] This concept extends beyond the realm of individual leadership, influencing broader aspects of organisational management and societal well-being. It establishes a moral and ethical benchmark for leaders, emphasising actions that align with deeply held values and principles, even when not legally mandated. Operating within this framework requires leaders to navigate complex moral dilemmas, making decisions guided by a commitment to what is morally right and just.

Palanski and Yammarino argue that at the core of this concept is the principle of integrity.[125] Integrity serves as a guiding force, ensuring leaders uphold their commitments and remain true to their ethical compass.[126] Leaders adhering to this framework exhibit unwavering honesty and ethical consistency, fostering trust and credibility within their organisations and

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[121] John Mukum Mbaku, "Bureaucratic and Political Corruption in Africa: The Public Choice Perspective," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 34(2), (2021): 502-503. Reviewed by Pierre Englebert (Boston University African Studies Centre). Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.2307/3097546 on November 11, 2023.

[122] T. F. India. *The Economic Civil Rights Movement: African Americans and the Struggle for Economic Power (Hardback)*, Taylor & Francis India (2013). Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.51-0458 on November 12, 2023.

[123] Michael R. Carey, "Transformational leadership and the fundamental option for self-transcendence," *Leadership Quarterly*, 3 (1992): 217. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1016/1048-9843(92)90013-6 on November 14, 2023.

[124] Y. Sankar, "Character Not Charisma is the Critical Measure of Leadership Excellence," *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 9(4) (2003): 45. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1177/107179190300900404 on November 16, 2023.

[125] Michael E. Palanski and F. Yammarino, "Integrity and Leadership:: Clearing the Conceptual Confusion," *European Management Journal*, 25(3) (2007): 171. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1016/J.EMJ.2007.04.006 on November 10, 2023.

[126] A. Morrison, "Integrity and Global Leadership," *Journal of Business Ethics*, 31 (2001): 65. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1010789324414 on November 17, 2023.

communities. The concept also places a premium on the moral character of leaders, emphasising virtues such as compassion, moral uprightness, and a commitment to fairness. Leaders with strong moral character possess qualities like empathy, enabling them to understand the needs of the people they lead, thereby ensuring their leadership is people-centred.

Furthermore, leadership above the line highlights the importance of selflessness, where leaders prioritise the well-being of others over personal gain.[127] Dedicated to serving their constituents, employees, or communities, selfless leaders operate with a genuine commitment to the greater good. This approach not only benefits leaders individually but also has a significant impact on the communities or organisations they lead. It fosters an environment of ethical conduct, trust, and mutual respect, contributing to higher employee morale, increased productivity, and societal progress. Moreover, leaders embodying this concept serve as powerful role models, inspiring others to uphold similar moral and ethical standards in their leadership roles and setting a precedent for ethical practices to permeate through organisations and communities. The bedrock for African leaders to be above the line is the practice of good governance.

Defining Good Governance

Sheng defines good governance as the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented).[128] It is a multifaceted concept that encompasses the principles, processes, and practices by which institutions and leaders manage the affairs of a nation or organisation.[129] According to Sheng, good governance has eight major characteristics. They are effective and efficient, participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, equitable and inclusive, and follow the rule of law.[130] This ensures the mitigation of corruption, the inclusion of minority perspectives, and the amplification of the voices of the most marginalised individuals in societal decision-making processes. Furthermore, it demonstrates responsiveness to both current and future societal demands.[131] Good governance is not a one-size-fits-all model but rather an adaptable framework that can be customised to meet the unique needs and circumstances of a given entity. It aims to promote ethical leadership, sound decision-making, and the protection of human rights while minimising corruption and inefficiency.

In the contemporary world, good governance is of paramount importance for several compelling reasons. Aside from safeguarding against corruption, which diverts resources away from essential public services and abuses of power, good governance ensures that leaders are held accountable for their actions, fostering transparency and reducing the risk of corruption. It is essential for economic development, for there is always transparent and accountable governance, which attracts foreign investments, stimulates economic growth, and creates an environment conducive to entrepreneurship. It also allows for the efficient allocation of resources, ensuring that public funds are directed toward projects and programmes that benefit society as a whole.

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[127] D. England, "Leadership: as my father used to say" In *Seminars for nurse managers*, 4 4 (1996): 196.

[128] Yap Kioe Sheng, *What is Good Governance?* (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific). Retrieved from https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/good-governance.pdf on November 16, 2023.

[129] G. Cuming, "Thomas Cranmer, Translator and Creative Writer," *Language and the Worship of the Church*, Edited by Jasper, D., Jasper, R.C.D. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990). Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-20477-9_6 on November 18, 2023.

[130] The study categorises these aspects under main headings: the rule of law, participation and inclusivity, responsiveness and transparency, and equity and inclusiveness. This categorisation is not meant to diminish their importance but to facilitate the flow of thought within the constraints of space.

[131] Sheng, *What is Good Governance?*

Furthermore, good governance is instrumental in promoting social justice. It upholds the rule of law and protects the rights of citizens, ensuring equal access to opportunities and services. By fostering inclusivity and fairness, good governance works to reduce inequalities and create a more just society.

Good governance is intricately linked to development.[132] It creates an environment in which development can flourish. One compelling example of good governance driving development can be found in Botswana.[133] The nation's sustained commitment to good governance, marked by adherence to democratic principles, respect for the rule of law, and robust anti-corruption measures, stands as a driving force behind its impressive strides in both economic and social development.[134] Being a UN member, Botswana's astute handling of its diamond resources and dedication to inclusive policies have resulted in continuous economic growth and enhanced well-being for its citizens, underscoring the significance of embracing good governance in Africa.[135]

This underscores that a nation, upon embracing good governance, ensures sustained economic growth for its citizens. Thus, when African leaders adhere to the principles of good governance, public funds are allocated efficiently, promoting investments in crucial sectors such as infrastructure, education, and healthcare. This, in turn, contributes to the creation of a conducive environment for economic development, job creation, and poverty reduction.

Methodology

The present study employed a comprehensive research technique that integrates inductive, biographical, and phenomenological approaches by Wilbert Webster White,[136] William Mitchell Ramsey,[137] and Paul Ricoeur[138] respectively. This method encourages individuals to engage directly with the text and derive meaning from it through careful observation and interpretation, leading to personal insights and a deeper understanding of Scripture. The biographical research explores the lives and interpersonal dynamics of individuals connected to leadership within the biblical context. It aims to extract beneficial insights that can be emulated as well as cautionary tales that should be avoided.[139] The phenomenological approach aims to understand the human experiences within African leadership by focusing on their activities.[140] The research is based on a thorough review of relevant literature, incorporating the perspectives and findings of established experts in the subject, thus establishing a strong theoretical framework for the study. In summary,

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[132] S. Clegg, "Governmentality," *Project Management Journal*, 50(3), (2019): 266. https://doi.org/10.1177/8756972819841260

[133] A. Żuber, C. Blickenstorfer, & H. Groth, "Governance, Transparency, and the Rule of Law," *Africa's Population*: *In Search of a Demographic Dividend*, edited by Groth, H., May, J. (Springer, Cham., 2017): 367-384. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-46889-1_23; Atsushi Iimi, "Did Botswana Escape from the Resource Curse?" *Development Economics*, 138 (2006): 1-31. https://doi.org/10.5089/9781451863987.001.

[134] Iimi, "Did Botswana Escape from the Resource Curse?" 1-31.

[135] Iimi, "Did Botswana Escape from the Resource Curse?": 1-31.

[136] Charles R. Eberhardt, *The Bible in the Making of Ministers The Scriptural Basis of Theological Education: The Lifework of Wilbert Webster White* (New York, NY: Association Press, 1949), 49.

[137] W. M. Ramsay, *The Bearing Of Recent Discovery On The Trustworthiness Of The New Testament (1915)*, Kessinger Publishing, 2007.

[138] Ricoeur, Paul, "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation," In *Philosophy Today*, 17(2), (1973): 129-141.

[139] Rick Warren, *The Biographical Method*. Retrieved from http://www.olemissxa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/The-Biographical-Method.pdf on April 11, 2024.

[140] A. Flood. "Understanding phenomenology," *Nurse Researcher*, 17(2) (2010): 7-15. https://doi.org/10.7748/nr2010.01.17.2.7.c7457.

the eclectic approach selects biblical leaders, analysing their dynamics to comprehend African leadership experiences through activity-focused observation, interpretation, and application.

The Concept of Biblical Good Governance
The Bible offers a substantial number of cases that exemplify excellent administration, carefully chosen for their significance. Notable illustrations, among others, encompass the following:

Integrity and Moral Character
Within the framework of biblical teachings, the concept of integrity is defined by an unyielding dedication to truthfulness, adherence to ethical principles, and steadfastness in one's behaviour. This extends beyond mere loyalty to external regulations, diving into the area of personal conviction and unwavering commitment to a moral framework. The account of Joseph in the Bible is an exemplary illustration of integrity, as seen by his unwavering commitment to moral values when confronted with the overtures of Potiphar's wife (Gen. 39:7-12). The stories of Job (2:3), Ruth (in her book), Abigail (1 Sam. 25), Esther (in her book), Paul (2 Cor. 1:12), and Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 2:22) are timeless illustrations of individuals who, in various circumstances, maintained their integrity, often facing challenges and adversity with faith and obedience to God.

The complex notion of moral character, closely intertwined with the fundamental nature of integrity, comprises a range of attributes, including compassion, fairness, and a steadfast dedication to the values of justice. The Bible has various examples wherein individuals demonstrate moral character through their choices and engagements. The story of King David serves as an example, in which the prophet Nathan questions him about his extramarital relationship with Bathsheba. In response to this confrontation, David openly confessed his wrongdoing and actively pursued divine forgiveness (2 Sam. 12:1-13). The recognition of individual flaws and the need for atonement highlights the importance of moral rectitude in biblical accounts. Additional individuals who serve as exemplars of moral character include Joseph, as described in Genesis 39:7-12, Ruth, as depicted in Ruth 1:16-17, Daniel, as illustrated in Daniel 6:10, and Jesus Christ, as outlined in Philippians 2:5-8. Collectively, these instances highlight the varied aspects of moral character portrayed within the biblical framework. The biblical teachings of integrity and moral character provide a substantial foundation for leaders, compelling them to ground their judgements on values that transcend the present circumstances. This encourages a leadership style that stands out for its moral excellence and enduring qualities.

Accountability and Transparency
The concept of accountability, as depicted in the Bible, encompasses the leaders' voluntary acceptance of responsibility for their acts and choices. An illustrative instance can be observed in the narrative of Joseph, who ascended to a position of prominence in Egypt, ranking second only to Pharaoh. The individual executed a detailed strategy to establish a grain storage system during periods of abundance in anticipation of an imminent famine (Gen. 41-46). The prudent management of Joseph in Egypt, which prevented famine and made it easier for his family to emigrate, serves as an example of how the Bible illustrates accountability through leaders' voluntary acceptance of responsibility. This aligns with the biblical tenet that leaders are accountable to both those they govern and a higher moral jurisdiction, as Paul encourages leaders to be faithful and accountable in their dealings (1 Cor. 4:12).

The biblical narrative around the character of Daniel offers a compelling and instructive illustration of the concept of transparency. In the context of the Babylonian court, it is apparent

that Daniel's devout worship of God was characterised by a notable level of transparency. This aspect of his religious practice was recognised by his adversaries, who themselves acknowledged his resolute and unchanging dedication to his beliefs (Dan. 6:1-28). The exhibition of transparency illustrated the ethical tenet of openly adhering to one's convictions, especially in difficult situations. Other biblical texts that admonish leaders to show transparency are Proverbs 11:1; 28:13; and Ephesians 4:25.

The biblical narratives highlight that leaders must be accountable to their constituents and display transparency to foster trust and credibility. Acknowledging errors, seeking forgiveness, and transparently communicating intentions, biblical leaders establish a governance model characterised by modesty, uprightness, and dedication to ethical values.

Servant Leadership

According to biblical accounts, servant leadership is a style of leadership characterised by traits like humility, selflessness, and an unwavering commitment to serving others. Within the biblical story, Jesus Christ is considered an exemplary embodiment of a servant leader. The Gospel of John depicts a significant occurrence wherein Jesus engages in the act of washing the feet of his disciples. The task in question, historically designated for individuals in servitude, functions as a symbolic manifestation of Jesus' profound modesty and steadfast dedication to the assistance of others (Jn. 13:1-17). This action serves as a powerful metaphor that encompasses the core tenets of servant leadership, in which a leader exhibits a dedication to the well-being of their subordinates and places the interests of others before their own.

Inferring from this, in the current context of leadership, the practice of servant leadership involves leaders adopting a cognitive mindset that prioritises service and empowerment. Servant leadership entails emphasising the progression and development of team members, aiming to offer support and motivation to empower them to reach their maximum potential. This technique diverges from traditional authoritarian leadership methods by placing emphasis on collaboration, empathy, and active listening.

Justice and Fairness

The Bible consistently emphasises the importance of justice, which is defined by the fair and impartial treatment of individuals, as well as fairness, which involves an unwavering commitment to just ideals. An exemplary biblical narrative that serves as an illustration of these concepts can be located in the biblical account of King Solomon's sagacity in effectively resolving a dispute between two women who each asserted to be the biological mother of the identical child (1 Kgs. 3:16-28).

In the scenario, two women sought King Solomon's judgement over a shared infant, each claiming maternal rights. Solomon proposed dividing the child, but the genuine mother selflessly offered to relinquish her rights to ensure the child's well-being. Observing her true care, Solomon ruled in her favour, exemplifying justice and fairness. His wise and unbiased judgement illustrates a profound understanding of human conduct and dedication to impartiality.

The Book of Ruth illustrates principles of justice and equity through the story of Ruth, a Moabite widow, and her maternal figure, Naomi. Boaz, a relative of Naomi, exemplifies fairness by ensuring kindness and opportunities for Ruth in his fields. His exceptional efforts, culminating in marriage, protect Ruth's rights and affirm her value in society.

The Bible's narratives serve as archetypes, illustrating justice and equity's concrete manifestation and their vital role in moral deliberation. Emphasising impartiality, especially

towards vulnerable populations, the Bible guides leaders in decision-making, prioritising equity, neutrality, and protecting rights. These values are integral to fostering a fair and equal society.

Although some biblical leaders such as David (2 Sam. 11:2-4), Samson (Jdg. 16:16-17), King Saul (1 Sam. 13:9-14; 15:3, 22-23), Judges of Israel (Jdg. 19:22-30), Judas Iscariot (Matt. 26:14-16), and Diotrephes (3 Jn. 1:9-10) fell short of the above-discussed qualities, the Bible consistently urges believers to prioritise what is noble and good (Php. 4:8). This emphasis reinforces the importance of aspiring to and emulating virtuous characteristics, despite the shortcomings observed in some leaders.

The United Nations(UN) Concept Of Good Governance

The UN actively supports states in achieving effective and ethical leadership through a comprehensive framework for good governance. These rules encompass fundamental ideas and practices vital for fostering efficient, transparent, and responsible governance globally. They play a crucial role in influencing the behaviour of governments, organisations, and leaders, impacting not only the African context but also the global stage. They include the rule of law, participation and inclusivity, responsiveness and transparency, and equity and inclusiveness.[141]

Rule of Law

Investigating the significance of the rule of law as the UN defines it sheds light on a fundamental principle that supports stable and just societies. The rule of law signifies a system where laws are applied consistently, fairly, and without bias, providing a framework for governance and ensuring that individuals, including those in positions of authority, are accountable for their actions.[142] Western nations, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Canada, Australia, France, and the Netherlands, are widely acknowledged for their steadfast dedication to upholding the principles of the rule of law. A key aspect of their legal systems is a strong focus on protecting individual rights, alongside the essential characteristic of an autonomous judiciary. In such countries, individuals are afforded the opportunity to seek legal redress in instances where their rights have been infringed upon. This encompasses safeguarding against instances of discrimination, arbitrary detention, and many manifestations of injustice.

The rule of law holds paramount significance due to its foundational role in establishing and maintaining political stability and effective governance. Adherence to this principle mitigates political instability by creating a consistent legal structure, instilling confidence in governmental institutions, and providing a basis for resolving conflicts peacefully through legal avenues rather than resorting to force.

Moreover, the rule of law is essential for fostering economic development. Establishing a legal framework that protects property rights, enforces contractual obligations, and reduces corruption risks creates an environment conducive to investment and economic growth. Investors are more likely to engage in economic ventures when they trust the legal system to safeguard their rights and uphold fair business practices.

Moreover, a commitment to the rule of law is pivotal in upholding human rights and advancing social justice, especially in countries grappling with issues like socioeconomic inequality and discrimination. Furthermore, it extends its support to LGBTQI+ activities,

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[141] The study categorises these aspects under main headings. This categorisation is not meant to diminish their importance but to facilitate the flow of thought within the constraints of space.
[142] Sheng, *What is Good Governance?* 2.

illustrating that a resolute dedication to the rule of law is essential for effectively addressing systemic injustices.[143]

Nevertheless, the attainment and sustenance of the rule of law within the African environment present certain obstacles. In this context, the problems include instances of corruption in the legal system, a lack of resources for effective law enforcement, and the need for legal systems to be able to adapt to different cultural settings.[144] Recognising and implementing the rule of law can significantly boost stability, foster economic growth, and advance social justice in African countries. The UN's rules on the rule of law provide a vital foundation for African nations seeking to enhance their legal systems and uphold fundamental values for a fair and impartial society.

Participation and Inclusivity

Investigating the principles of participation and inclusivity in the context of African leadership involves a deep exploration of democratic governance and the involvement of diverse voices in decision-making processes.[145] Participation emphasises the active engagement of citizens in political, social, and economic activities, ensuring that their perspectives and needs are considered in the formulation and implementation of policies.[146] Inclusivity, on the other hand, emphasises the deliberate efforts to include individuals from various backgrounds, regardless of factors such as ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic status, in the decision-making processes.[147] In Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Switzerland, the UN recognises a commitment to the principles of participation and inclusivity. These nations actively engage citizens in decision-making processes, fostering democratic governance and inclusiveness in their societies.

Implementing the principles of participation and inclusivity is crucial for multiple reasons. Firstly, it enhances the legitimacy of governance structures by fostering citizen involvement in decision-making, reinforcing the democratic nature of leadership. This builds trust between leaders and citizens, fostering a shared responsibility for national development. Secondly, the benefits are manifold, as inclusivity taps into diverse perspectives, leading to more informed decision-making. It also addresses historical inequalities, promoting social cohesion by considering the needs of all.

Responsiveness and Transparency

Analysing the concept of responsiveness involves a thorough examination of how governments and leaders address the evolving needs and concerns of their citizens. Responsiveness refers to the ability of leaders to listen to, understand, and promptly act upon the demands and expectations of

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[143] A. Indira, "Chronological outlook of the role of law to accompany social equity," *Journal of emerging technologies and innovative research*, 6 (2019): 149.

[144] Sheng, *What is Good Governance?* 2; Steve Letza, "Corporate governance and the African business context: the case of Nigeria," *Economics and Business Review*, 3(1), (2017): 184. https://doi.org/10.18559/EBR.2017.1.10.

[145] Lisa Thompson, C. Tapscott, and Pamela Tsolekile de Wet, "An Exploration of the Concept of Community and Its Impact on Participatory Governance Policy and Service Delivery in Poor Areas of Cape Town, South Africa," *Politikon (South African Journal of Political Studies)*, 45(2), (2018): 276. https://doi.org/10.1080/02589346.2017.1398528.

[146] Sheng, *What is Good Governance?* 2; Andrea Cornwall and J. Gaventa, "From Users and Choosers to Makers and Shapers: Repositioning Participation in Social Policy," *IDS Bulletin*, 31 (2000): 50. https://doi.org/10.1111/J.1759-5436.2000.MP31004006.X.

