

THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

JESUS CHRIST

N.B.T.S.
Ph.D.
AKI51-j

AS LIBERATOR FROM MORAL CORRUPTION

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
DEPARTMENT OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

BY

PHILIPS SUNDAY AKINBOBOLA
(MATRIC NO. 02/0023)

OGBOMOSO, OYO STATE

JUNE 2006

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation attempts to show that Nigerian society and the church are morally corrupt, and therefore, have no solution to the problem of moral corruption through strategies, policies, bureaus and different decrees that they had evolved so far.

The Nigerian society and the church have tried unsuccessfully to overcome moral corruption but to no avail because moral corruption has eaten deep, like a festering tumor, into the society and church. However, what the society and the church are not able to overcome which is the power of moral corruption that ravages the society and the church has already been accomplished in Christ.

The position of this thesis is that whatever forms of strategies the society and church have developed; they cannot solve the problem of moral corruption in the society outside Christ, because moral corruption has its roots in evil mediated through sin.

What constitutes corruption in the society and church with a look at various definitions of moral corruption, were examined. The extent of the awareness and perception of the society and the church were examined through data collection. The fact is established through the study that the Nigerian society and the church are experiencing destabilization of order, which is both social and spiritual. The study reveals further that moral corruption's sinister's power enslaves humans and thus make humans make culpable wrong

choices.

Society and church cannot stamp out moral corruption through Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (I.C.P.C), Economic and Financial Crime Commission (E.F.C.C) or whatever strategies the government put in place. The solution is found outside the society, in Jesus Christ through whom God has summoned the human race to liberation from bondage of evil and sin. The message, ministry, atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ when accepted by an individual imputes grace to overcome moral corruption as mediated through the unrestricted presence of God by the Spirit.

The capacity of the liberated man to overcome moral corruption consists primarily in humanity's obedience to the salvific work of Christ. The conduct of the liberated cannot be guided solely by human legality through decrees but when humanity's conduct is in tune with Christ; moral corruption is overcome.

This dissertation therefore takes the position that humanity "in Christ" is a liberated individual, for Christ becomes for him the distinctive hallmark and standard of moral life and this means government, society and church can find in Christ solution to moral corruption.

Recommendations

Through the length and breath of the dissertation a number of limitations were pointed out and these could be eye openers for areas of study in scholarship circles.

John Parratt said, "All true theology must lay itself open to critique."⁴⁰ The researcher is pleased to humbly lay this work open to critique and improvement. The work cannot but reflect the limitations of the writer since he is still a student of theology but Readers who are especially exposed to the study of Systematic Theology and contextualization would be of great help and their ideas are greatly welcomed and would be appreciated to help improve this dissertation. Altogether four recommendations would be made.

First, there is the need for a more intensive investigation the kind of training and orientation that leaders in the society, Pastors and other church leaders are receiving. The wonder of leadership is the like that attracts like, but what kind of attractions are the members of the society and the church experiencing? It is a perennial problem and a compelling issue, if a study is done in this area it could be a rewarding exercise, which the society and the church will greatly benefit from.

Second, more work needs to be done in the area of society and church discipline. Society and church leadership need to be disciplined as examples where necessary. Moral issues are scarcely

⁴⁰ John Parratt, *Reinventing Christianity: African Theology Today* (Grand Rapids: WMB Eerdmans, 1995), 3.

dealt with in the society and the church today as stipulated in the scriptures, so much the reason for the decay in the society and the church. The study presented some cases of immorality both in the society and the church. Church has no message if she cannot deal summarily and precisely with immoral issues.

Third, it will definitely be revealing and educative to do a thorough study and enquiry of the contrast between what draws the people together in the early church and what is drawing the 21st century people. This is really urgent for the society and church.

Aggressive evangelism and the attraction of the gospel hardly account for the phenomenon growth of the new age or 21st century churches. The prosperity gospel and the economic appeal are the vogue. Kenneth O. Gangel says "prosperity gospel is a transfer of the yuppie lifestyle to the church."⁴¹ This creates the two-headed monster of evangelical affluence. One head, "material prosperity," which places its emphasis on the kind of life philosophy mocked by the writer Ecclesiastes: "A feast is made for laughter, and wine makes life merry, but money is the answer for everything" (10:19 NIV). The other element is "theological prosperity," the position that health and wealth depend on faith. However, the essential message of the book of Job suggests that prosperity does not indicate God's blessing anymore than poverty indicates God's curse.⁴²

⁴¹ Kenneth O. Gangel, "Leadership: Coping With Cultural Corruption" *Biblio Theca Sacra* Vol. 144, no. 57, October-December 1987, 452.

⁴² *Ibid.*