[147] Sheng, *What is Good Governance?* 2; Timothy Donais and E. Mccandless, "International peace building and the emerging inclusivity norm," *Third World Quarterly*, 38 (2017): 291-310. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2016.1191344

the populace.[148] This must be done transparently; hence, the need for transparency. The significance of responsiveness lies in its potential to bridge the gap between governance and the lived experiences of citizens. In the global landscape, Singapore, Norway, Canada, and New Zealand stand out as exemplars within the UN, showcasing exceptional practices in both responsiveness and transparency.

Responsiveness in governance is intricately linked to accountability and transparency. Leaders prioritising responsiveness commit to serving people transparently, addressing citizens' concerns, and tailoring policies to pressing issues. This enhances governance effectiveness, builds trust, and ensures policies align with evolving needs, fostering an inclusive and participatory governance model.

Equity and Consensus-oriented

Exploring the principles of equity and inclusiveness delves into the foundational elements that can shape fair and sustainable progress across nations. Equity involves ensuring that resources, opportunities, and benefits are distributed in a just and impartial manner, acknowledging and addressing historical disparities.[149] Consensus-oriented, on the other hand, involves decision-making focused on achieving general agreement and unity among participants for collective harmony and cooperation.[150] Together, these principles form a powerful framework for fostering a more equitable and participatory development trajectory in Africa.

Utilising equity and result-oriented approaches in development aims to rectify past disparities, promoting social equity by ensuring marginalised communities have equitable access to opportunities. Tailoring policies to specific cultural and economic settings fosters social cohesion, diminishes disparities, and promotes collective accountability. This approach contributes significantly to the effectiveness and long-term viability of development programmes, generating responsive policies with enduring positive consequences. Achieving sustainable development among nations requires a holistic understanding of various elements impacting the overall welfare of states, emphasising the importance of equitable and responsive governance.

A Comparative Analysis of Biblical Good Governance and The UN Concept
Alignment between Biblical Principles and UN Guidelines

The alignment between biblical principles and the UN's framework for good governance is evident in shared values and ethical foundations. Both stress the importance of integrity, moral character, and leaders exhibiting unwavering commitment to honesty and ethical coherence. Biblical narratives of exemplary figures like Joseph, Job, Ruth, and Jesus Christ serve as enduring testaments to these ideals. Convergence is also observed in the emphasis on accountability and openness, with Joseph and King David exemplifying acknowledgment of personal transgressions, aligning with the UN's call for accountable government. Servant leadership, a biblical principle, resonates with the UN's focus on leaders prioritising constituents' welfare, reflecting Jesus Christ's teachings on humility and service. Both entities emphasise the importance of fostering

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[148] Sheng, *What is Good Governance?* 2; J. Husted, R. Cook, V. Farewell and D. Gladman, "Methods for assessing responsiveness: a critical review and recommendations," *Journal of clinical epidemiology*, 53(5), (2000): 459. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0895-4356(99)00206-1..

[149] Sheng, *What is Good Governance?* 2; Emily Talen, "Visualizing Fairness: Equity Maps for Planners," *Journal of The American Planning Association*, 64(1) (1998): 22-38. https://doi.org/10.1080/01944369808975954.

[150] Sheng, *What is Good Governance?* 2; F. J. Cabrerizo, F. Chiclana, R. Al-Hmouz, A. Morfeq, A. Balamash and E. Herrera-Viedma, "Fuzzy decision making and consensus: Challenges," *J. Intell. Fuzzy Syst.*, 29 (2015): 1109. https://doi.org/10.3233/IFS-151719.

equitable and accountable leadership, creating a potential manual for ethical and efficient government.

This analysis underscores the possibility of a cohesive incorporation of biblical principles and the UN's framework, providing a comprehensive guide for leaders committed to ethical governance and societal well-being.

Disparities between the Two Sources

An exploration of biblical principles and the UN's criteria for good governance reveals disparities arising from differing sources of influence. The Bible, rooted in divine authority, emphasises moral and ethical behaviour derived from religious principles. In contrast, the UN's secular framework draws upon international legal concepts and human rights, illustrating varied perspectives on ethical leadership's essence. Discrepancies extend to the rule of law, with the Bible incorporating religious laws, such as disapproval of homosexuality, while the UN advocates LGBTQ+ rights.[151] Varied interpretations of justice further highlight challenges in harmonising cultural and religious viewpoints under universally applicable UN principles. The biblical notion of servant leadership, rooted in religious doctrines, differs from the UN's emphasis on leaders prioritising constituents' welfare.

This analysis recognises the intricate challenge of integrating diverse ethical frameworks into a cohesive approach to governance, acknowledging the multifaceted nature of leadership principles across cultural, religious, and ethical contexts.

The Implications of Integrating Both Approaches

Leaders in Africa face the daunting task of addressing systemic injustices for equitable distribution. The integration of biblical and UN values into African leadership practices holds the potential to create a comprehensive governance approach, fostering ethical leadership. Biblical principles, rooted in moral and spiritual values, can instil integrity and servant leadership, guiding leaders in decision-making. Meanwhile, the UN's universally accepted structure encompasses human rights, openness, and accountability. Combining these ideas enables a holistic ethical framework encompassing both spiritual and secular aspects of administration.

However, integration in Africa faces challenges due to diverse cultural and theological viewpoints, requiring astute navigation to harmonise UN standards and biblical precepts. Effective leadership is vital to managing these intricacies, respecting multiple perspectives, and fostering inclusive governance, which is crucial for addressing the unique needs and values of African nations in terms of basic rights and privileges and impacting citizens' access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Navigating this intricate landscape requires a commitment to good governance, transcending legal compliance.

This paper, through a comparative study of biblical and UN governance concepts, seeks to elevate African leadership to a profound moral and ethical standard. The goal is to contribute insights that enhance governance practices, fostering a more ethical, effective, and inclusive leadership paradigm for a prosperous and equitable future.

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[151] Nick J. Mulé, Maryam Khan and Cameron McKenzie, "The growing presence of LGBTQIs at the UN: Arguments and counter-arguments," *International Social Work*, 61(6), (2018): 1126. https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872817702706.

Implications For African Leadership
Importance of Embracing Good Governance
Embracing good governance principles is imperative for African leaders, offering a foundation for sustainable development, political stability, and social progress. Transparency, accountability, and the rule of law create an environment conducive to investments, economic growth, and resource efficiency, leading to poverty reduction and improved living standards. Prioritising effective governance addresses historical challenges like political instability and corruption. Ethical leadership builds public confidence, fosters stability, and lays the groundwork for sustainable planning. Anti-corruption efforts gain efficacy when leaders prioritise public resources for essential services. The adoption of good governance is not just strategic but moral, demonstrating a commitment to the people's welfare, providing equitable opportunities, and upholding individual rights. On a diverse continent, effective governance serves as a shared foundation, fostering cooperative efforts to overcome obstacles and shape a prosperous and equitable future for Africa.

Contribution to Alleviating Citizens' Challenges
The implementation of good governance principles in Africa holds the promise of significantly alleviating diverse issues faced by its populace, notably economic development. African leaders, by adopting transparency, accountability, and effective resource management, can foster an environment conducive to economic progress, leading to increased employment, poverty reduction, and improved quality of life. Effective governance also plays a crucial role in addressing societal issues like healthcare, education, and social justice. Transparent governance allows for the allocation of public finances to essential services, enhances healthcare infrastructure, and supports educational initiatives. Embracing social justice principles reduces disparities, ensuring equitable opportunities and rights. Furthermore, effective governance contributes to political stability and security. By adhering to legal governance and fostering responsible leadership, African states can instil confidence in their institutional frameworks, reducing the likelihood of political volatility and creating an environment conducive to peace and security.

Enhancing the Quality of Life for Constituents
The application of good governance in African nations holds the potential for significant improvements in various aspects of citizens' well-being. Transparent and accountable governance is crucial for the efficient allocation of public funds, ensuring robust healthcare and educational infrastructure, and consequently leading to improved health and educational outcomes. Additionally, good governance contributes to economic development by attracting investments and fostering domestic growth, resulting in job creation, poverty reduction, and improved economic prospects for the population. Furthermore, these governance principles play a vital role in promoting social justice, addressing historical disparities, and creating an equitable and inclusive society where all citizens can thrive, reinforcing human rights and the rule of law for a dignified and just existence.

Conclusion
Moral integrity and selflessness, which are the hallmarks of leadership above the line, align with sound governance and drive societies toward social justice, economic growth, and ethical advancement. A comparative analysis of biblical principles and the UN's framework reveals shared values—integrity, accountability, and servant leadership. Disparities arise in authority origins, the rule of law, fairness, and leadership approaches. Integrating both approaches in African

leadership fosters a holistic ethical framework for recognising universal human rights. The diverse cultural and religious perspectives present challenges but offer potential advantages. Adopting good governance principles in Africa is both strategic and morally obligatory, countering challenges like political instability and corruption while prioritising citizens' well-being through comprehensive and cohesive governance.

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Riding on the Waves of Ethnicity to Political Power:
A Narrative Reading of Judges 9: 1 – 21

Gifty Ama Kyerewaa Dei Dawson (PhD)

Department of Religion and Human Values
University of Cape Coast, Ghana.
Email: gifty.dawson@ucc.edu.gh

Abstract
Ghana's political terrain has been marked by some political parties having their stronghold firmly grounded in regions with strong ethnic backgrounds. Scholars like Naomi Chanza and many security experts over the years have argued that politics that thrives solely on the interest of one tribe to the neglect of the other is detrimental to the development of the nation. This is because ethnic politics has the tendency to lead to the polarization of a nation. In spite of these warnings, politicians continue to use ethnicity and religion to manipulate and incite electorates especially the youth, to engage in electoral violence. This paper employed a narrative critical method to read Judges 9:1 – 21 to assess the strategy used by Abimelech in his quest to become king of ancient Israel. The paper concluded that ethnicity may help in identifying specific developmental projects for a group of people who share a common identity and ancestry but it is dangerous when employed by politicians in their quest for political power. The paper then makes suggestions on the attributes that electorates are to look out for from people who are seeking political power.

Keywords: Ethnicity, Ethnic Politics, Political Parties, Narrative Criticism

Introduction
A talk about the political terrain in Ghana cannot be done without proper recourse to ethnicity.[152] Ethnicity, though complex to define can be described as a community of common descent.[153] This affinity between some selected people may differentiate some aspects of their developmental needs from those of others based on their geographical location and peculiar preferences.

Gindro cites Weber who describes ethnic groups as: "being made up of humans who have a subjective belief in shared origins, a belief which is grounded on a similarity of habits, customs or both."[154] Some of the most common characteristics that distinguish one ethnic group from the other are ancestry, language, forms of dressing, and a common history.[155] Hence, people who belong to the same ethnic group share a common heritage which gives them their unique identity. Subsequently, "the core of ethnicity is the consciousness and feeling of individuals that they are members of a 'We'- group, and their behavioral actions are in light of this feeling."[156] This 'We'

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[152] Naomi Chazan, "Ethnicity and Politics in Ghana" in *Political Science Quarterly*, 97 no. 3 (Autum, 1982),461.
[153] Enclopedia Britanica online, Ethnic Conflict, https://www.britannica.com/topic/ethnic-conflict, accessed Novermber, 2023
[154] Gindro Sandro, "Ethnicity" in Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity and Culture, edited by Guido Bolaffi et. al (London: sage Publications, 2003), 90.
[155] Enclopedia Britanica online, Ethnic Conflict, https://www.britannica.com/topic/ethnic-conflict, accessed Novermber, 2023.
[156] Christoph Antweiler, *Ethnicity from an anthropological perspective in Ethnicity as a Political Resource: Conceptualizations across disciplines, regions and periods*, (Germany: Transcript Verlag, Bielefeld, 2015), p. 27.

feeling most often influences the group's decisions and choices towards development and politics. It also gives them a unique identity.

Ethnic identity is basically formed by tangible and intangible characteristics.[157] The tangible characteristics which come in the form of shared culture or common visible physical traits are important because they contribute to the group's feeling of identity, commonality, and uniqueness. On the other hand, the intangible characteristics are based on factors that border on what people believe or are made to believe in, in order to create a sense of solidarity among members of a particular ethnic divide.[158] Mobilization of ethnic identity and ethnic nationalism is a powerful tool to use by any group of people or individuals seeking political power. The need to govern and protect the interest of the group intertwines the goals of politics.

Politics simply refers to "the art or science concerned with guiding or influencing governmental policy."[159] It also concerns itself with the activities associated with governance of a country or area, especially between parties having power.[160] Both ethnicity and politics provide a unique identity to a people which helps with governance and development. This is because governance tailored to cater for the peculiarities of ethnic groups in a country can hasten development and subsequently foster unity among ethnic groups.

Ethnic politics have come to play an important role in the political landscape of Ghana since independence.[161] In spite of its involvement from the very beginning, ethnic politics have received a lot of backlash from experts, the populace and ethnic minorities. This is due to the fact that some analysts link every negative political happening to ethnicity.[162] This overemphasis ignores aspects of ethnicity that foster solidarity and ethnic identity. Politicians mostly take advantage of the ambitions of larger ethnic groups in Ghana to win sentiments for power. Chanza, further intimates that the activation of ethnic sentiments, resistance and dissent may be traced back to the composition, structure, policies and performance records of various ruling coalitions at different points in time. She further argues that: "it is not so much as the existence of ethnicity that is important but the politicization and alteration of ethnicity as a response to particular measure must be stressed".[163] Though she admits that the politicization of ethnicity and ethnic participation in politics are distinct yet interrelated, it is the excesses by ambitious politicians that create the problem for ethnic politics.

Ethnic politics in this paper is explained as a system of governance that seeks to exploit and manipulate one political group to the detriment of the other. This exploitation and manipulation come in the form of campaign messages, political utterances and strategies that the political parties employ to gain power. This paper argues that ethnicity devoid of politics but geared towards even distribution of national resources is good but when politics is allowed to politicize ethnicity, then it becomes a canker that can destroy the unity and development of that group.

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[157] Enclopedia Britanica online, Ethnic identity, ethnicity and ethnic group.
[158] Enclopedia Britanica online, Ethnic Conflict.
[159] The Britannica Dictionary, "Politics", accessed November, 2023, https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/politics
[160] https://www.meriam-webster.com/dictionary/politics
[161] Chanza, "Ethnicity and Politics in Ghana", 461
[162] Chanza, "Ethnicity and Politics in Ghana", 462.
[163] Chanza, "Ethnicity and Politics in Ghana", 462.

Methodology

The paper used the narrative critical approach which assumes that the Bible is a literary work and could be analyzed from that perspective.[164] Narrative criticism looks at biblical text as literature that tells a story. Powell cites Chatman who argues that the main interest of narrative criticism is to look at biblical texts as "story- as- discoursed".[165] According to this statement, narratives have two aspects that they deal with namely: story and discourse. He explains these two aspects as:

> Story refers to the content of the narrative, and what it is about. A story consists of such elements as events, characters and settings, and the interaction of these elements comprises what we call a plot. Discourse refers to the rhetoric of narrative, how the story is told. …narrative critics tend to think that the reader is guided through devices intrinsic to the process.[166]

Therefore, the reader in the narrative employs some tools that enable him/her to arrive at the meaning of the text. Some of these tools are; ordering events[167] which make references to previous incidents in the narrative that may be of help to the reader during the reading process. Another tool is the duration and frequency of events which focuses mostly on the time span between two events. Other tools that help the reader in the analysis of the narrative are causal links, character, characterization, setting, symbolism and irony. The researcher thus approached Judges 9: 1 – 21 as a narrative and employed all these tools during the reading process. Special emphasis was placed on the setting, character, and plot of the story to unravel the strategy used by Abimelech to attain political power and Jotham's assessment of that strategy.

Pericope, Context and Structure of Judges 9: 1 – 21

The book of Judges portrays the political life of ancient Israel in Palestine prior to the Monarchy. It is:

> …the third book of an account of Israel's history which starts at the beginning of Deuteronomy and goes on to the end of the second book of Kings. We owe the classic study of this history to Martin Noth who first presented a persuasive case for treating this part of the Old Testament as a single literary unit, to be called the deuteronomistic history."[168]

This is because the book of Judges is heavily influenced by the theological and literary style of the book of Deuteronomy which is considered the first book in this section called the Deuteronomistic History.[169] The book of Judges is broadly divided into three parts, namely:

Prologue: Ch. 1: 1 – 2: 5

Body: Ch. 2: 6 – 16: 31

Epilogue: Ch. 17 – 21

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[164] Elizabeth Struthers Malbon "Narrative Criticism: How does the story mean" in *Mark and Method: Approaches in Biblical studies 2nd Ed*, Edited by Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore (Fortress Press, 1992),

[165] Mark Allan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990),23.

[166] Powell, *what is narrative criticism*, 23.

[167] Powell, "Narrative Criticism," in *Hearing the New Testament: strategies for interpretation* edited by Joel B. Green (Michigan: Grand Rapids, Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing co., 1995), 244 – 247. See also Malbon, "Narrative Criticism", 30 – 36.

[168] A. D. H Mayes., *Judges*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 10

[169] Mayes, *Judges*, 10.

The chosen text can be found in the body where there is the narrative of the first trial at kingship.[170] The paper focuses on the elements of ethnic politics in the strategy adopted by Abimelech in Judges 9:1-21 to be crowned king. Judges 9:1-21 serves as the pericope of the narrative, even though Judges 8 ends with the death of Gideon which is distinct thematically from chapter 9, the identification of Abimelech as the son of Gideon shows a linkage with the previous chapter. However, because of the interest of this paper, Judges 9: 1 – 21 deals with Abimelech's political strategy and Jotham's assessment of that strategy serves as the pericope. The narrative is therefore structured into two main parts, namely:

    a. 9:1 – 6: Abimelech's strategy for kingship
    b. 9:7 – 21: Jotham's assessment of Abimelech's strategy

Narrative Reading of Judges 9:1 – 21
Though the pericope of the narrative covers Judges 9:1 – 21, emphasis will be laid on the strategy used by Abimelech (vs 1 – 6) and Jotham's assessment of that strategy (16 – 21). This is because this paper is interested in highlighting how the characters in the text perceive ethnic politics. Unless otherwise stated in the paper, all Bible quotations are from the Revised Standard Version.

    a. 9:1 – 6: Abimelech's strategy for kingship
The first character to be introduced in the narrative is Abimelech, son of Gideon with the narrator deliberately stating the status of his mother. This introduction takes the reader back to the previous chapter that explains the exploits of Gideon as a judge and later the birth of Abimelech. Block explains that the mentioning of Abimelech in Judges 8:31 by the narrator is not a coincidence, since it tends to draw the reader's attention to him and what he will do in the future.[171] It is therefore not surprising that readers meet the now grown Abimelech in Judges 9: 1. The Hebrew name *ʾábîmelek* (my father is king) presents him as a prince, hence the right to succeed his father as king. However, Gideon/Jerubbaal in Judges 8:22 – 23 rejected the request by the Midianites for him and his sons to become king over the people. The irony employed by the narrator sets the tone of the narrative: Abimelech (whose name means my father is a king but his father was never a king) visits his mother's kinsmen, as his first step towards achieving his political aspirations. The narration that begins in verse 1 quickly switches to dialogue in verse two enabling the reader to witness what ensued between Abimelech and his mother's relatives. The narrator's description of the people of Shechem presents them as an ethnic group.[172] They were people from his mother's tribe (he was related to them by blood and shared a common ancestry with them) and so likely to create the 'We' and the 'them' feeling.[173] The reference to Shechem also provides the first setting of the narrative.

    The dialogue in verses 2 and 3 of Judges 9 reads:
"*Say to all of Shechem's lords: 'Which is better for you, for seventy men to reign over you—all the "sons" of Jerubbaal—or for one man to reign over you?' You will recall that I am your own bone and flesh.*"[174]

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[170] It must be stated that the issue of Abimelech as the first king of Israel is a little awkward as there is not enough evidence to support the kingship of Abimelech beyond the boundaries of a few tribes.

[171] Daniel I Block, *The New American Commentary 6: Judges, Ruth, electronic ed.*, (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2001), 310.

[172] Sandro, "Ethnicity", 94

[173] Sandro, "Ethnicity", 94

[174] Robert G. Boling, *Judges: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2008), 165.

The narrative proceeds purposefully in verse two by stating the motive behind Abimelech's visit to his mother's family. He throws his challenge to his mother's family and by extension to the Lords of Shechem. Abimelech was after power so he did not seek commoners but rather the Lords (*ba'alîm*)[175], who could positively advance his political aspirations. Boling intimates, the question: "*Which is better ... for seventy ... or for one* is a double rhetorical question, implying the narrator's own answer: neither one would be… not merely the comparative adjective (better) but also a term for covenantal amity".[176] He is crafty and creates the imagery of seventy men vying for one position. Such rivalry will only lead to bloodshed which any good leader will want to avoid. The issue is further explained by Okyere that:

> "...he first creates suspense in the people when he asks- which is better for you? The reader can only imagine the sense of surprise which will show on the faces of the people hearing Abimelech's question. This is because there is no indication that the people of Shechem are preoccupied with thoughts of leadership: Abimelech just surfaces and pops this question up"[177]

Abimelech's question also creates the assumption that all the seventy sons of Gideon want to rule over the people. The usage of the Hebrew verb *mašal* (to rule or to reign) is very significant in this narrative. It connotes Abimelech's desire to rule over the people in contrast to his father's statement in Judge 8:22-23. This incident took place when the Israelites asked Gideon and his sons to rule over them after he defeated the Midianites. Gideon emphasized that God is the ruler of the Israelites and so will not rule over them. However, this time, it is not the people who ask Abimelech to become king but he rather decides to make himself king over them. His question of which is better, pitches him against his other seventy brothers who are all, according to Abimelech, vying for the opportunity to rule over the Israelites. The irony in the narrative is very clear: whereas the father saw God as the king, Abimelech saw himself as a prince, one to succeed his father who was a king.

Further, the skill Abimelech uses to end his request in verse two confirms his motive for going to Shechem. His sole aim is to appeal to his blood relation in order to gain support to become king. It is likely, that Abimelech realized his background as a son of a concubine made him not the favourite for any kingship position. Thus, he used a strategy that focused on the *lev* (heart) and blood ties rather than competence and eligibility. He reminded his kinsfolk to support him and not his siblings because he was their blood relation and not because he was competent. Okyere explains that per the last statement, "he stands out as a smart and dangerous politician"[178] who is willing to do anything to get power. Abimelech's request also defies the desires of his father, that his children will not be rulers over the people. He appears as a son who goes against the decisions of his father because he is no more. Is such a son worthy to be followed?

Curiously enough, the relatives of Abimelech did not question his motive nor seek to verify his claims but blindly offered their support because he was their blood. Was it true that the other seventy sons of Gideon were also interested in becoming kings in Israel? Okyere explains that: "judging from the impression made on his character so far, it easily appears to the reader that his

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[175] Boling, *Judges*, 170. The Hebrew word Baal (Lord) is also viewed as "city fathers". This term is also used to mean prominent citizens in the Israelite society in other passages eg. Joshua 24:11

[176] Boling, *Judges*, 171; Block, *The New American Commentary 6: Judges, Ruth*,311: explains that it was obvious that the leaders of Shechem would prefer one king over seventy.

[177] Kojo Okyere, "Culture of Politico-Religious intrigues (Judges 9:1-21): implications for Africa." *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology*, 18 (3), 2012,p.60.

[178] Okyere, "Culture of Politico-Religious intrigues (Judges 9:1-21)," 61.

claim is false or at least an exaggerated statement: one couched to incite ethnic sentiments among his people."[179] He disqualifies the rest of the sons of his father on the basis that they do not come from the tribe of his mother. The narrative proceeds in verse three: *So his mother's relations reported the whole proposal, on his behalf, in an audience with all the lords of Shechem. They were inclined to favour Abimelech "because," they said, "he is our own kin"*[180]

It is clear from the text that he first met with his close relatives and after convincing them asked them to also help convince the other Lords (prominent citizens)[181] in Shechem. His blood relations also diligently did exactly as he requested, they presented his message to all the other important decision-makers in the land of Shechem to seek their support. These Lords also did not question the competence of Abimelech but viewed the benefit of having a king from their territory. They endorsed his bid to rule not because of competence but because *"he is our own kin"*. The leaders of Shechem were blinded to all his faults because he shared blood ties with them. To them, it was better for their own to rule over them than to have the other seventy sons who were not their own to rule over them.[182]

The leaders of Shechem did not only support their own with their mouths but they also gathered money to help in his bid to become king. Judges 9:4 reads: *They gave him seventy pieces of silver out of the temple of Baal-berith with which Abimelech hired worthless and reckless fellows, who followed him.*

Why did they give him exactly seventy pieces of silver which is equal to the number of sons of Gideon? Block posits: "It appears a shekel for each son making the total sum seventy shekels."[183] Where did the Lords get the money to support Abimelech? While Gideon, the father of Abimelech gained his name Jerubbaal as a result of his destruction of a shrine of Baal,[184] his son uses the money raised from a shrine of Baal to propel him to kingship. Thus Abimelech was given money to do whatever he needed in order to become king. Subsequently, it does not come as a surprise when the narrative explains what he did with the money. The elders of Shechem's blind support of Abimelech served as a deadly sword in his hand. Ethnicity, when mostly applied to politics has little to no regard for the interest of others and only caters for the people who they believe share the same identity as them. A characteristic that can negatively affect the unity, peace and development of a nation.

The setting of the narrative changes in vs 4 as readers are told that he leaves his mother's people and recruits *worthless and reckless fellows*. Okyere explains that "the hired men, who could possibly be soldiers of fortune, cared less about Abimelech's ideologies. The relative clause used by the narrator: "who followed him" suggests the hired men were very willing to be used by their leader or anyone who was ready to pay for their services.[185] After acquiring these men with no conscience, the narrative explains that he marched to his father's house and got rid of all possible threats to his bid to gain power on one stone. Verse 5 reads: *He went to his father's house at Ophrah, and killed his brothers the sons of Jerubbaal, seventy men, on one stone; but Jotham, the youngest son of Jerubbaal, survived, for he hid himself*. The imagery connoted by the narrator with

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[179] Okyere, "Culture of Politico-Religious intrigues (Judges 9:1-21)", 61.
[180] Boling, *Judges*, 170
[181] Boling, *Judges*, 170
[182] Block, *The New American Commentary 6: Judges, Ruth,* 311, explains that the argument based on blood or common ethnic ties win the sympathy of the Lords of Shechem for Abimelech and automatically disqualify the rest of the sons of Gideon.
[183] Block, *The New American Commentary 6: Judges, Ruth* ,311. See also Boling, Judges, 171.
[184] Judges 6: 25 – 32.
[185] Okyere, "Culture of Politico-Religious intrigues (Judges 9:1-21)", 63.

this murder is treacherous and barbaric.[186] It also helps the reader understand the kind of men he hired to do his job for him. They were just paid assassins who did not care as long as their monies were paid.

However, the narrator explains that one of the sons of Jerubbaal survived. He survived not by confronting his wicked brother but by hiding himself, just as his father did before he was chosen as a judge. Abimelech with all the power was not able to dispose of the youngest son of his father. The Hebrew word *qāton* is translated as small or insignificant. Compared to the support of the lords of Shechem and the hired assassins, Abimelech had the advantage but still could not dispose of the insignificant Jotham. The mass slaughter can be viewed as an end in an era, thus bringing an end to the lineage of Gideon and ushering in a new one.[187] His disregard for life and that of his brothers is not condemned but seems to have been approved by the Lords of Shechem. The narrative explains that immediately after he completed this task, he was made king. Never in the narrative did the Lords feel they had wronged the house of Gideon by supporting Abimelech. This is because it was better to have a king who came from their territory than from another, irrespective of the method used to get to the throne.

Judges 9:7 – 21: Jotham's Assessment of Abimelech's Strategy
The narrative begins with Abimelech's ambition to be king and ends with his succeeding to be king. It is clear from the text that he functioned more as a tribal king than an "all-Israel king" since he was never listed as one of the kings of ancient Israel.[188] However, his inability to get rid of all his threats meant that someone with a conscience, outside his kinsmen was bound to question his legitimacy and approach to kingship. In verse 7 it is read that Jotham was informed of Abimelech's coronation as king. The narrator does not tell readers who informed him, neither does it tell how the informant knew of Jotham's existence. However, Jotham does not remain silent when he gets the information, he decides to speak. He begins his speech by calling the Lords of Shechem to listen. Why does he use the expression: …listen to my voice so that God may listen to you"? (Vs. 7c). Jotham weaves his message in the form of an allegory. His message lacks the direct and fast pace that characterized Abimelech's action. He slows down the narrative by conveying his message to the lords in the form of a story about how the trees ended up choosing the bramble tree (the most insignificant tree) to become king over them.

The trees were patient enough to give room to all the competent and worthy trees (such as Olive, fig, and vine) a chance to rule because they were the most important in the forest/ the most qualified for the position. These important trees rejected the offer because they saw their roles in the forest to be more important than being crowned king over their kinsmen. In the fable, it is the trees who go about looking for a king and not the one who is crowned king. The bramble tree who is made king does not deal in any underhand schemes but is chosen because all the others contacted before him felt they were already serving important roles in the forest. This fable questions Abimelech and the role the Lords of Shechem played in the slaughter of the house of Jerrubaal. The respect they showed to those who were contributing to society was clear through the manner they supported Abimelech. The bramble tree who is consulted last agrees only on condition that all the other trees will support him truthfully.

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[186] Boling, *Judges*, 171.
[187] Boling, *Judges*, 171
[188] Boling, Judges, 171

The Hebrew word *beʾémet* can be translated as "in truth, faithfulness, firmness, steadiness, reliability, and security."[189] The usage of this word suggests the notion of dealing faithfully or fairly with someone. Boling explains that the Hebrew word *bᵉʾᵉmet*, can be translated as: "in truth," a noun which is common in covenantal usage, where it stands for fidelity to an agreement."[190] Jotham argues in vs 17 that the Lords of Shechem owed his father Jerubbaal a sense of fidelity which at least compelled them to ensure the safety of his household because he fought for them. He emphasizes the sacrifice his father made for the people even in total disregard for his life. The Hebrew word *šālak nefeš* can be translated as to cast one's flesh away[191] which portrays the risk Gideon took in order to save the people from the Midianites. However, it looks as if the people of Shechem forgot all that his father did and supported Abimelech to destroy their saviour's household "*kî ʾáhîkem hûʾ*" (because he is your brother). This is a clear case of blindly supporting someone on the basis of ethnicity. They wrongfully killed their benefactor's children because of blood ties. This action by the Lords of Shechem spells some of the dangers of ethnic politics. Jotham condemned them because they did not deal with the house of Jerrubaal fairly (in truth).

Findings from Reading

Judges 9:1-21 presents the strategy to use when one is interested in political leadership. The table below explains the strategy and qualifications that one needs in order to be king based on the actions and words of the major characters (Abimelech, Lords of Shechem and Jotham) in the narrative.

Table 1: Strategies for Political Leadership

Character	Political Strategy
Abimelech (determined, committed, cunning, manipulative, ruthless and disrespectful)	1. Approach the ones closest to you: which in this case was his mother's kinsmen (vs 1 – 2) 2. Create a sense of need: he did this by painting a picture of complete chaos (70 people vying for one position) 3. Raise funds that can help advance your cause: he did this by convincing the Lords of Shechem the need to support him because he is their kin 4. Recruit the support of people who will follow you without questioning your motive or purpose for vying for the position 5. Ruthlessly dispose of all those who may stand in your way
Lords of Shechem (selfish, greedy and gullible)	1. Ally with one's kin (Judges 9:3 reads…and their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, "He is our brother"

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[189] Warren Baker, The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2003, c. 2002), 74

[190] Boling, *The New American Commentary 6: Judges, Ruth*, 311.

[191] Baker, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*, 74.

	2. Provide money to support one's kin (vs. 4 …and they gave him seventy pieces of silver…) 3. Do not question the mode and motive for desiring the position 4. Make one king because of blood relation
Jotham (vulnerable, intelligent, bold and determined)	1. The ruled should be allowed to choose their ruler: the choice for a king or leader must be based on the desires and initiative of the people, not the king. Vs 8 reads: "The trees once went forth to anoint a king over them" 2. The procedure of selection must be done fairly and in good faith.

The narrative presents two strategies to adopt when choosing a leader. The approach used by Abimelech enabled him to be king but at the cost of the lives of all those he believed were contenders to the throne. In Judges 19: 53 one reads about Abimelech's death and how his reign could not be sustained because of the blood he shed to get to the throne. One also reads about the disagreements that ensued between Abimelech and the men of Shechem, the same people who supported his bid for the throne. Consequently, it is clear from the narrative that the strategy that used ethnicity to gain power could not be sustained.

The political strategy that can last is likely the one that the people themselves through fair means decide on who should be their leader. A leader chosen through such means is likely to get the support of the people which can help ensure his smooth reign.

Abimelech and the people of Shechem's actions alienated them from the other tribes and God. Their actions led to the destruction of the house of Gideon which likely incurred the wrath of the tribes of the other sixty-nine children. The chaos that followed his bid would have daunting consequences for the Shechemites and all the people of Israel. It is therefore not surprising that Abimelech is not counted as one of the kings who ruled in Israel[192] in spite of ruling for three years.

Application of the findings to the Ghanaian Context

Over the years the voting pattern in Ghana, in some cases has continued to reflect ethnic polarization in some regions. This is because political awareness of ethnic groups in Ghana has been aroused due to the way successive governments have continued to use the ethnic card to win more votes in their strongholds.[193]

The research reveals that the politicization of ethnicity can be very dangerous, especially when the leader is supported to the political position not through his competence but rather based on blood ties. Throughout the narrative, the only reason the relatives and Lords of Shechem gave for supporting Abimelech was; "because he is our kin" not because he is a visionary and competent leader who has the interest of the people at heart.

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[192] Barry G. Webb, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Judges* (Grand Rapids: Michigan, 2012), 399. Webb posit that Abimelech can best be described as a tribal leader and not king of all Israel since it was the Lords of Shechem that crowned him king and not all of Israel.
[193] Chazan, "Ethnicity and Politics in Ghana", 464.

Not too long ago, the news reported that some leaders of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in the Ashanti region were entreating the just elected Flag bearer to select his running mate from the Ashanti region.[194] The women's wing of the NPP in the Greater Accra region has also demanded that the running mate should be a Ga woman.[195] In all these instances, not much emphasis was placed on the leadership qualities of the choice to be made but rather the need to pick from among them. This is not the first time such statements have been made in the Ghanaian media landscape. Such comments have the tendency to affect the peace in the country.

On the presence of ethnic politics in the Ghanaian political landscape, the NPP held an election for their Flag bearer for the upcoming 2024 Presidential elections on 4th November, 2023. During the campaign period, some comments made by some candidates bordered heavily on tribal/ ethnic politics. Kennedy Agyapong, one of the candidates and the Member of Parliament for Assin Central was reported as complaining over the possible monopolization of the run for the next President of Ghana by Northerners if Dr Mahamudu Bawumia won the Flag bearer race of the NPP.[196] This comment prompted the Ya-Na Abubakari Mahama II, the King of Dagbon to condemn the Honourable member. The Ya-Na explained that such comments make Northerners appear as secondary citizens who do not merit running for the highest political position in the country.[197] Abimelech's strategy and his unfortunate end serve as a clear warning of the dangers of using the ethnic strategy to gain power.

The research also revealed that the best strategy for political power should be through the choice of the whole community and not in the interest of a selected few. Jotham in his submission reiterated the need for a leader to be chosen based on "good faith" because it has the tendency to gain the support of the majority of the populace to ensure the smooth running of his/her administration. Henceforth, there is a need for deepened education on the dangers of ethnic politics and the qualities electorates are to look out for from any political leader. This education will help the majority of Ghanaian electorates understand the enormous responsibility that they have in choosing competent leaders through fair means and not their party faithful or cronies.

The research also posits that there is a need for the church to serve as a voice of warning against those who engage in ethnic politics based on its responsibilities towards the society. Though Jotham was scared he still gathered the needed courage to draw the attention of Abimelech to the abomination they have caused and the consequences that will arise as a result of it. This is a role the church should embrace.

Recommendations

The research proposes the following recommendations:

a. The church based on its unique role in the community should educate its members on God's stand and punishment for those who use ethnic politics as a means to gain power.
b. There must be more education in the media landscape on the gruesome dangers of engaging in ethnic politics.

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[194] https://www.myjoyonline.com/npp-has-agreed-for-bawumias-running-mate-to-co...

[195] https://www.peacefmonline.com/pages/politics/202311/495255.php

[196] https://3news.com/stop-preaching-hatred-against-northerners-ya-na-advises-ken-agyapong/ accessed November, 2023.

[197] https://3news.com/stop-preaching-hatred-against-northerners-ya-na-advises-ken-agyapong/ accessed November, 2023.

Conclusion

The paper concludes that a political strategy that heavily employs ethnicity is bound to disrupt the fortunes of the people and nation. Electorates are, therefore, encouraged to apply the advice of Jotham in their selection of leaders to ensure the peace, unity and development of the people and nation.

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Judgement Oracle in Micah 3:1-12 and Its Relevance for Political Stability in West Africa

Edward Akintunde Ojediran

The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso Nigeria.
Email: ojediranedward@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper examined the relevance of the judgment oracle in Micah 3:1-12 for political stability in West Africa. The researcher hypothesized that corruption is one significant cause of political instability characterized by coup d'état in these states. The paper used the historical-grammatical exegetical method to demonstrate the relevance of Micah's oracle to political and religious corruption vis-à-vis political stability in West Africa. The paper's findings were that Yahweh's expectation from the government to promote social justice and economic equality. Also, God expects Christian leaders to address injustice in society, and that political corruption leads to political instability and insecurity. The paper concluded that unless economic injustice is addressed, the sub-continent may continue to experience military juntas and other forms of political instability. It is recommended that government officials should implement fair economic policies. Furthermore, religious leaders should speak to power when it perpetuates social injustices.

Keywords: Coup, Corruption, Micah, West Africa

Introduction

The recent interruption in democracy in African countries, especially West African states has become a concern to many. At least three coups have taken place in West Africa within the last twelve months. Such occurrence comes with dire consequences for these nations and their citizens. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) have intervened to return these countries to democratic civilian rule. Despite the intervention and sanctions of ECOWAS and AU, coups still occur successfully in the sub-continent. It then implies that the root causes of these coups have not been addressed.

The research hypothesis is that corruption is one significant cause of coup d'état in these states. It is an irony that despite the religious nature of Africans, corruption is still prevalent in Africa. Therefore, this paper seeks to examine issues of corruption among political and religious leaders from a biblical perspective. One of the Biblical texts that addresses political and religious corruption is Micah 3:1-12. In addressing political instability in Africa, the paper shall review various sources of literature on coups and corruption. It shall also exegete Micah 3:1-12 to discover its relevance to political instability in West Africa.

Coup d'etats and Corruption

A coup d'état is a forceful takeover of the political apparatus of a nation which usually is carried out by military officers of the nation. This research's description is in tandem with Patrick McGowan's description that "[a] coup d'état involves the sudden, often violent overthrow of an

existing government by a small group …"[198] This forceful takeover of government in post-colonial Africa first occurred in Togo in 1963.[199] By 1985, there had been 71 attempted coups and 60 successful coups in Africa.[200] By 2001, 68 more coups had been attempted with 20 of those coups successful.[201] The data presented shows that while the rate of successful coups between the two periods decreased by 41%, the rate of coup attempts actually rose a little more than 26% between the two periods.

Recent events show that coup attempts, and indeed successful coups are on the rise again on the continent. In the last three years, eight coups have been successful in Africa.[202] In one of the recent coups, Nigerians flooded the streets in support of the military junta despite the high handedness and the human rights abuse military regimes are known for.[203] A deduction is that factors promoting military juntas in Africa are yet to be fully addressed.

Several factors are responsible for coups. However, one significant factor is corruption or selfish ambitions of civilian leaders at the expense of the citizens. Several studies have confirmed this claim. Jonathan Powell asserts that prominent among the reasons why the military intervenes in politics is due to the corrupt tendencies of heads of state and attempts to manipulate political systems to elongate their stay in office.[204]

Burkina Faso, one of the eight countries that experienced a coup in the last three years, is reported to have widespread corruption cases, with a corruption perception index of 41%.[205] Another study also confirms that coups "…usually result from political and economic crisis and related dissatisfaction with civilian leadership."[206] The researcher argues that unless corruption by political and religious leaders is addressed, political instability characterized by coup d'etats will not cease to occur. Therefore, the article exegetes Micah 3:1-12 as a response to corruption among political and religious leaders in Africa.

Methodology

This paper used the judgement oracle in Micah 3:1-12 to examine the issue of political instability in West Africa. Micah Chapter 3 was written within a cultural time frame. Therefore, its interpretation to address political instability will require a thorough analytical study (exegesis) of the passage. This paper engaged the historical-grammatical approach to exegesis. The paper analyzed the historical and literary context of the text. It also analyzed the original text, the form,

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[198] Patrick McGowan, "African Military Coup D'etat, 1956-2001: Frequency, Trends and Distribution," *Modern African Studies* 41, no. 3 (2003): 342.

[199] Kate Skinner, "West Africa's First Coup: Neo-Colonial and Pan African Projects in Togo's 'Shadow Archive'," *African Studies Review* 63, no. 2 (2020): 375.

[200] Patrick McGowan and Thomas Johnson, "Sixty Coups in Thirty Years – Further Evidence Regarding African Military Coups D'etat," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 24, no. 13 (Sept. 1986): 541.

[201] McGowan, "African Military Coup d'etat," 339.

[202] "Africa: The 7 Military Coups over the Last Three Years," *Africanews*, https://www.africanews.com/2023/08/30/africa-the-7-military-coups-over-the-last-three-years/, accessed November 29, 2023.

[203] "Thousands in Niger Rally in Support of Coup Leaders," *Aljazeera*, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/8/6/thousands-in-niger-rally-in-support-of-coup-leaders.date, accessed November 29, 2023.

[204] Jonathan Powell, "Determinants of the attempting and outcome of coup d'etat," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56, no 6 (2012): 1018.

[205] Inaki Albisu Ardigo, Matthew Jenkins, and Guillaume Nicaise, "Burkina Faso: Overview of Corruption and Anti-Corruption," *Transparency International*, 2019.

[206] Matthias Basedau, "A force (still) to be Reckoned with: The Military in African Politics," German Institute of Global and Area Studies (2020), 6.

structure, and biblical context of the text, and then discussed the relevance of the text to political and religious corruption in Nigeria.

Exegesis of Micah 3:1-12
Historical Context

To make meaning out of a biblical text, the historical situation of that text must be understood because the Bible is a historically oriented revelation. Therefore, this section will discuss the background, the authorship, the dating, the social context and the foreground of Micah.

Background of Micah

In the days of King Menahem of Samaria, Tiglath-Pileser III, the Assyrian Emperor, began a military campaign in the Ancient Near East. The northern kingdom of Israel was defeated and became a vassal nation under Assyria. A year later, Menahem died, and his son, Pekahiah, reigned a while before Pekah, a military commander, toppled his reign. The rise of the Assyrian empire continued to threaten the existence of the two Israelite nations.[207] Andrew Hill and John Walton note that Assyria invaded Judah severally during the days of Micah. A major invasion took place around 701 BC.[208] In a bid for political survival, King Ahaz submitted to the Assyrians as a vassal by giving away the temple treasures.[209] It was under this threat that Micah prophesied.

Authorship

In what Longman and Dillard find typical of prophetic superscription, the first verse of Micah provides internal evidence for the book's author. The first verse names the author and his hometown, Micah of Moresheth.[210] The name Micah is an abbreviation of *Mîkāyāhû* which means 'who is like Yahweh?'[211] According to Gleason Archer, the prophet was from a humble background in the southern Israelite kingdom and lived in Moresheth near Gath, about twenty miles west of Jerusalem.[212] Even in ancient times, the distance between Moresheth and Jerusalem was close enough for the prophet to know what was happening in the capital as it would be about a 7-hour walk away. The news of political happenings in the capital could easily reach Micah, and he could also easily transverse the capital to deliver his oracles.

Furthermore, Andrew Hill and John Walton note that the prophet was a contemporary of the prophet Isaiah.[213] Micah and Isaiah are contemporaries, which means they share the same social context as the latter was also a prophet in the southern kingdom. R.K. Harrison also asserts Amos's oracles (some decades earlier) influenced Micah's prophecies, as the former lived less than thirty-two kilometres away from Micah's town. [214]

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[207] Alfred J. Hoerth, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 333-335.

[208] Andrew E. Hill and John H. Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 504.

[209] Hoerth, *Archaeology and the Old Testament,* 338.

[210] Tremper Longman and Raymond Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 450.

[211] William Sanford Lasor, David Allan Hubbard, and Frederic William Bush, *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1996), 270.

[212] Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1978), 324.

[213] Hill and Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament,* 503.

[214] R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), 920.

Dating

Like the book's authorship, the internal evidence for the dating of Micah is found in the book's first verse. According to the first verse, Micah prophesied in the days of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of the Southern kingdom. Longman and Dillard assert that Jotham began to reign in 750 BC while Hezekiah died in 686 BC,[215] which is about 63 years. Longman and Dillard doubted that Micah prophesied for that number of years. Instead, they suggest that "Micah's work may have begun toward the end of Jotham's reign and ended at the beginning of Hezekiah's."[216] As a validation of the internal evidence, Archer states that Micah's depicted corruption and immorality fit what characterized Ahaz's reign.[217] In the writer's opinion, the prophecy in chapter three fits into the context of the latter part of Ahaz's reign and the earlier part of Hezekiah's reign.

Social Context

As stated earlier, chapter three fits into the social context of the latter part of Ahaz's reign and the earlier part of Hezekiah's reign. According to Alfred Edersheim, the rule of Ahaz was characterized by a religious change that "was no less than a systematic attempt to substitute a complicated heathenism for the religion of the Old Testament." Edersheim states Ahaz substituted the altar of burnt offering for the heathen one, which was an attempt to subvert the central part of Yahwism. The king also ordered the closure of the doors of the holy place and most holy place. Furthermore, Ahaz introduced the worship of Syrian, Phoenician, and Assyrian idolatry. All these religious introductions were with the support of the high priest Uzziah.[218] The priest's involvement demonstrates the level of corruption in the priestly order. The depravity of Ahaz was such that he sacrificed his son, most likely to Molech (2 Kings 16:3).

Furthermore, Norman K. Gottwald asserts that there was widespread political injustice during the reign of Ahaz. According to Gottwald, small landowners were expelled from their traditional means of livelihood. There were also dishonest business practices. Gottwald observes Isaiah's denouncement of the leaders' "rampant violations of the rights of the common people and their headlong rush to amass quick wealth and political power at any cost." Isaiah's concerns, Gottwald observes, are parallel with Micah's.[219]

Foreground

Samaria failed to yield to Micah's warning, and it soon fell to the Assyrians under King Sennacherib in 721 B.C.[220] Meanwhile, Ahaz soon died, and Judah found a new king, Hezekiah, Ahaz's son. Hezekiah soon initiated religious and political reforms that were likely influenced by Micah's prophecies. The twenty-five years old new king reversed his father's religious policies, starting with the reopening of the temple. Although he reigned under the shadows of Sargon II, the Assyrian King, with the military threat from the Assyrians, Jerusalem would not experience the doomy predictions of Micah until almost a century later.[221]

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[215] Longman and Dillard, *An Introduction*, 451.

[216] Longman and Dillard, *An Introduction*, 451.

[217] Archer, *A Survey,* 325.

[218] Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995), 892-93.

[219] Norman Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985),375, 377.

[220] H. Keith Beebe, *The Old Testament: An Introduction to its Literary, Historical, and Religious Traditions* (Belmont: Dickenson Publishing Company, Inc., 1970), 263.

[221] Hoerth, *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, 341-351.

Literary Analysis
Placement in the Bible
In the Hebrew Bible, Micah is classified in Nevi'im as a latter prophet. In the protestant Bible, it is classified as a minor prophet. The Nevi'im addresses immediate social and political issues in Israel's history. These books are referred to as prophetic oracles.[222]

Style
According to Hans Wolff, Micah Chapter 3 is replete with several literary devices. He notes that Micah emphasizes a speech's climax by engaging in alliteration, as in verse ten. Wolff states that the prophet expressed his accusations with crude and dramatic metaphors, such as comparing the construction workers' condition to the butchering of cows.[223] In the writer's opinion, Micah uses metaphoric imagery to appeal to the emotions and feelings of the leader to have an accurate picture of their actions and inactions. Wolff also observes Micah's use of parallelism to emphasize his message.[224] The literary devices reveal the prophet's intention to capture his audience's attention and drive home his point.

Form Analysis
The book of Micah is a prophetic book with an amazing range of literary genres. According to Gottwald, Micah has a twofold redactional scheme of judgement-salvation.[225] Micah 3 is a poetic judgement oracle associated with prophetic books. This judgement oracle involves six elements: "introduction, accusation, development, messenger formula, God's intervention, and the result of that intervention."[226] Based on the passage's historical context, the prophet announces the judgement of Yahweh against social injustice.

Biblical Context
Micah Chapter 3 has no citation or allusion to the New Testament. However, some elders quoted Micah 3:12 in Jeremiah 26:18. This is the only time an Old Testament text is quoted in another. In the twenty-sixth chapter, Prophet Jeremiah prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem because of the people's wickedness. This prophecy did not please the people, and they demanded his execution on blasphemy charges. Some elders quoted Micah 3:12, evidencing that such prophecy had been given before in Israel without the prophet being killed. As noted by F. B. Huey, the quotation reveals that Micah's oracles were preserved in written collections. Huey also observes that the quotation ties Hezekiah's reform to Micah's oracles.[227]

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[222] Stephen L. Harris and Robert L. Platzner, *The Old Testament: An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2008), 7, 9.

[223] Hans Wolff, *Micah: A Commentary,* trans. by Gary Stansell (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990), 9.

[224] Wolff, *Micah: A Commentary,* 9.

[225] Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible,* 374.

[226] Timothy Pierce, "Micah as A Case Study for Preaching and Teaching the Prophets | Preaching Source", *Preachingsource.Com*, 2003, https://preachingsource.com/journal/micah-as-a-case-study-for-preaching-and-teaching-the-prophets/, accessed July 1, 2022.

[227] F. B. Huey, *Jeremiah, Lamentations* Clendenen, Kenneth Matthews, and David Dockery (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1993), 238.

Textual Analysis
Original Text

1 וָאֹמַר שִׁמְעוּ־נָא רָאשֵׁי יַעֲקֹב וּקְצִינֵי בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל הֲלוֹא לָכֶם לָדַעַת אֶת־הַמִּשְׁפָּט:

2 שֹׂנְאֵי טוֹב וְאֹהֲבֵי רָעָה גֹּזְלֵי עוֹרָם מֵעֲלֵיהֶם וּשְׁאֵרָם מֵעַל עַצְמוֹתָם:

3 וַאֲשֶׁר אָכְלוּ שְׁאֵר עַמִּי וְעוֹרָם מֵעֲלֵיהֶם הִפְשִׁיטוּ וְאֶת־עַצְמֹתֵיהֶם פִּצֵּחוּ וּפָרְשׂוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר בַּסִּיר וּכְבָשָׂר בְּתוֹךְ קַלָּחַת:

4 אָז יִזְעֲקוּ אֶל־יְהֹוָה וְלֹא יַעֲנֶה אוֹתָם וְיַסְתֵּר פָּנָיו מֵהֶם בָּעֵת הַהִיא כַּאֲשֶׁר הֵרֵעוּ מַעַלְלֵיהֶם:

5 כֹּה אָמַר יְהֹוָה עַל־הַנְּבִיאִים הַמַּתְעִים אֶת־עַמִּי הַנֹּשְׁכִים בְּשִׁנֵּיהֶם וְקָרְאוּ שָׁלוֹם וַאֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִתֵּן עַל־פִּיהֶם וְקִדְּשׁוּ עָלָיו מִלְחָמָה:

6 לָכֵן לַיְלָה לָכֶם מֵחָזוֹן וְחָשְׁכָה לָכֶם מִקְּסֹם וּבָאָה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ עַל־הַנְּבִיאִים וְקָדַר עֲלֵיהֶם הַיּוֹם:

7 וּבֹשׁוּ הַחֹזִים וְחָפְרוּ הַקֹּסְמִים וְעָטוּ עַל־שָׂפָם כֻּלָּם כִּי אֵין מַעֲנֵה אֱלֹהִים:

8 וְאוּלָם אָנֹכִי מָלֵאתִי כֹחַ אֶת־רוּחַ יְהֹוָה וּמִשְׁפָּט וּגְבוּרָה לְהַגִּיד לְיַעֲקֹב פִּשְׁעוֹ וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל חַטָּאתוֹ:

9 שִׁמְעוּ־נָא זֹאת רָאשֵׁי בֵּית יַעֲקֹב וּקְצִינֵי בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל הַמְתַעֲבִים מִשְׁפָּט וְאֵת כָּל־הַיְשָׁרָה יְעַקֵּשׁוּ:

10 בֹּנֶה צִיּוֹן בְּדָמִים וִירוּשָׁלַ͏ִם בְּעַוְלָה:

11 רָאשֶׁיהָ | בְּשֹׁחַד יִשְׁפֹּטוּ וְכֹהֲנֶיהָ בִּמְחִיר יוֹרוּ וּנְבִיאֶיהָ בְּכֶסֶף יִקְסֹמוּ וְעַל־יְהֹוָה יִשָּׁעֵנוּ לֵאמֹר הֲלוֹא יְהֹוָה בְּקִרְבֵּנוּ לֹא־תָבוֹא עָלֵינוּ רָעָה:

12 לָכֵן בִּגְלַלְכֶם צִיּוֹן שָׂדֶה תֵחָרֵשׁ וִירוּשָׁלַ͏ִם עִיִּים תִּהְיֶה וְהַר הַבַּיִת לְבָמוֹת יָעַר:

English Translation

1 Then I said, indeed learn you heads of Jacob and leaders of Israel's house! (Is) not to you to know justice?

2 You who hate good and love evil (by) tearing off their skin from them and their flesh from their bones.

3 Even who eat my people's flesh and they caused to take up their skin from over them
And they broke *their bones intensely,* and they broke (them) in pieces like flesh in the cooking pot and meat amid a cauldron."

4 Then, they will be calling out unto Yahweh, and He will not be answering them, and He will cause to hide His face from them at that time as they caused their practices to be evil.

5 Thus, Yahweh said concerning the prophets causing my people to err, biting with their teeth. They will be crying "peace", and who is not putting on their mouth they will set battle intensively against him."

6 Therefore, (it will be) night to you, without prophecy and darkness to you without practising divination. The sun will be going (down) upon the prophets: the day will be dark over them.

7 And the seers will be ashamed, and the ones practising divination will be ashamed, and they will all cover their lips for (there is) no answer of Elohim.

8 And truly *I* am filled with power, of the spirit of Yahweh and justice and might to declare to Jacob his transgression, and to Jerusalem, his sin.

9 Indeed, listen to this, you heads of Jacob's house and leaders of Israel that justice loathes intensively and all (that is) uprightness distort intensively.

10. building Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with injustice.

11 Her head continues judging *for* a bribe, her priests continue teaching for hire, and her prophets for silver continue practising divination, and upon Yahweh, they continue to trust in, saying, "Is Yahweh not in the midst of us? Distress will not *come* over us."

12 Therefore, because of you, Zion (like) a field will be ploughed, and Jerusalem will become heaps of ruins and the mount of the house a high place thicket.

Structural Analysis

The six elements of a judgement oracle in the passage inform the structure of the passage. The passage has four poetic strophes with three cycles of judgement oracles.[228] The first strophe contains the cycle of the judgment oracle, which is against the juridical leaders. Verse 1 forms the introduction of the oracle, which begins with שִׁמְעוּ. Verse 2a gives the accusation. Meanwhile, the development of the accusation is found in verses 2b-3, and God's intervention is in verse 4. However, it lacks the messenger formula and the result of the intervention.[229]

The second strophe contains the second oracle judgement (verses five to eight), in which the prophet addresses the religious leaders. Verse 5 contains the introduction and accusation. The development and messenger formula is missing in this cycle. Verses 6-7 contain God's intervention. The judgement oracles are interjected with Micah's resume as Yahweh's prophet in verse 8. This resume forms the third strophe of the prophecy.

The fourth strophe contains the final oracle cycle (verses 9 to 12). The last strophe is the climax of the judgement oracles. Here the prophet loosely uses the elements of judgement oracle. While the introduction is in the first part of v.9a, the accusation and development against juridical leaders and religious leaders cover verses 9b-11. Verse 12 contains the result of God's intervention.

Syntactical Analysis

The first strophe which is the judgement oracle against political leaders begins in verse 1 with שִׁמְעוּ; an imperative 'to listen', which summons ראֹשׁ and קָצִין, the political leaders to court. Micah then uses a rhetorical question to call these leaders' attention to their failed responsibilities: establishing justice. Verse 2a begins Micah's accusation against these leaders. They hated doing good but loved doing evil. The leaders loved evil because they oppressed the people they were supposed to lead. The prophet uses graphic metaphors that would have been censored in contemporary times to paint the grave nature of the oppression. The oppression was so grave that the prophet described it in verses 2b to 3 as a butcher would butcher meats. The intensity of the oppression could be seen in the prophet's use of a hiphil verb, הִפְשִׁיטוּ; in verse 3. From this imagery, it would be said that the leaders oppress the people to the point of death. Yahweh's interview in verse 4 is a continuous silence to the prayers of these leaders.

The prophecy in verse 5 then turns to another judgement oracle. This time, it is the religious leaders, specifically the prophets (הַנְּבִיאִים). Micah's allegation against them is that they are responsible for the spiritual derailment of the nation (הַמַּתְעִים). These corrupt prophets were also known to proclaim שָׁלוֹם. Although not explicitly stated in the text, it could be inferred that Micah perceived it was not a time to proclaim peace, at least not to the audience to which these prophets proclaim peace. Another allegation against these prophets is that they are unfavourably disposed to whoever is not inducing financially. Verses 6 to 7 introduce God's intervention. Yahweh will no longer speak through these prophets because they have spoken peace in the name of Yahweh when He did not send them.

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[228] Ernst Wendland, "A Literary-Structural Analysis of The Prophet Micah", *Research Gate*, 2021, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349644866_A_Literary-Structural_Analysis_of_the_Prophet_Micah?enrichId=rgreq-3d1e01af99408fc7cdc4809cf42fbaf7-XXX&enrichSource=Y292ZXJQYWdlOzM0OTY0NDg2NjtBUzo5OTU3NDE2MDI0NDMyNjRAMTYxNDQxNDcxNDcwNjZmNQ%3D%3D&el=1_x_3&_esc=publicationCoverPdf&__cf_chl_tk=y9WVCsA6_bGCszpNfXvxuhdVWaAo5FlsN3HUOvWot7c-1659434737-0-gaNycGzNDL0, accessed July 2, 2022.

[229] Claus Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*, Trans. by Gene M. Tucker (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 174.

Micah breaks off from his prophecy to proclaim his resume in verse 8. The prophet proclaims that he is "filled with power, of the spirit of Yahweh and justice and might…" which enables his prophetic ministry to warn Judah of their sins.

The last strophe of the oracle is a summary of the first two oracles. The oracle begins with שִׁמְעוּ־נָא (hear this) calling the attention of the leaders of Israel. Again, the prophecy levies the charge of injustice against the רֹאשׁ and קָצִין in verses 9 to 10. Rather than practice justice, these leaders detest anything that has to do with justice because they have acquired wealth through bloodshed. Verse 11 is an indictment against both political and religious leaders. וְכֹהֲנֶיהָ, the Levitical priests who were not in the second judgment oracle are included here. The priests and the prophet had commercialised the word of Yahweh. רָאשֶׁיהָ בְּשֹׁחַד יִשְׁפֹּטוּ·explains how the tribal heads acquired wealth through bloodshed. For the prophet, to have perverted justice is to have killed the innocent. The oracle went ahead to challenge the false notion that the leaders had that they could have Yahweh on their side despite their corruption. The last verse of the periscope forms the result of Yahweh's intervention. Security instability is coming on the nation as "Jerusalem will become heaps of ruins and the mount of the house a high place thicket."

Relevance of Micah 3:1-12 to Political Instability in Africa

Just as corruption was prevalent in the days of Micah, so also corruption is widespread in most West African nations. If Micah was a contemporary prophet, he would have addressed the same issues he addressed in the 8th century BC. How would he have described owing civil servants and pensioners for months to the point that some of them committed suicide, if not as stripping off their skin? The prophet would have described the purchasing of expensive vehicles for government officials while the purchasing power of citizens is weakened as the crushing of the masses' bones. Also, the judicial corruption in most West African states where money dictates the outcome of a judicial process seems not to be different from that of Micah's days.

Just like in Micah's days, God expects justice from political leaders. While West African nations may not be theocratic, the nations exist in a theocentric universe. God is the creator and owner of the universe.[230] Therefore, political leaders should ensure that justice reigns supreme in the nation. Workers and pensioners should be paid when due. Retirees should also not have to wait years before their gratuity is paid. Also, the human cost of every policy, program, or project should be weighed before it is executed. In addition, there is a need to eradicate judicial injustice such that material inducement no longer determines the outcome of any judicial process. Law enforcement officials should also be fair in enforcing the law. They should not be biased, nor should they implicate the innocent as there are people locked up in countries' prisons who have committed no crime.

Furthermore, the prophets of Micah's days were guilty of proclaiming peace to the wrong audience at the wrong time. Rather than warn the political class of their sins, the prophets promised them peace. They were also guilty of having hatred for those from whom they could not get anything. These prophets proclaimed peace to the political leaders for financial gains. The priests were not also innocent of the commercialisation of the Torah. Some contemporary religious leaders in Africa are not guiltless of the accusations levied against the religious leaders of Micah's days. For example, during the just concluded elections in Nigeria, there were many conflicting prophecies from many Christian leaders concerning the election and the contestants which show that these prophecies did not originate from God. An investigative journalist did an expose on

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[230] Emiola Nihinlola, *Theology for Living: Essays in African Context* (Ogbomoso: Kingdom Impact Publishing and Media, 2021), 73.

corruption in some churches where people are conned into parting with their money for prophecies. The investigation revealed that most of the prophecies were false.[231] It is not also uncommon for religious leaders to fraternise with political leaders known to be corrupt. Contrary to such practices, Micah states that one of the roles of the prophetic ministry in every society is to warn their society against injustice. The prophet expects preachers and prophets to be bold to confront injustice in society. This is just as Ezekiel Ajibade asserts that the current level of corruption in Nigeria requires that prophetic preachers arise who would speak the mind of God to the nation.[232] While it may come with persecution Christian preachers and prophets must rise to fulfil God's mandate to combat injustice.

Micah's judgment oracle ended on the note that Judah's political and religious corruption was going to lead to political instability and insecurity for the nation that would lead to a total collapse of the nation. Thankfully, King Hezekiah was wise enough to heed the warning, making sweeping reforms that curbed corruption. However, a century later when such a warning was sounded by the prophet Jeremiah it was ignored which led to the collapse of Judah. Reviewed literature demonstrates that political instability characterised by coups cannot be unconnected to the corruption prevalent in African nations. The dissatisfaction among citizens with the government would always endear the military to intervene in the politics of the nation. Unless corruption is addressed in African states, these nations will continue to experience interruption of democracy.

Conclusion

The researcher is concerned with the recent interruption in democracy in African countries, especially West Africa states. The paper responded to this issue from a biblical perspective by an exegesis of Micah 3:1-12. Therefore, the paper did historical, literary, form, textual, lexical, and structural analysis of Micah 3:1-12. The exegesis of the passage reveals that God expects justice from political leaders. It is also expected of religious leaders to address societal injustice which they cannot do if they are also corrupt. Also, political corruption leads to political instability and insecurity. Based on the inference, the paper concludes that religious leaders should be courageous to preach against corruption and exemplify purity. Meanwhile, political leaders should shun corruption. If not, these nations will continue to experience an interruption of democracy.

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[231] Fisayo Soyombo, "Prophets Of their Pockets (I): At Celestial Church of Christ Headquarters, There Are Over 100 Prophet-Scammers," Foundation for Investigative Journalism, October 24, 2022, https://fij.ng/article/prophets-of-their-pockets-i-at-celestial-church-of-christ-headquarters-there-are-over-100-prophet-scammers/, accessed May 12, 2023.

[232] Ezekiel Ajibade, "The Place of Prophetic Preaching in Stemming the Tide of Sin and Evil in Contemporary African Society," *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology* XXII, no. 1 (2017): 129.

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'Rules for Thee but not for me': Political Instability in Africa in Light of Qoheleth 8:11-13

Okechukwu Okorie (PhD)

Department of Biblical Studies
The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso
Email: okeynokorie@gmail.com

Abstract

This study sought to identify the nature and significance of one of the foremost causes of political instability in contemporary Africa: impunity. The ubiquity of this phenomenon is evidenced by its succinct highlighting in Qoheleth 8:11–12. Hence, Qoheleth offers insights into contextual, practical, Bible-based methods by which Africa may overcome the challenge posed by impunity. The biblical text's insights were obtained through a rhetorical analysis of Qoheleth 8:11–12. The study found that impunity is both insidious and oppressive, thereby undermining the national cohesion of any nation where it is virulently espoused. The study highlighted the need for the African church to recognize impunity's destabilizing nature and develop innovative, long-term solutions to return stability to African politics.

Keywords: Impunity, Qoheleth, African Politics, African Church

Introduction

The phrase "rules for thee but not for me" while familiar to careful observers of human history has made a renewed assault on the popular lexicon of global politics. This term, from recent urban usage, describes the actions of individuals or states by which they demand that others follow a set of rules to which all have given common assent while they are unbound by such rules. In international law and politics, it may be argued with good reason that "rules for thee but not for me" may actually signify a departure from the naïve adherence to rules-based systems that may be detrimental to national interests or self-interest. Within the context of states' internal affairs, however, "rules for thee but not for me" provides a devastating commentary on the gradual destruction of a state's internal cohesion and the undermining of societal and cultural values and norms.

For instance, "rules for thee but not for me" may relate to the experience of police officers brazenly violating the very laws that they are sworn to uphold and protect.[233] Another Nigerian example of such an instance is that of Nigeria's national government, notorious for ignoring court judgments,[234] and attempting to halt planned nationwide industrial action through court injunctions. Nigeria's national government subsequently complained that the labour unions have refused to yield to law and order when the court injunctions are ignored and the industrial actions

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[233] Kabir Yusuf, "How Nigeria Police Violated Nigerian Laws in Awarding N3 Billion Contracts – Audit Report," *Premium Times* (January 28, 2022), https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/508357-how-nigeria-police-violated-nigerian-laws-in-awarding-n3-billion-contracts-audit-report.html. Accessed 23 November, 2023.

[234] Evelyn Okakwu, "SPECIAL REPORT: How Buhari Administration Serially Disobeys Court Orders," *Premium Times* (June 11, 2017), https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/233665-special-report-how-buhari-administration-serially-disobeys-court-orders.html. Accessed 23 November, 2023.

commence.[235] Hence, in the context of rules-based political systems "rules for thee but not for me" creates political, executive, judicial, and legislative classes that live above the law. The cronyism and rent-seeking that often accompany such a political system inevitably create a trickle-down effect of living above and beyond the law until the rules-based system is undermined and injustice and inequity lead to destabilization. A much more straight-forward outcome of "rules for thee but not for me" is "impunity," and in the sections that follow, this study will seek to define impunity and its contribution to political instability in Africa; engage the concept of impunity through an analysis of Qoheleth 8:11-12; and suggest solutions for this problem in Africa's political space.

Conceptual Clarifications

In the preceding section, "impunity" had already been alluded to as living above the law. Arguably, this definition is inadequate in describing the breadth and nature of the concept. In a December 2012 article, Sang-Hyun Song defined impunity based on the updated set of Principles for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights (8 February 2005, E/CN.4/2005/102/Add.1, pg. 6) as:

> the impossibility, de jure or de facto, of bringing the perpetrators of violations to account – whether in criminal, civil, administrative, or disciplinary proceedings – since they are not subject to any injury that might lead to their being accused, arrested, tried and, if found guilty, sentenced to appropriate penalties, and to make reparations to their victims.[236]

This definition provided a foundation for understanding impunity and building an international framework for tackling it. The Rome Statute was created in 1998 to combat impunity with a preamble that expressed a determination "to put an end to impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the International Community as a whole and thus contribute to the prevention of such crimes."[237] The Rome Statute created both the International Criminal Court (ICC) and a new international legal system incorporating the ICC and the national jurisdictions of each state that signed up to it. As of July 2012, one hundred and twenty-one (121) states had signed up to the Rome Statute with a further 32 signing up but yet to ratify the Statute.[238] As of October 2022, only 33 African countries had signed up to the Rome Statute. Nigeria signed up on June 1, 2000, but officially ratified the Statute on September 27, 2001.[239]

It can be argued that the refusal by a number of African countries to sign up to the Rome Statute may depict an unwillingness to acknowledge and deal with impunity. However, even in the context of African states that have both signed up and ratified the Statute, questions may be raised as to the level of compliance. For instance, in a report entitled *Time to End Impunity* Amnesty International documented "at least 82 cases of torture, ill-treatment and extra-judicial execution" by Nigeria's notorious but now defunct Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) between

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[235] Qosim Suleiman and Mary Izuaka, "NCL, TUC, ASUU, Others Defy Court Order as they Begin Strike," *Premium Times* (November 14, 2023), https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/643123-nlc-tuc-asuu-others-defy-court-order-as-they-begin-strike.html?tztc=1. Accessed 23 November, 2023.

[236] Sang-Hyun Song, "The Role of the International Criminal Court in Ending Impunity and Establishing the Rule of Law" *UN Chronicle*, No. 4, Vol. 49, Delivering Justice, (December 2012), https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/role-international-criminal-court-ending-impunity-and-establishing-rule-law. Accessed 22 November 2023.

[237] Song, "Role of the International Criminal Court."

[238] Song, "Role of the International Criminal Court."

[239] "Nigeria," *International Criminal Court –Assembly of State Parties to the Rome Statutes*, https://asp.icc-cpi.int/states-parties/african-states/nigeria. Accessed 22nd November, 2023.

January 2017 and May 2020.[240] Further research by Amnesty International indicated that no SARS official was brought to book for these far-reaching human rights violations. Ojigho asserts that impunity "sends the message to torturers that they will get away with it. Impunity denies victims… the right to have the truth established, the right to see justice served and the right to reparations."[241]

The lack of enforcement of the Rome Statute signed by Nigeria in 2000 is further highlighted by Komolafe when he insisted that the systemic root of impunity in the Nigerian state can be found in the political system of the country. Komolafe argued that the political system is "designed to make a class of people escape questioning, much less punishment for crimes against the people."[242] Komolafe asserted that in addition to the violation of the political rights of the citizenry by state actors, impunity in the Nigerian context also incorporated a daily unleashing of socio-economic violence on the people through "policies that breed poverty and underdevelopment."[243] The encouragement of poverty and underdevelopment, according to Komolafe, undermined the development of "public reason" manifested through citizens' rational actions such as protests and civil disobedience.

Furthermore, in the weeks leading up to Nigeria's general elections of 2023, calls were made for the Nigerian government to address accountability for past elections-related abuses and widespread insecurity across the nation.[244] The rationale for this call was the link between impunity and failed elections as evident in the history of Nigerian democracy. Hence, impunity has been identified as a clear and present danger to one of the most fundamental tenets of democracy and the rule of law. Human Rights Watch noted that Nigerian elections had on several occasions suffered from violence and other abuses. The perpetrators of these abuses had never been identified nor had they been held accountable for their actions.

In a publication entitled *Addressing Impunity: Role of Justice in Governance Non-Paper* the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) noted that there was a "widescale prevalence of impunity which is in many respects, the highest form of injustice"[245] in the Sahel, a region including countries in Central, North, and West Africa. All well-meaning efforts to curb impunity in the Sahel, including the establishment of the Network of West African Central Authorities and Prosecutors against Organized Crime (WACAP) among others, have proven insignificant in the face of the sheer scale of impunity within this region. The UNDP insisted that the hindrances to addressing impunity within the Sahel include theoretical dilemmas such as the seeming dichotomy between peace and justice, and the dichotomy arising from preferences for retributive and restorative justice. Other hindrances include normative and legal frameworks that raise questions on the tension between amnesty and justice; immunities for the ruling class embedded in the constitutions of countries; the irrelevance of the separation of powers principle in light of overwhelmingly powerful executive branches of government; and colonial holdovers in

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[240] Osai Ojigho, "Nigeria: Horrific Reign of Impunity by SARS Makes Mockery of Anti-Torture Law" *Amnesty International* (June 26, 2020), https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/06/nigeria-horrific-reign-of-impunity-by-sars-makes-mockery-of-anti-torture-law/. Accessed 23 November, 2023.

[241] Osai Ojigho, "Nigeria: Horrific Reign of Impunity by SARS Makes Mockery of Anti-Torture Law."

[242] Kayode Komolafe, "Against the Reign of Impunity" *ThisDayLive* (August 4, 2021), https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2021/08/04/against-the-reign-of-impunity. Accessed 23 November, 2023.

[243] Komolafe, "Against the Reign of Impunity."

[244] "Nigeria: Impunity, Insecurity Threaten Elections," *Human Rights Watch* (February 6, 2023), https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/02/06/nigeria-impunity-insecurity-threaten-elections. Accessed 21 November, 2023.

[245] "Addressing Impunity: Role of Justice in Governance Non-Paper," *UNDP*, 2022, https://www.undp.org/africa/publications/non-paper-addressing-impunity-role-justice-governance. Accessed 21 November, 2023.

constitutions and criminal laws.[246] Other hindrances to fighting impunity in the Sahel region include overreach by executive branches of government; inability of ordinary citizens to access justice; entrenched judicial corruption; complicity by state actors in organized crime; and ongoing conflicts and political instability.[247]

Cornwell and Krantz appeared to support the assertion that the political systems of most African countries seem to favour self-interest that apparently drives impunity when they argued that "public policy has long been based on the assumption that people generally make decisions based on self-interest."[248]

The preceding argument creates a tension between understanding impunity as rooted in the individual or the community. Ekeh argued, however, that in African society, every individual appeared to be at the ethical confluence of a private and public realm. However, unlike the Western perception of the two realms participating in a commitment to a monolithic morality, Africans experienced the two realms as differentially associated in terms of their commitments to morality. Ekeh further insisted that the public realm can be divided into two realms in the African experience. He recognized the first realm as the *primordial* public realm while he accorded the appellation *civic* public realm to the other realm. The civic public realm was that which historically had been associated with indigenous interactions with both the colonial authorities and the politics of the post-colonial era. Hence, its morality was committed to the civil structures of the institutions that made up the African state. This implied that the civic public realm was essentially amoral and "lacks the generalized moral imperatives operative in the private realm and in the primordial public" realm.[249] Ekeh further insisted that there existed no linkages between the morality of the civic public realm and that of the private realm. The primordial public realm, however, was characterized by a moral bias and operated according to the same moral imperatives associated with the private realm. Ekeh argued that one outstanding feature of contemporary African life is the simultaneous operation of these two realms within the actions of a given individual.

For most contemporary Africans, therefore, society is comprised of two publics. The primordial public from which the individual gained little but expended much, and the civic public to which the individual gives very little, and usually grudgingly, but strived to gain as much as possible. The dialectical tension generated by these two competing publics in an individual's life is heightened by the fact that their relationship with the primordial public is moral. In contrast, the relationship with the civic public realm is amoral. In other words, a "*good* citizen of the primordial public gives out and asks for nothing in return." In contrast, a "*lucky* citizen of the civic public gains from the civic public but enjoys escaping giving anything in return whenever [they] can." It would appear then that the unwritten code of conduct of the dialectics of the contemporary African is that it is "legitimate to rob the civic public in order to strengthen the primordial public."[250] Ekeh's arguments can be viewed as a framework for understanding the African exercise of individual moral agency but may not exhaustively explain the tendency to impunity evident in

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[246] UNDP 2022 "Addressing Impunity: Role of Justice in Governance Non-Paper."

[247] UNDP 2022 "Addressing Impunity: Role of Justice in Governance Non-Paper."

[248] James F. M. Cornwell and David H. Krantz, "Public Policy for Thee, but not for me: Varying the Grammatical Person of Public Policy Justifications Influences their Support," *Judgment and Decision Making*, 9, (5) (September 2014), 433.

[249] Peter P. Ekeh, "Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement," in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 17, (1), (Jan., 1975), 92, http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0010-4175%28197501%2917%3A1%3C91%3ACATTPI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-%23. Accessed 23 November, 2023.

[250] Peter P. Ekeh, "Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement," 92.

African countries. Impunity appears to be dependent on both internal and external forces to the individual.

In concluding this section of the study it would be important to highlight the fact that vulnerability and impunity tend to be mutually compatible while impunity and sustainable peace are irreconcilable.[251]

Analysis of Qoheleth 8:11-12

In a world filled with injustice, there is a tendency to believe that wicked people seem to get away with doing evil deeds. Qoheleth seems to have experienced this sense of certain people living above the law during his time. His keen observation of the situation is recorded in Ecclesiastes 8:11-12:

> "*When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, people's hearts are filled with schemes to do wrong. Although a wicked person who commits a hundred crimes may live a long time, I know that it will go better with those who fear God, who are reverent before him.*" Ecclesiastes 8:11-12, NIV

The analysis of Ecclesiastes 8:11-12, will include a brief background to the book of Ecclesiastes, a consideration of the contexts of Ecclesiastes 8:11-12, and a rhetorical analysis of the focal text.

Method for the Analysis

In a general sense, the term 'rhetoric' refers to the art of speaking and writing effectively. When used as a method for analysis, rhetorical analysis seeks to critically examine text as it relates to a context or situation. It seeks to analyse what appeals the author of the text might have employed to not just communicate but achieve communication that influences the audience. Typically, the rhetorical appeals that the author uses to validate what they are communicating can be located in their use of *logos, ethos and pathos* and other rhetorical strategies such as highlighting the speaker, audience, and purpose of the text.[252]

Background to Qoheleth

Qoheleth was one of the five books known as the *Megilloth* (The Scrolls), a part of the *Kethuviím* (Writings) division of the Hebrew Bible. Others in this section include Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, and Esther. Jewish tradition suggested that these five books were read throughout the year at particular Jewish Festivals. Qoheleth was read each year at the Feast of the Booths (Tabernacles), or *Sukkoth* (a period when the Jews would assemble in Jerusalem and build temporary shelters where they would stay for that week's celebration in remembrance of the Israelite's journey from Egypt to the Promised Land).[253] Qoheleth was read to remind them that life was temporary and that only things done for Yahweh would make a long-lasting difference. The book's English title, Ecclesiastes, is derived from the Greek translation of the Hebrew title *Qôheleṯ*. The book is placed by some Hebrew traditions among the five scrolls (*Megilloth),* while

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[251] "Impunity and Sustainable Peace are Irreconcilable," *TRIAL International*, (January 6, 2017), https://trialinternational.org/latest-post/impunity-and-sustainable-peace-are-irreconcilable/. Accessed 20 November, 2023.

[252] "How to Write a Rhetorical Analysis," P*urdue University Fort Wayne*, https://www.pfw.edu/offices/learning-support/documents/WriteARhetoricalAnalysis/pdf.

[253] Steven L. Mckenzie and John Kaltner, *The Old Testament: Its Background, Growth and Content* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 320.

others link it closely to the book of Proverbs and the Songs of Songs (just like several contemporary English versions). This link to Solomon comes largely from Qoheleth's implied reference to Solomon in Eccl. 1:1, 12, 16, and also due to the obvious connections of the three books as examples of wisdom literature attached to Solomon's name. Hence, in such traditions, Qoheleth was placed after Psalms because it was thought that the writings of Solomon should follow those credited to his father, David.[254]

Garrett affirms that based on internal evidence (Eccl 1:1), Christians and Jews traditionally believe that the book's author is Solomon. However, with the rise of historical criticism, the notion of Solomon's authorship was widely challenged.[255] Lasor argued that it is much easier to say that King Solomon did not write the book than to answer the question of who did. He affirms that the author was indeed a wise man eager to challenge the opinions and values of other wise men. However, who he was or where he lived is best stated as unknown.[256]

Qoheleth reveals the frustration that ultimately results from pursuing happiness untethered to eternal values, giving Christians the opportunity to see the world through the eyes of a person who, though very wise, is trying to find meaning in temporary, human things, one who had explored all forms of worldly pleasure and none gives him a sense of meaning outside God. In the end, Qoheleth comes to accept that faith in God is the only way to find personal meaning. He decides to accept the fact that life is brief and ultimately worthless without God. Qoheleth advises the reader to focus on eternity instead of temporary pleasure. Kidner asserts that the book reveals God as the Creator who sets the scenes of life, as Sovereign, one who orders the events, and as Unsearchable Wisdom, who reduces the most brilliant thoughts to little more than guesses.[257] McCain citing O'Brien states that one of the purposes of the book is to provide an inspired view into the heart and mind of a person who has left God out of his life.[258]

Context of Ecclesiastes 8:11-12
Qoheleth expresses indignation over an unjust world and how that injustice in the world encourages people to choose evil over good. Dealing with the apparent distortion of values in the world under three key themes: the prosperity of the wicked (vs. 9-11), God's justice (vs. 12-13), and God's seeming participation in injustice in that wickedness often goes unpunished (vs. 14).[259] The passage describes how the wicked are being honoured at the very scene of their misdeeds

Analysis of Ecclesiastes 8:11-12
In the context of the world that Qoheleth has just described, his central claim in Qoheleth 8: 11-12 is that where wrongdoing or crime goes unpunished, certain people become laws unto themselves, and begin to live above the law. In other words, in the context of impunity, law and order break down and society is undermined. This claim feeds into the general pathos of his proclamation –

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[254] William Sanford Lasor, David Allan Hubbard and Frederic William Bush, *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 498.

[255] Duane A. Garrett, *The New American Commentary Volume 14: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes & Song of Solomon* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1993), 254.

[256] Lasor, Hubbard and Bush, *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament,* 500.

[257] Derek Kidner, *The Message of Ecclesiastes: A Time to Mourn, and a Time to Dance* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1976) 12-13.

[258] Danny McCain, *Notes on Old Testament Introduction* (Bukuru: Africa Christian Textbooks (ACTS), 1996), 377.

[259] Duane A. Garrett, *The New American Commentary Volume 14: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes & Song of Solomon* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1993), 254.

that frustration is the ultimate reward for all who live "under the sun" with no recourse to things of eternal value.

The plausibility of Qoheleth's claim is supported by the powerful connection that he has established with his audience from the beginning of the book. He has implied that he is someone of noble if not royal birth, someone of intelligence and vast experience bolstered by the wisdom that such exposure brings. Qoheleth's ethos is greatly enhanced by the claims he makes of accomplishing within his life time goals that many others only dream about. The fact that he is able to objectively read himself and his circumstances and declare that all is "meaningless" under the sun lends credibility to his take on life.

While he is not unduly pessimistic, nor naively optimistic, Qoheleth comes across as a realist and offers clear-eyed recommendations to his audience as regards the apparent injustice that he sees around him. While his central claim is that impunity undermines the very fabric of society, his supporting claim is that a rules-based system is possible if people focus on eternal values as the basis for a just society. In addition to this, Qoheleth implies that Yahweh is still the final Judge who will not tolerate impunity but would reward all people in accordance with their thoughts, attitudes, and actions.

Recommendations

A number of recommendations can be drawn from Qoheleth 8:11-12. First, the Church as a community in Africa must provide the leadership in speaking out against impunity. The Church must realize the insidious and destructive nature of impunity and set up mechanisms to combat it in various contexts and rules-based systems. It is only in the context of law and order can the church and the society as a whole thrive.

Second, the Church should highlight and emphasize the fact that for any rules-based system to thrive, citizens must look to values beyond the letter of law to commit to. In walking with the Spirit of God and living forth the fruit of the Spirit of Yahweh, all laws are invariably followed (Galatians 5:23).

Finally, the Church must commit herself to identifying and exposing impunity, cronyism, and rent-seeking in all its forms even in the African Church. Qoheleth's example of teaching and preaching must be combined with a commitment to living a life centred on eternal values rather than the things "under the sun."

Conclusion

In order to curb impunity and stop its destruction of African communities and states, advocacy from the African Church and other organizations must target the attainment of comprehensive transformative justice processes that uphold the rule of law and guarantee justice and equity for African society. This must ultimately serve as the goal of all political movements in Africa. The Church in Africa cannot afford to sit on the fence in regard to this matter. Ginetta Sagan asserts that "silence in the face of injustice is complicity with the oppressor.[260]" In this case, the 'oppressor' may refer to an attitude that animates a form of governance that validates greed and impunity to the detriment of the society. The Church in Africa must be in this system but not of this system. She must provide a voice and a platform for speaking truth to power while exposing the cancer that is rapidly impoverishing the values, cultures, and economies of Africa. The Church in Africa must be part of that movement that brings peace, harmony, and justice to the continent.

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[260] Lawrence Joffe, "Obituary: Ginetta Sagan," *The Guardian* (September, 2000), https://www.theguardian.com/news/2000/sep/14/guardianobituaries. Accessed 23 November, 2023.

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Politics and Leadership in the New Testament: An Analysis of Matthew 20:25-28

James Edo Ikwulono (PhD)

School of Biblical Studies Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria.
Email: jikwulono@yahoo.com

Abstract
The New Testament not only serves as a source of spiritual guidance but also offers profound insights into the realms of politics and leadership. The New Testament addresses the political context of its time, predominantly the Roman Empire. It emphasizes the idea of rendering unto Caesar what is Caesar's, highlighting the importance of respecting secular authority while maintaining one's spiritual commitment. The New Testament provides a foundation for understanding politics and leadership from a Christian perspective. The purpose of this study was to encourage the leadership structure that is accepted by the New Testament teaching. The methodology for this study was qualitative. The study revealed that leadership in the New Testament is characterized by servant leadership. It was also found out that biblical leadership is exemplified by Jesus Himself. It was recommended that for the success of any leadership, it must be structured after the New Testament pattern. Another recommendation was that for any leadership to succeed, it must demonstrate humility and selflessness as core leadership qualities.

Keywords: Politics, Leadership, Servanthood, New Testament.

Introduction
The New Testament not only serves as a source of spiritual guidance but also offers profound insights into the realms of politics and leadership. The New Testament addresses the political context of its time, predominantly the Roman Empire. It emphasizes the importance of respecting secular authority while maintaining one's spiritual commitment. The New Testament provides a foundation for understanding politics and leadership from a Christian perspective. Albert A. Bell writes that "The New Testament is anchored firmly in the political processes of the first century A. D."[261]

Definition of Terms
Politics: Politics is defined as "activities that relate to influencing the actions and policies of a government or getting and keeping power in a government." [262] According to Bueno, politics is "the ability to persuade and influence in the sovereign electorate to provide political power and authority in the governmental affairs of the state." [263]

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[261] Albert A. Bell , Exploring the New Testament World. Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1998: p. 57.

[262] Britanica.com (https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/politics)

[263] Christopher Fuster Bueno, The Fundamental Principles and Concepts of Politics**.** The Modern View of Government, State and Politics (August 2012): 44. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260201124 accessed 5th Dec. 2023.

Leadership: Leadership is the "art and practice of exerting an influence on the behavior and beliefs of others." [264]

Literature Review

The question of leadership is the most debated topic in this modern world. People are looking for a leadership model to follow in their lives. Katola and Nyabwar observe that the world today needs leaders who meet the physical, spiritual, economic and political needs of the people. This kind of leadership was practiced by Jesus Christ. The New Testament records the life, teachings and service of Jesus Christ the founder of Christianity. His teachings on leadership served as guiding principles to His disciples and even the present-day leaders in the church. [265]

Ian Parkinson observes that scholars learn a huge amount about how leadership is understood by the New Testament writers from the words they used to describe those exercising leadership.[266] The behaviour pattern exposed by a leader during his responsibilities and mission is known as a leadership style. This paper shall consider the two types of leadership styles that are identified in the New Testament.

Political Rulership

The established political rulership in the New Testament was the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire by the New Testament period established a two-tiered system of government over the Jews. This consisted of a Roman procurator and a Jewish leader who exercised control in the name of Rome. While Pontius Pilate was a Roman procurator, the family of Herod the Great represents the Jewish leader over the Jews in the name of Rome. The Herodian family was known for its tyrannical rule and also for selling out the Jewish heritage to a foreign power. Herod Antipas was responsible for the beheading of John the Baptizer and he also mocked Jesus at his pre-crucifixion trial. Political rulership has its own characteristics.

Jesus recounts the nature of political rulership. When His disciples were disputing among themselves as to which of them should be considered the greatest, Jesus said to them, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you, but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servants" (Matt. 20.25-26). From these statements of Jesus, it is understood that political rulership is characterized by the following:

A Political Power Play

Collins Dictionary defines power play as an attempt to gain an advantage by showing that one person is more powerful than another person or organization.[267] Wantaate holds that "Because power is a finite resource, individuals compete for power in an economy of scarcity resulting in a power play within groups and organizations." [268] This means since the individuals cannot get all the power they want to advance their goals just by asking; they get it at someone else's expense.

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[264] Robert B. Sloan. A Biblical Model of Leadership. Journal of Biblical Perspective in Leadership. Vol 8. No 1, (Fall 2018): 8

[265] Micheal T. Katola and Bernard Gechiko Nyabwar, *The Leadership Style of Jesus Christ In The New Testament And Its Relevance For Africa*. (2013): 2

[266] Ian Parkinson, How Does the New Testament Understand Leadership*? Lead On* 2019.

[267] Collins Dictionary, https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/power-play

[268] Fred Wantaate, "Attitudes And Behavior That Characterize A Power Play In A Small Group," *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict*. Volume 21, Issue 2 (2017): 6.

Pfeffer believes that power play is "fundamentally the ability to have things your way when other's best efforts are required and when others have personal interests and ideas." [269] In political power play, there is a campaign for office. To do this the aspirants have to do some good to the people so as to be given the office. This type of political power play was common among the Gentiles. That was why their rulers were called benefactors (Lk 22.25). A benefactor is a person who helps people or institutions with financial help. Pfeffer lists several things that political rulers do to advance their agendas during a power play: (i) They will mete out resources to garner support and allegiance; (ii) they will shape behavior through rewards and punishments; (iii) Advancing on multiple fronts; (iv) making the first move when a power struggle is looming; (v) co-opting antagonists; (vi) removing rivals-nicely, if possible; (vii) persisting; (viii) making important relationships work-no matter what and (ix) making the vision compelling.[270] Wantaate tells of the different types of power. Legitimate Power is "the ability to influence others' behavior because of one's position within an organization." This type of power is enhanced through policies, procedures, and rules. Reward Power is "the capacity to direct others' behavior by providing them with desirable rewards." Coercive Power is a person's ability to affect others' behavior by punishing them or by presenting a threat to do so. Expert Power is the ability to shape others' behavior because of recognized knowledge, skills, or abilities. Referent Power is a person's capacity to affect others' behavior because they like, admire, and respect the individual." Referent power grows out of admiration for another and a desire to be like that person.[271] Lees believes that the use of power by an individual undermines the claim that they are leading; they are, in actuality, managing (not leading) a group. Therefore, according to him, "power and leading are incompatible concepts."[272] Lopez suggests that instead of centralizing power in himself, an authentic leader will intentionally empower others to lead [273]

Authoritarian Attitude

The second characteristic of political rulership is the attitude of exercising dominion over the subordinates. Jesus says, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them" (Matt. 20.25).[274] That the rulers lord it over the people means that they have an authoritarian attitude. An authoritarian attitude is a leadership style that uses authority to control subordinates and demands unquestioning compliance or absolute obedience from subordinates.[275] Authoritarian leaders emphasize authority to gain control over subordinates.[276] They often dictate decisions and demand absolute obedience. Recent research postulates that there are differences between authoritarian leadership and autocratic leadership. According to Jack Chiang, Xiao-ping Chen and Zheng Wang "Unlike authoritarian leadership,

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[269] J. Pfeffer, "Power Play." *Harvard Business Review*, *88* (7-8), 2010: 84.

[270] Pfeffer, "Power Play," 90-92.

[271] Fred Wantaate, "Attitudes And Behavior That Characterize A Power Play In A Small Group." *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict.* 21 (2), (2017): 5.

[272] D. Lees, "Leadership and Power, an Incompatible Mix. In human capital without borders: Knowledge and learning for quality of life." *The proceeding of the Management Knowledge and Learning International Conference*, 2014. 26.

[273] R. Lopez, "The relationship between leadership and management: Instructional approaches and its connections to organizational growth," *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly*, 6 (1), 2014: 98.

[274] All Scriptural references are from New King James Version.

[275] X. P. Chen, et al, "Affective Trust in Chinese Leaders: Linking paternalistic leadership to employee performance," *Journal of Management* 40 (3): 2014: 796–819.

[276] J. M. Schaubroeck, Shen Y and Chong S. "A Dual–Stage Moderated Mediation Model Linking Authoritarian Leadership To Follower Outcomes," 2017, 203.

autocratic leadership is often not considered destructive."[277] DeRue et. al, also add that the two types of leaders differ in how they interact with their team members. Autocratic leaders tend to be task-oriented and initiate structured behaviors, which can be perceived as effective and accepted by subordinates who seek strong leaders.[278] Authoritarian leaders demand absolute obedience and this domineering style generally elicits negative responses such as fear or distrust.

A Position of High Table

The third characteristic of political rulership is that it is a position of high table. In Luke 22.27 Jesus asked, "For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table?" The aim of being on the high table is to be served. Political rulership is aimed at being served and not to serve. But this is not biblical leadership.

Christians' Response To Political Rulership

Jesus taught that His disciples be obedient to the Government that be. When the Pharisees asked whether it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not, Jesus replied: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" (Mark 12.17). The Pharisees marveled at the answer of Jesus because they thought He would rebel against the Roman Government. But Jesus was not an insurrectionist. The answer of Jesus shows that the Christian faith is not a threat to the established Government order. Apostle Paul argued that the Roman Government existed with the approval of God (Rom. 13.1-4) and that Christians should be submissive to it (Titus 3.1). The apostle Peter also wrote about the need to be submissive to the governing authority. In First Peter 2.13-17 Peter says: "Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men . . . . Honour all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."

While Christians are enjoined to submit to political rulership, there are however some situations where civil disobedience is accepted by God. In Acts 5.28 the apostles of Jesus were charged not to teach in the name of Jesus. Instead of submitting to this immoral law, Peter and the other apostles responded by declaring "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Since Christians are to submit themselves to the governing authority, it means that Christians can also get involved in the political affairs of their nation. Edmund Burke once says, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."[279] In the same way, Dietrich Bonhoeffer says, "Silence in the face of evil is itself evil: God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act."[280] This means that Christians have the responsibility to influence the government of their nation in order to avert atrocities that are perpetrated by bad people. Johnson believes that"Courageous Christian men and women who defend the defenseless and advocate for the oppressed fundamentally advance the gospel of Jesus Christ and provide for those who need His love."[281]

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[277] Jack Chiang, Xiao-ping and Hen Wang. "We Have Emotions but Can't Show Them! Authoritarian Leadership, Emotion Suppression Climate, and Team Performance,"2021: 6. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/1339041676

[278] D. S. DeRue, Nahrgang J, Wellman N and Humphrey S , "Trait And Behavioral Theories Of Leadership: An Integration And Meta-Analytic Test Of Their Relative Validity," *Personnel Psychology* 64 (1): (2011) 7–52.

[279] Quote by Edmund Burke. www.goodreads.com

[280] Quote by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. www.goodreads.com

[281] Jake Johnson, "A Biblical Response to Oppressive Government," *The Idea of An Essay*, 6, (21) (2019):4.

New Testament Leadership

The New Testament leadership is in another way called the Jesus' Model of Leadership. Reading through the Gospels account, one is impressed by the leadership of Jesus Christ. The exceptional leadership of Jesus is not only relevant to spiritual leaders but also to national leaders who may wish to use their authority for the enrichment and liberation of men. It is also relevant in all other spheres of life. McAlpine writes that Jesus Christ was the greatest leader who ever walked on the earth.[282] But then Jesus taught that the greatest is to be a servant. In Matthew 20.26 Jesus says, "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant." Here Jesus teaches that spiritual leaders are to be servants among other servants. There was a reason why Jesus brought up this teaching. The mother of James and John came to Jesus and asked that He grant one of her sons to be seated on His right hand while the other on His left in Jesus' kingdom. Since Jesus was the head, she wanted her two sons to be next in rank. On hearing this the other disciples were not pleased. In Luke, it is read that there was a dispute among the disciples as to which of them should be considered the greatest (Luke 22.24). This means the idea of who will be the greatest has been lingering in the minds of the disciples. Jesus therefore called his disciples and taught them the lesson of greatness. His teaching was to disabuse their minds. The rulership style of the world is not to be transferred to the church. The leaders of the world are those who exercise authority but the leaders in the church are servants.

The qualities of a servant include the following: (i). A servant recognizes that he is serving a master. The master of the Christians is Jesus. Apostle Paul said of Jesus, "He who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6.15). (ii). A servant knows that he must be in subjection. (iii). A servant must not think of himself too highly. In Romans 12.3 the apostle Paul writes, "For I say through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith." Jesus taught that when the servants have done all they are supposed to do, they should say, "We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do" (Luke 17.10). This means it does not matter how much the servant has done, he is not the master. Therefore, he should not think so highly of himself. Jesus shows three important aspects of leadership. These are: leadership is servant-hood, loving and practical.

Leadership Is Servant-Hood

The New Testament is very clear that leadership is servant-hood. Jesus emphatically declared that He came to serve. The New Testament pattern of leadership must begin with the behavioral pattern of Jesus Christ. According to Katola and Nyabwar "Jesus was not only a servant-leader but also a good shepherd who was ready to die for his people."[283] Sloan believes that Jesus is the distinctive, supreme presence and revelation of God in human history and that the God who reveals Himself in Scripture and in history has definitively spoken and revealed Himself through Jesus, who, as the image of God and the superintending Lord of the universe, is the clearest model and declaration for how God acts and how He uses His power."[284] It was only by being a servant leader that Jesus was able to accomplish the mission for which He came to the world. This is the reason why in Christianity, service is considered the hallmark of true leadership.

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[282] C. McAlpine , *The Leadership of Jesus*, (Tonbridge: Sovereign World Ltd, 1982), 6.

[283] Micheal T. Katola & Bernard Gechiko Nyabwar, *The Leadership Style of Jesus Christ In The New Testament And Its Relevance For Africa,* (2013):3.

[284] Robert B. Sloan, "A Biblical Model of Leadership," *Journal of Biblical Perspective in Leadership*. 8 (1), (Fall 2018): 10.

According to Pascoe, servant leadership means that the leaders serve those they lead in order to make their followers happier in their work environment, more appreciated, more productive, in their work, more rewarding, more fruitful, and more challenging.[285] That leadership is servanthood means that leadership is service. Jesus taught in Matthew 20.27 saying, "And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave." He then gave an example of Himself, "Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20.28). In John 13.3-5, we see Jesus demonstrating exactly what He has said. The Apostle John writes, "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded." This kind of act can only be done by a true leader. Biblical leadership is not about oneself but about others. After Jesus was done washing the disciples' feet, He said to them, ". . . Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord and you say well. For so I am. If I then your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you" (John 13.12-15). Jesus, the Master Teacher has given the leaders in His church an example to follow. In John 13. 17, Jesus said, "If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them." This is the expectation for spiritual leaders.

Leadership Is Loving

The second characteristic of New Testament leadership is love. Ferris defines love as "a feeling of caring or deep respect for yourself and others, of valuing and believing in yourself and others, and of helping to achieve the best of which everyone is capable."[286] Jesus demonstrated a loving attitude as a leader. In John 13.1, "When Jesus knew that His hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end." In John 10.10 He says, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy, I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." Gunderson articulates Jesus' love in a very convincing language:

> Jesus deplored categorizing people according to worldly importance and refused to have anything to do with such a charade. His responses to the Samaritan woman at the well were as sincere and caring as His responses to the wealthy and powerful men with whom He came in contact. Status, whether His own or that of others meant nothing to Jesus. For Him, agape love was something to bestow freely upon all men, not just upon those holding places of prominence. [287]

Nishant Khandelwal and Anil Mehta hold that "the importance of love for a true leader is no secret" and that "love is widely acknowledged as having an important role in leadership." [288] Further, they write that "Humans want to love. They want to be loved. Love is always contemporary, meaningful and impactful. It does not depend on times, situations, or context. So, love becomes an obvious act of choice for a leader" [289] "When we love we cease to be a threat to people. When we love it helps the person loved to feel comfortable with us. Hay believes that love

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[285] Roger Pascoe. *Biblical Model of Christian Leadership. Part 2. The Servant Model.*
https://bible.org/seriespage/biblical-models-christian-leadership-part-2-servant-model-1: par. 2.

[286] R. Ferris, "How Organizational Love Can Improve Leadership." *Organizational Dynamics*, 16(4), (1988): 41.

[287] D. Gunderson, *Through the Dust* (Seattle: YWAM Publishing Ltd 1992), 63.

[288] Nishant Khandelwal and Anil Mehta, *Leadership by 'Love': A divine Paradigm.* (March (2018): 41.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323934200_Leadership_by_'Love'_A_Divine_Paradigm.

[289] Khandelwal and Mehta, "*Leadership by 'Love': A divine Paradigm,"* 41.

is always the answer to healing of any sort." [290] In a study, Dierendonck and Patterson argued that "a leader's compassionate love is related to a stronger virtuous attitude in terms of humility, gratitude, forgiveness and altruism."[291] Kouzes and Posner believe that besides the head, leadership is also basically an affair of the heart. They stated that "Leaders are in love." [292] According to Carter, "Leading with love is the key to success. Understanding and caring about what motivates and empowers others is essential to leading with love. Love is about respecting individuals' differences and their processes for growth. It is about caring enough to understand what is significant to them and supporting them in achieving their goals.[293] He further writes, "The secret to leadership effectiveness is to lead with love."[294] Khandelwal and Mehta strongly believe that "The greatness of a leader perhaps may be weighed by his or her ability to be that human. Humans approach life with love. In fact, they cannot, not love. To lead is to leave thyself for others." [295] They further write that "In fact, the question of leading only arises when we cease to be humans or we fall short of love."[296] Natasha suggests that "The key to leading with love is to nurture a culture where people feel safe enough to be vulnerable" [297] The love of a leader has to be witnessed by others. Jesus' love was witnessed by the disciples and all of the people He came in contact with. Jesus showed love to different categories of people such as the poor and the oppressed, the lonely and misunderstood, the sick, the sorrowing and the outcasts of society. Jesus' love for other members of society reveals that leadership without love does not profit.

Leadership is Practical
The third aspect of the New Testament leadership is that it is practical. The practicality of leadership means that leaders are to be what they say. Jesus knew that people learn by examples more than words. It is for this reason that He demonstrated that leadership is practical by living what he taught. Jesus was a humble and loving leader. He therefore taught His disciples to emulate these qualities. Katola and Nyabwar write that because Jesus lived what he taught He was able to challenge his accusers to point out any sins he had committed.[298] In view of this, true leaders should be what they teach. They must match words with deeds.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations
This research found out that the New Testament talks of two types of leadership styles. The political rulership style is characterized by political power play, authoritarian attitude and position of the high table. The New Testament leadership modelled after Christ is servant leadership, loving

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[290] L. L. Hay, You Can Heal Your Life. Santa Monica, CA: Hay House. (1987): 8. Accessed on 26th November, 2023: https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/874208-you-can-heal-your-life

[291] D. Dierendonck, & Patterson, K. Compassionate Love as a Cornerstone of Servant Leadership: An Integration of Previous Theorizing and Research. Journal of Business Ethics, 128(1), (2015) 119-131.

[292] J. Kouzes, & Posner, B. Ethical Leaders: An Essay about Being in Love. Journal of Business Ethics, 11(5/6), ((1992): 479-484. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25072296

[293] Louis Carter. What is the Psychology of Love in Leadership? https://mostlovedworkplace.com/what-is-the-psychology-of-love-in-leadership/ par. 1.

[294] Carter, "What is the Psychology of Love in Leadership?" 2.

[295] Khandelwal and Mehta. *Leadership by 'Love': A divine Paradigm,* 42.

[296] Khandelwal and Mehta. *Leadership by 'Love': A divine Paradigm,* 47.

[297] Bonnevale, Natasha. "Leading with Love: Three Ways Leadership can show love in the workplace," 5. https://www.thnk.org/blog/leading-with-love

[298] Micheal T. Katola & Bernard Gechiko Nyabwar, *The Leadership Style of Jesus Christ In The New Testament And Its Relevance For Africa.* (2013): 4

and practical. It is therefore recommended that for any organization or society to succeed, it must imbibe the New Testament leadership style.

Conclusion

This paper has addressed the issue of political rulership and New Testament leadership. Political rulership is characterized by political power play, an authoritarian attitude and a position at the high table. While Christians are not to practice political rulership, they are however enjoined to be submissive to the power that be. This paper also calls on Christian leaders to embrace the New Testament or Jesus' model of leadership. The New Testament leadership is modelled by the life and example of Jesus Christ. It is servant-hood leadership, loving and practical.

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Pharisaical Righteousness in Matthew 6.1-8: A Prototype for Christian Worship in Africa

Abel Aor Inyaregh(PhD)

National Open University of Nigeria,
Plot 91, Cadastral Zone,Nnamdi Azikiwe Express Way,
Airport Road, Jabi, FCT, Abuja.
+2348032589953, ainyaregh@noun.edu.ng
https://orcid.org/**0000-0002-0666-8592**

Abstract
The point of departure for this study addressed the outward exhibition of piety, the current trend in Pharisaic hypocrisy that infiltrated the practice of Christianity in Africa. Discourse on ostentation deals with the outward and inward expressions of Jewish piety almsgiving, prayer and fasting. Jesus sanctions standard obligations on worship and piety devoid of ostentations and ideally to be performed in secret to attract heavenly reward. The dilemma in contemporary Christianity practised in Africa is practically a resurgence of pharisaical righteousness where the act of piety is trumpeted loudly to demonstrate self-worth to gain admiration before men, especially on the aspect of prayer and almsgiving. The study adopted a historical-critical method to re-examine the Matthean pericope in the light of redress to reposition the practice of Christianity in Africa. Against this backdrop, the study strongly proscribes a theatrical parade of piety that impresses people rather than glorifies God.

Keywords: African-Christianity, Almsgiving, Pharisaical, Prayer and Reward

Introduction
The purpose of this article is to determine how Matthew uses 'righteousness' as an identity pointer. Righteousness is a significant concept in the first gospel and has a substantial awareness in the Sermon on the Mount. The argument in this article is based on righteousness and piety in conformity to the Sermon on the Mount; acts of δικαιοσύνη are not to be seen by people. Matthew calculatedly uses the word "righteousness" in the Sermon on the Mount as a tool to define the identity of his community. However, righteousness can be used in a soteriological logic. It is deduced that Matthew primarily uses it in an ethical sense. By righteousness, Matthew denotes the appropriate behavioural norms and attitudes for his community. Commitment to Jesus builds the dominant emphasis of the community's identity. Matthew contrasts the righteousness of the disciples with that of the Pharisees and teachers of the Law which applies to Christianity in Africa. Pharisaic righteousness exists in our day, also. The practice of Christianity in the contemporary African context is manifested in hypocritical worship downgraded to impress spectators. The researcher explores the Matthean pericope to articulate pharisaical elements of worship in Post-modern Christianity with the mind to proffer a solution.

Literature Review
The review of related literature hinged on exploring the Matthean pericope (6.1-8) to unearth the general caution against ostentation in Religious Onuses: The Root of Pride (6:1). Almsgiving, prayer and fasting are selected as religious observances. These three were (and are) the most

prominent practical requirements for personal piety in mainstream Judaism.[299] Jesus accepts the same three activities, as central also to the religious life of his disciples. In this study, emphasis is hinged on Almsgiving and prayer (6.1-8). Righteousness is a central term in the Matthean gospel and has a noteworthy attentiveness in the Sermon on the Mount.[300] It plays a substantial role in how Matthew designates the function of the Law and the position of his community.[301] With this word, he is undoubtedly trying to reform and emphasize some matters in the social background of the community.[302]

The word translated in 6:1 "Be careful" (NIV), "beware" (NRSV), or "take heed" (KJV) is Greek *prosechō*, which means "to turn toward," explicitly in this context, "to be in a state of alert, be concerned about, care for, take care."[303] It serves to acme the command which follows it. The next phrase is, "To be seen by them". How much of people's lives are lived to "be seen by them"? They dress to impress, attract and entice. They speak to manipulate and ingratiate and seek their own advancement. They work very hard to create an impression on the outside world. But they are critical of the Pharisees who sometimes did the same thing.

Five of the seven manifestations of the word δικαιοσύνη are found in the Sermon on the Mount. This attentiveness designates that the concept epitomizes a significant theme in the Sermon on the Mount. Betz consequently comments that in the sermon on the mount, the term δικαιοσύνη inhabits a place of ultimate importance."[304] Similarly, Davies and Allison aver that the word 'righteousness' expresses the core of the Sermon on the Mount.[305] One can hence deduce that the righteousness of the conduct in Matthew 6:1 does not lie in what is done but in how it is done. The rivals also gave alms, prayed and fasted, but they did it hypocritically in order to advance their reputation. These performances are only stared as righteous if they are done with genuineness, to honour God and to institute his reign in an evil and unfit society.

In Matthew 6:1−18, righteousness is once again used in a polemical context, προσέχετε (δὲ) τὴν δικαιοσύνην ὑμῶν μὴ ποιεῖν ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων πρὸς τὸ θεαθῆναι αὐτοῖς (be careful not to do your righteousness before men, to be seen by them). The expression τὴν δικαιοσύνην ὑμῶν (righteousness of you) in Matthew 6:1 is very similar to ὑμῶν ἡ δικαιοσύνη (your righteousness) in Matthew 5:20.[306] The righteousness of Matthew 6:1 refers back to the

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[299] W.D. Davies, and D.C., Allison, *Matthew 1−7, International Critical Commentary*, Vol. 1. (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 307-317.

[300] J.C., Thom, 'Justice in the Sermon on the Mount', *Novum Testamentum*, 2009, 51, 314−338. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/156853609X432792; accessed 11/02/2020.

[301] Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 124.

[302] Warren Carter. *Matthew and the Margins: A Socio-Political and Religious Reading. Bible and Liberation Series*. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2000), 13-14; B. Przybylski, B. *Righteousness in Matthew and his World of Thought*, (Monograph Series), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 105-116.

[303] Walter Bauer. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd Ed. (BDAG). Ed. Frederick William Danker. Third ed. (Logos Bible Software, 2000), 789-880.

[304] Hans Dieter Betz. The Sermon on the Mount including the Sermon on the Plain (Matthew 5:3−7:27 and Luke 6:20−49), Hermeneia: *A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 130.

[305] Davies and Allison, *Matthew,* 499.

[306] The righteousness which surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees (5.20) is to be perceived not only in a new radical approach to the legal and ethical questions which concerned the scribes (5.21-48) but in a new attitude to the trustworthy religious performance which was the symbol of the Pharisees (6.1-8). The new attitude consists not in a repudiation of the main aspects of Jewish piety but in an avoidance of ostentation in their performance. Religious observance is to be directed towards God, not to gain the approval of men. As Jesus initiates discourse expressions of piety in his day, he zeros in on the foremost problem with spiritual life: its constant tendency to go to our head

righteousness of Matthew 5:20.[307] Whereas Matthew 5:20 deals with the nature of true righteousness in general, Mt 6:1 warns against the pitfalls of practicing dishonest righteousness.[308] Jesus contrasts the outward religious performances of the hypocrites to impress people with that of the disciples who aim to gratify their Father in heaven. Associates of the Matthean community are invigorated to perform their acts of piousness lacking sham and in private where only God can see, not like the hypocrites who display their devout acts in public to gain admiration.[309] Jesus hence, opposes a fundamental societal pattern.

In this passage, Jesus is dealing a lot with the motivation of the heart. The main issue dealt with in the passage is the situation of "man before God-the genuineness of man's benevolence, his prayer and his repentance."[310] This is prefixed in verse 1. Contextually, Jesus didn't want the disciples to act in the mode of the hypocrites and required them to see that the reward from giving in public does not go beyond pride. The important phrase in verse 1 is "to be seen of them". We are to seek God's glory; not our own. In this verse, John Wesley opines, "Take heed that ye practice not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them."[311]

The passage flinches out in verse 1 developing this theme of spiritual acts or acts of righteousness. The subject of this verse is exhibiting righteousness before men in order to gain self-praise rather than choosing to glorify God with actions and gain heavenly reward from God. This is a preamble to the passage in that it sets out right away that Jesus is not teaching that these spiritual acts should not be done, but the modification is to whom the glory is given.[312] Teaching on religious observance (1-8), the general theme of the piece is specified purely, in words which sketchily appear to conflict with 5.16, but what is condemned here is ostentation, chiefly in the practice of religious duties. Piety is a good translation for *dikaiosyne* typically righteousness, in this context; it construes the 'righteousness' of 5.20, but with distinct application to religious observance instead of ethical compliance, and so acts as a general term to shelter the definite references to almsgiving, prayer and fasting which follow. The disciple's life is inescapably, and precisely, public, but does not warrant him to show off his religious consecration; there is a world of difference between living a visibly good and considerable life (5.13-16) and striving to gain a status for piety. The difference lies not only in the motive but in the outcome: the former conveys glory to God, the latter only to the recitalist.[313]

Prohibition on Hypocrisy in almsgiving: Trumpeting Our Piety (6:2-4)
In ancient Israeli society, giving to the needy ranked as one of the highest religious duties. As such, it was a regular, ordinary part of the Jewish person's experience. In teaching his audience, about spiritual disciplines in Matthew 6, Jesus exhibits the wisdom-prophetic rhetorolect with which he teaches his audience. In Matthew 6:1-4 Jesus proposes to his audience as follows: Μὴ σαλπίσῃς

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and turn into a resonating religiosity. "Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven".

[307] Davies and Allison, *Matthew,* 437.

[308] H. Strack and P. Billerbeck. *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrash* (Beck,Munick,1961), 386.

[309] Betz, The Sermon on the Mount including the Sermon on the Plain,351; Davies and Allison, *Matthew,* 579; D.C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism: The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community* (Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1999), 122.

[310] Suzanna De Dietrich. "The Gospel According to Matthew". *The Layman's Bible Commentary*. Vol. 16. (Richmond: John Knox, 1961), 40.

[311] Ralph Earle, *Matthew. Beacon Bible Commentary*. Vol. VI. (Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1964), 81.

[312] Donald A. Hagner,"Matthew 1-13,"*Word Biblical Commentary*. Vol. 33. (Dallas: Word Incorporated, 1993), 140.

[313] R.T.France, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries,* Vol.1, Matthew (England: Inter-Varsity Press,2004), 135.

ἔμπροσθέν σου (Do not do your alms) like οἱ ὑποκριταὶ (the hypocrites) do; Do not sound a trumpet in the synagogues and the streets like οἱ ὑποκριταὶ (the hypocrites) do; Do not seek δοξασθῶσιν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων (the praise of others) as οἱ ὑποκριταὶ (the hypocrites) do; Μὴ γνώτω ἡ ἀριστερά σου τί ποιεῖ ἡ δεξιά σου (Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing) Rather, ὅπως ᾖ σου ἡ ἐλεημοσύνη (Do your alms) *ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ* (away from the public eye) καὶ ὁ πατήρ σου ὁ βλέπων ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ ἀποδώσει σοι. (and your Father in heaven will reward you openly). How different is a religion that makes a show of piety? In Jesus' day, some of the Pharisees would give alms with great display "to be honoured by men." We know by construing the rabbinical writings of Judaism that this was not the heart of Pharisaism. It was an aberration. But hypocrisy occurs in any day.

The problem with the hypocrites in Matthew was not that they did not perform these acts but that they performed them disingenuously. The hypocrites made people into onlookers by influencing them so as to maintain their own position. The first instance of accurate or false righteousness refers to offerings of mercy (Mt 6:2−4). Giving to the needy was a crucial duty for pious Jews (cf. Dt 15:7−11). The explicit act of almsgiving, a significantly righteous act, was not intended to convey attention to and accept appreciation from others. The fleeting prize of applause is nothing equated to the heavenly reward received by those who do their acts of giving in secluded areas. "Only deeds done for God's glory will receive an eschatological reward."[314] The mercy of God intended that people would express compassion to each other, as has already been specified in the fifth beatitude (Mt 5:7). In Matthew, Jesus construes the holiness code in terms of the mercy code.[315] Everyone would have acknowledged that it was a religious obligation to assist the poor, but Jesus asserts that it can be done obnoxiously. Once almsgiving ceases to be what it purports to be, that is, service to God, it can never again be viewed as a service of mercy.[316] To be viewed as a righteous act, such an offering must be done for the advantage of the penurious and not to hunt for public credit for it. Concerning the above argument, when the well-to-do helped the underprivileged in a decently and shameful culture, it is repeatedly self-regarding in that the giver expected more honour for himself. The wealthy would look down on the poor with derision. Almsgiving is tainted for the purpose of self-respect. Jesus imparts that it is imperative to give but not to be recognised to give. Unrighteous acts of almsgiving are done by hypocrites.

The word 'hypocrite' was typically used for actors who willfully performed in a play. Batey indicates that Matthew intentionally alludes to a 'hypocrite' as an actor and speculates whether Jesus' use of the concept comes from his contact with the theatre in Sepphoris.[317] Performing acts of righteousness in a hypocritical sense indicates that worship is turned into a spectacle. Hypocrites act with ethical fabrication. The identity of the disciples does not lie in the quest for public esteem but in endorsing God's saving mercy. It is assumed that disciples would share resources with the needy. Such acts would designate the presence of God's kingdom.

Argyle analyses verse 2 to portray that it ends with the statement "Your Father who sees in secret will reward you," which ties it together with verses 8 and 18. In verse 3, the writer uses a metaphor of not letting the "left hand know what the right hand is doing." This metaphor is substantial in Arabic culture in that "the relation of the right hand to the left" is "a type of close

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[314] Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 140.

[315] K. Snodgrass, 'Matthew and the law', in D.R. Bauer & M.A. Powell (eds.), *Treasures New and Old: Contributions to Matthean Studies*, pp. 99−127, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 111.

[316] Leon Morris. *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to Matthew*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992, 136.

[317] R. Batey, 'Jesus and the theatre', *New Testament Studies*, 1971, 30, 563−574. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0028688500013242; accessed 11/02/2020.

fellowship."[318] The precise exercise of almsgiving is a noticeably righteous act that was not intended to bring focus to and receive appreciation from others. The fleeting award of applause is none likened to the heavenly reward received by those who do their acts of giving in private. "Only deeds done for God's glory will receive an eschatological reward."[319] Hill elaborates that it is not that Jesus is against the real act of almsgiving, but keen-sighted that the act has been sullied by hypocrisy, Jesus decides to speak against the misapplication of giving to the poor.[320] The model, as seen in verse 3, is to give for the sake of profiting from the life of another, not to gain grandeur for oneself. The goal is kingdom progress, not self-congratulation. Consistent with verse 4, the only form of almsgiving that will be rewarded by God is that which is done in order to glorify God and let go of the suffering of others in the predicament of poverty.[321]

In contrast, the society of the disciple's almsgiving will be upshot in a reward (not an earned remuneration, but the lopsided return of God's grace: 5.12), not from men, but from your Father who sees in secret. The emphasis is on the source and the quality of the reward about the hypocrite's 'wages', not on the style of its giving (vv3-4).[322] Jesus pointed out to his disciples the widow who gave two small copper coins and gave more than all the rich people combined (Mark 12:41-42). She gave all she had, but she gave for "the Audience of One" and he was indeed watching. We are not to give to impress others, but for "the audience of One." It matters to God that we do not burn out our spiritual devotion in impressing others. It matters very much to him. He wants us to live in devotion for him alone. He wants us to have a pure heart, a single heart. "But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you" (6:3-4).

Anything that appeals to a person's enticement to elevate himself or herself is a poor impetus for Christian giving. Almsgiving was a religious duty, not a philanthropic option, in Judaism (cf. Deut. 15.7-11; Ps. 112.9) and by the first century AD poor relief based on such almsgiving was remarkably well-ordered. Jesus supposes his disciples to give generously, but not visibly, 'sound no trumpet' is undoubtedly metaphorical for calling attention to oneself, as in other ancient literature, since no literal use of trumpets in connection with almsgiving is attested. Hypocrite is a favourite word in Matthew, used particularly, here and in vv.5, 16 to characterize the Pharisees in their ostentatious piety. In chapter 23, it becomes a stereotyped epithet for the scribes and Pharisees.

Green buttresses the fact that simplicity, which is a lack of ostentation, applies to Christian giving (6.1-4). Disciples will be generous givers. But they will not make their contributions in a way that will draw attention to themselves. They will not do it publicly or to gain admiration. It will be noiseless. It will meet real needs. It will be offered in love and appreciation to the heavenly Father who has given us all we have. The idea of 'reward' in Christianity needs great care.[323] Believers are not converted to Christianity because of what they hope to gain, but in admiring response to the implausible generosity of God. Such is his generosity that he does, in fact, lavish

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[318] A. W. Argyle. "The Gospel According to Matthew". *The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible*. Vol. 1. (London: Cambridge Univ., 1963), 55.

[319] Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 140.

[320] David Hill, "The Gospel of Matthew." *The New Century Bible Commentary*. (Grand Rapids: Marshall Morgan & Scott), 1972, 132.

[321] Hill, "The Gospel of Matthew," 132.

[322] France, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, 136.

[323] Michael Green, *The Message of Matthew* (England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000), 98.

good things upon the objects of his love both in this life and, believers are guaranteed, after it. [324] But reward has nothing to do with the believer's merit; it has everything to do with his/her character of incontrollable generosity.

Prohibition on hypocrisy in prayer and Unostentatiousness of Secret Prayer (6:5-8)
The second instance of true or false righteousness refers to praying (Mt 6:5−15). It gives the impression that, as with almsgiving, there was a propensity amongst those who prayed to use their prayers as a mode of impressing others with their piety. Jesus' teaching on praying in a righteous style comprises two warnings on how not to pray, each well-adjusted by positive teaching (Mt 6:5−6; 5:7−8) followed by the model prayer (Mt 6:9−15). The first caution contrasts the disciples' routine with the piety of the Jews in the synagogue. [325] Morris deduced from the foregoing that, Matthew's Jesus warns against the public fabrication of hypocrites when praying. Righteous praying should be done in a secluded area and not for showiness. Jesus prohibits hypocritical prayers in public, not genuine prayer in public. Looking for public endorsement for praying infers that prayer ceases to demonstrate love for God but serves the one praying. In its place, prayer is envisioned as communication with God and not as a means to build one's reputation in the presence of others. [326]

Turner on another controversy argues that the second warning is against verbosity or loquaciousness when praying. This caution expresses the disciples' prayer against that of the Gentiles. The word used, babbling (βατταλογέω) describes a calculatedly repetitive speech shape analogous to the spontaneous repetitions of a person who stammers. [327] Jesus likens such praying to the rambling babbling of the pagans to get the attention of the gods or even the reiteration of magical formulas. [328] The Greek Magical Papyri indicates the use of worthless sounds held to be the language of gods. [329]

Righteous praying is done in effortlessness. The model prayer then affords a positive example in contrast to the hypocritical routine of the Jews in the synagogue and the babbling of the heathen prayers. This prayer portrays a worldview and shapes the community that prays it. [330] It describes heaven, the place where God's will is done and the earth, the location of the prayers and the place of disobedience. Evil antagonizes God's order on earth at the same time as the prayer searches for the emergence of God's kingdom on earth. Those who pray constitute a community of children on earth. They know God as their Father and crave to do his will on earth amid evil and temptation. They hinge on God's grace to sustain their survival. They pray for a transformation of life to conform to God's will.

It attested systematically that verse 5 is not a plea against worshipping in public. That is not in the schema of Jesus. Relatively, verse 5 is a "warning against succumbing to the temptation to 'showiness' in performing public worship and prayer." [331] Jesus speaks in the sixth verse to urge the act of prayer as an act of clandestineness. In verse 7, Christ cautions the disciples about using

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[324] Green, *The Message of Matthew*, 98-99.
[325] Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 161.
[326] Morris, *The Pillar New Testament*, 139.
[327] D. L. Turner. *Matthew, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 185.
[328] Betz, The Sermon on the Mount including the Sermon on the Plain, 365.
[329] Betz, The Sermon on the Mount including the Sermon on the Plain, 161−162.
[330] Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 169.
[331] Hill, *The New Century*, 132.

repetitive language used in vain during the act of prayer.[332] The point Jesus makes is that the Christian is to address only God in his prayer as the audience of One. Furthermore, there is no point in cataloguing a long line of needs to God who previously knows all that we desire and want.[333] It is also an instance of gentile criticism, which is seen manifold times in the book of Matthew, which makes the possibility that Matthew was written with Jewish-Christian intent more credible. The Language in verse 8 shows that God, "Our Heavenly Father", knows that in prayer we are addressing Him and that He already has a premonition of what we will and need to ask Him for.[334] Even if prayer is presented within the sphere of public worship, it is still only to be directed towards God alone and in secret, not projected to be an act for the public eye or a selling point for Christianity (which doesn't need to be "sold") or your own righteousness.[335] Prayer is merely authentic when it is directed to God alone. Hagner opines that it is forthright and modest for those who have experienced the grace of the kingdom of Christ. The disciple does not try to force or manipulate God. There are no charmed words or methods, nor does plenty of words count with God."[336] The father is already aware of the requests of the disciple and how to handle them. Nevertheless, Hill avers that the disciple must pray with that in mind and with "confidence and trust" of God's providential care of His children.[337]

Dietrich parted way from the foregoing argument as he envisages, in this passage, that Jesus is dealing a lot with the enthusiasm of the heart. The foremost matter dealt with in the passage is the state of "man before God - the genuineness of man's benevolence, his prayer and his repentance."[338] This is preceded in verse 1. Contextually, Jesus forbade the disciples to act in the way of the hypocrites and required them to see that the reward from giving in public does not go beyond pride. The substantial phrase in verse 1 is "to be seen of them". Believers are to search for God's glory; not their own. In this verse, John Wesley penned, "Take heed that ye practice not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them."[339]

It is often tacitly assumed (though rarely stated) that the longer the prayer, and the more ardently it batters the door of heaven, the more likely it is to get the desired answer. But Jesus explodes this myth: 'Do not be like them' (6.8). Prayer is not updating God on something he does not already know, nor is a prayer seeking to get God to adjust his mind. It is the admiring compliance of the creature to the Creator, of the disciple to the Master. He knows and cares. He is your Abba and Father. So, when you pray, say, 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name…….' (6.9).[340] The show-off gets what he has earned, the approval of men, and so misses the true reward which comes only from the Father who is in heaven (5.16).

In vv 5-6, the structure is meticulously similar to vv. 2-4, and uses identical keywords and phrases. The prayers in the synagogues were led by a member who stood at the anterior; to be requested to do so was seemingly a mark of distinction in the congregation.[341] In the second section of the discourse, dealing with propriety in prayer, there is concern both with manner and content. Verses 5-6 again, draw the dichotomy between eccentric public prayer whose object is affirmation

[332] Earle, *Matthew*, 82.
[333] Argyle, *The Cambridge Bible*, 55.
[334] Earle, *Matthew,* 82.
[335] Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 142.
[336] Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 152.
[337] Hill, *The New Century,* 134.
[338] Dietrich, *The Layman's Bible*, 40.
[339] Earle, *Matthew,* 81.
[340] Green, *The Message of Matthew*, 99.
[341] France, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, 136.

and praise for men, and prayer in secret which seeks only to talk to God. Then in vv7-8, a contrast is drawn sharply, about the manner of prayer, between loquaciousness and wiriness in speech. About the heaping up phrases in prayer, as well as affirming (5.37) believers might take note of Proverbs 10.19; "when words are many, transgression is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is prudent". In vv9-13 Jesus tutors by modeling. In contrast to the empty phrases of the Gentiles, the archetype prayer is given.

In vv 7-8, the subject of prayer is lengthened with other axioms, a warning against mechanical praying (11. 7-8). The first axiom is designed not directed against the hypocrites, but against praying as the Gentiles do. Prayers in the non-Jewish world were repeatedly pigeonholed predominantly by formal requests and magical incantations, in which the accurate repetition counted rather than the worshipper's attitude or aim. Heap up empty phrases translates the Greek *battalogeo*, a word otherwise mysterious in contemporary literature, and possibly devised as an onomatopoeic term for empty 'babbling', its similarity to the Hebrew *batel* (vain, idle) would perfect the point. The stress is ostensibly upon the quality rather than the quantity of the word. This is not a prescription either of reiteration in prayer (AV 'vain repetitions' is unwarranted; Jesus repeated himself, Matt. 26.44) or of set forms of prayer (vv. 9-13 go on to give one), but of inconsiderate, mechanical prayer. It is not many words that God replies to, but an attitude of prayer dependence.[342]

Methodology
The study adopted a historical-critical method to reexamine the Matthean periscope in the light of redress to reposition the practice of Christianity in Africa. The historical-critical method is the essential method for the scientific study of the meaning of ancient texts. Holy Scripture, studies their significance from a historical point of view, but also and above all seeks to shed light upon the historical processes which gave rise to biblical texts. It is a critical method because, in each of its steps, it operates with the help of scientific criteria that pursue to be as objective as possible. In this way it intends to make available to the modern reader the meaning of biblical texts, regularly very hard to grasp.

Findings and Discussions
The findings and discussions in this research are based on Pharisaical Righteousness as an Archetype for Christianity in Africa.

Pharisaical Righteousness as a Prototype for Christian Worship in Africa
The study found out that, a contextual application of the Law in the Sermon on the Mount has significance for every new community in a holistic logic, in that when observed copiously, it shapes the whole person unto divine perfection. Bridging the social and cultural gap between believers in the twenty-first century and its Mediterranean audiophiles is imperative for the understanding and applicability of the Sermon on the Mount. When the historical gap is bridged, it turns out to be clear that the Sermon on the Mount, rather than simply induce hullabaloo over ethics, connects the Mosaic Law and its fulfilment in a new righteousness that emanates from faith in Jesus. This faith is the outcome of submission to Jesus' word.

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[342] France, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries,* 137. One day Jesus told a parable of "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector to underscore the fact that for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted (Luke 18:10-14). The Pharisee prayed in his pride, but the tax collector prayed in his humility, and was heard by the Audience of One."

The research discovered in vivid terms that the contemporary significance of this incident is applicable in the African context where the practice of Christianity is concentrated on ostentation. Some Christians make donations to the church raising their shoulders high for recognition. Righteousness is trumpeted for others to see how some Christians are more spiritual than others. Those who fund the church often assume the position of proprietor who dictates to church leaders what should be done or without them, the church would cease to progress or exist. It demonstrates when almsgiving becomes, "I made you who you are". The honour that should be directed to God is given to them. When it comes to prayers, some Christians showcase their talents in displaying outward righteousness to be seen. Particularly, in the Pentecostal churches, prayers are said in terms of competition to determine who is really a powerful man of God. During prayers, speaking in tongues is even unknown to speakers themselves but being stage-managed to convince people of their spirituality is masked in babbling. These babblers prophesy publicly to scare and manipulate people to have confidence in them rather than God. The main purpose of pharisaical Christianity in Africa is disguised as making money whereby most so-called men of God perform fake miracles; sometimes through occultic powers to enable them to have large congregations as their economic source of getting richer. In contrast, higher righteousness is described as honest internal intentions that lead to external actions. Righteousness encompasses both the theoretical and practical aspects of religious conduct that are acceptable to God. During the publicity of prophecies, some men of God lied in the name of God to exploit their members for luxury by fabricating fake visions to convince them.

As more findings are revealed, another anthropologist, Peel, considers Yoruba indigenous prayer as a virtuously technical instrument for securing practical profits, rather than a vehicle for moral replication or a colloquy with the divine.[343] It is therefore easy to comprehend the spiritual undertone the Yoruba Christians gave to the influenza epidemic that ravaged the land and the instrumentality of prayer used to attack and wade off the disease. This technique can be understood from the perspective of their worldview and religion. Treading on the same path, Ukpong noted that, one of the indispensable features of the embryonic African Christianity was the stress placed on prayer in the power of the Holy Spirit. The unusual situation in the Nigerian society of the early 20th century contributed enormously to this spiritual awareness. There was plentiful poverty and frightening diseases. There was a severe presence of the demonic in the society and the personification of the demonic was seen in the witchcraft. Prayer was perceived as the instant way of battling these evils.[344] Holy Spirit is used as an assassin to kill and destroy one's enemies by fire and the manner through which the prayer is made is pharisaical.

Pentecostalism has unbolted a practice of religion that has shifted from worship to God to fear and terror, and from adoration to appeasement. Many Africans have been labelled typically as "Christians by day and Africans by night". Attributable to its skilful and neo-liberal use of electronic media, Pentecostalism is hyper-visible in Nigerian and African societies with pharisaic elements. Adelekun lamented African Christian practice full of hypocritical piety by some churches. The loud pleasant music boomed from loudspeakers; the church constituted the source of noise piercing the darkness.[345] Moreover, he observed the music from the church vigil changed to loud raucous prayers by what he imagined to be a horde of worshippers making their case before

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[343]J.D.Y. Peel. Aladura: *A Religious Movement among the Youth*. London: Oxford press, 1968, 62.

[344] D. P. Ukpong. "The Presence and Impact of Pentecostalism on Nigeria". www.glopent. net/ members/frdona/presence, 8. Accessed on 9/8/2009.

[345] Abimbola Adunni Adelakun, *Ph.D Dissertation*: "Godmentality: Pentecostalism as Performance in Nigeria". (Texas: Faculty of the Graduate School of The University of Texas at Austin), 2017, 4.

God at the 'witching hour. The lead pastor's voice would come on the loudspeaker and he would yell to prompt the church to pray and they would, hundreds of voices buzzing like a million bees on the same microphone. All night, the shouts of what God will do and should do on behalf of each person made him marvel how people get to the point where God's action defines their basic awareness of life and its mechanics."[346]

Adelekun observes that churchgoing had become an event that co-opted non-Christians and non-religious populations as well. wherever a Pentecostal church sprang up, an ad-hoc market also arises.[347] The vendors sell vehicle stickers; almanacs and prayer books, anointing oil, anointed handkerchiefs, branded wrist bands inscribed with the church logo, T-shirts, DVDs of Christian songs and drama; religion and motivational books; calendars with images of posh houses, cars, and their pastors; writing pads plastered with faces of "daddy-in-the-Lord" and his wife. The roads that led to the big churches resulted in the creation of crude markets where different people gathered to buy and sell to believers.[348]

The precise practices and rituals of Pentecostalism for instance *glossolalia* and interpretation, divine healing, Biblical authority, the new birth, exorcism or "deliverance." prophecies, holiness, spiritual warfare, visions, dreams, trances, performance of miracles, apocalyptic visions, spiritual gifts, prosperity gospel, extra-material ways of settling existential matters, all detached its events from orthodox Christianity. While the variety of these events is unvarying in global Christianity and everyone "drinks from the same theological pot," the exhibition of African Pentecostalism is haunted by a fantasy of enchantment. Hence, its rituals have a more theatrical quality as believers regularly war against the demonic militaries that hover over their healthy quality of life. The war against Satan and his demonic forces that go on in Pentecostalism regularly uses the flamboyant language of African traditional religious and narrative fantasy where human transfiguration is conceivable; chimaeras and headless bodies socialise with humans by taking on the flesh forms, and charmed figures who step out of the mystic world to either perform activities with humans or harm them.

Recommendations

An individual's religious practices to be trustworthy should concern one's relationship with God. Jesus' idea is not that only secluded or unobservable religious events count for anything, but that believers should go about their devotion, in all forms, as if no one else is seeing. Jesus' humour and hyperbole underscore this truth: the ways of religious folk have the propensity to bring out Christian egocentricity and ironically parade impiety.

Christianity in the African contemporary context should absolutely be eroded of erroneous practices that portray counterfeit righteousness. The hypocrites in the Church seek themselves, and their agenda, under the disguise of being Christians. Sometimes their evil is so entrenched in them that they do not even realise they are hypocrites[349], as Jesus indicates in chapter 23.

The application of the principle to prayer is along the same lines as with almsgiving: It should be done privately so as to be rewarded by God rather than people. It should be observed

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[346] Adelekun, "Godmentality: Pentecostalism as Performance in Nigeria."

[347] Adelekun, "Godmentality: Pentecostalism as Performance in Nigeria."

[348] Adelekun, "Godmentality: Pentecostalism as Performance in Nigeria."

[349] When hypocrites donate to the upkeep of the needy these days, they make it public for people to see and impress them, thus, it goes viral on social media; twitter, Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, telegram etc, the motive behind this publicity is to showcase their ego for people to worship them. This is the very hypocrisy that Jesus indicts the Pharisees.

that Jesus is not speaking of genuinely corporate prayer, as his example of praying on street corners indicates. He is speaking of private prayer that is done in public to gain attention for oneself.

The application of spiritual righteousness in the African context should not be performed to the audience of the many. It should be performed to the audience of the One, Father in heaven because He sees every action and knows every motivation.

The practice of Christianity in Africa should be ripped of hypocritical worship that attracts earthly reward. It is inevitably understood that all that matters in life is the worship that pleases God. At the same time, Christians in Africa should beware of using the passage as an excuse to avoid public prayer altogether. Jesus warns that those who practice public piety will receive their full reward only from their public audience.

Conclusion

The bottom line in this study delineates and disseminates that the Matthean Jesus' Sermon focuses on the righteousness (*dikaiosunē*) that symbolises the kingdom of heaven. Righteousness typically in moral terms, which is part and parcel of the kingdom of heaven, is not simply a list of actions to be performed. Though Jesus insists that certain behaviours are absolutely vital for a life of faith, his superior point is that righteousness incorporates the focus and state of mind that motivates and sustains one's actions. In the Christian life, it is not enough just to do the right thing. The Christian must do what is right in the right way and with the right motive. The theme of this passage is precisely about the enthusiasm of a genuine disciple. The determination of the disciple is ascertained by what motivates him and how his impetus differs from that of a non-Christian. The valuable lesson distinguishes between pleasing men and pleasing God. Charity is not charity when the motive is to attract the attention of others and influence lies behind it. Prayer is not prayer when the one praying is more absorbed in calling attention to one's own exertions, fluency, or importance than in steering authentic communication with God. If the goal one has is to get human credit, then that's all he/she has achieved: human acknowledgement.

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