



Bribery and Corruption in Matthew 28:11-15: A Lesson for the Church in Africa

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ABSTRACT

The narrative of Jesus' resurrection in Matthew 28:11-15 implies an incident of bribery and corruption and its effects on injustice, misinformation, and suffering in society. Literature abounds on bribery and corruption based on Matthew 28:11-15. Studies have also been done on bribery and corruption in Africa. However, few studies comparatively have emphasized the bribery and corruption mentioned in Matthew 28:11-15 and its relations to the church in Africa. Therefore, a review of the implication of bribery and corruption in Matthew 28:11-15 for African religious leaders is in order. The church in Africa may take some precautions from the implications of the narrative. The following implications can be drawn from the analysis of the bribery and corruption narrative of Matthew 28:11-15:(1)working for God does not exclude a person from evil. (2) the dare influence of bribery and corruption can destroy lots of good in society. The study adopted the textual-syntactical approach to biblical interpretation. The main objective of the study was to determine how a textual study of Matthew 28:11-15 can serve as a warning to religious leaders in Africa. To ensure that the church champions the fight against bribery and corruption in Africa, the study recommended that: (1) the church should demand accountability from its leadership as an example to the broader society;(2) the church exposes and fires corrupt leaders, and (3) church leaders should lead bribery and corruption-free life as examples to members and the wider society. This research will be of benefit to the clergy and other church leaders who would perceive the dire consequences of bribery and corruption in the church, especially as it relates to the African context. Second, it has also added to the existing literature on the interpretation of Matthew 28:11-15 as it relates to bribery and corruption in the Bible.

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INTRODUCTION

Bribery and corruption in any human society is unwelcome, no matter what forms it takes.¹ It tends to

¹Vitor Gaspar, Paolo Mauro, and Paulo Medas, "The True Cost of Corruption is Higher than You Might Realise," *World Economic Forum* (Apr 11, 2019): 1-3; Bribery and corruption can undermine all the 17 sustainable Development Goals Delia Ferreira Rubio and Elisabeth Andvig, "Serious about Sustainability? Get Serious about Corruption," *World Economic Forum* (Sep 23, 2019), 3; Eugen Dimant and Thorben Schulte, "The Nature of Corruption: An Interdisciplinary Perspective," *German Law Journal*, 17.1(2016): 53-56; Chantal Uwimana, "How Corruption is Stifling Africa's Growth" *World Economic Forum* (Dec 9, 2014): 1-3. Susan Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption: A Study in Political Economy* (New York: Academic Press, 1978), 9.

pervert justice² and leads to suffering and poverty.³ Bribery and corruption is prominent in developing countries where structures to control the menace are weak.⁴ Corruption can come from both the public and the private sectors.⁵ Developing countries lose around US\$ 1.26 trillion every year due to bribery, fraud, theft, tax evasion, and other illicit financial flows.⁶ Africa, a developing continent, is not exempted and is currently plagued with scandals of bribery and corruption.⁷ The situation is worrying because some Africans are willing to pay bribes.⁸ This is because they are compelled to pay bribes to access essential services like schools, and hospitals, the acquisition of identity cards, and the services of the police. Thus, to forestall the imminent challenges, they pay the requested bribes.⁹ The issue of bribery and corruption in Africa has become a worrying trend and the statement made by Sheila Masinde (Transparency International's Project Manager for Kenya), that "the people who are paying bribes are twice as likely to be the poorest, people who are less advantaged and under extreme pressure," highlights the fact.¹⁰ This is compounded by the fact that more than half of the workers in Africa think that receiving bribes in an economic crisis is acceptable.¹¹ In Africa, bribery and corruption are ingrained in both public and private lives.¹² The situation needs to be addressed to check the menace from escalating and provide Africa with the opportunity for needed growth and development.

Research has revealed a correlation between religion, culture, and human behaviour.¹³ Religion can contribute to one's susceptibility to engage in corrupt practices.¹⁴ As such, religion has been

²Gary S. Becker and George J. Stigler, "Law Enforcement, Malfeasance, and Compensation of Enforcers," *Journal of Legal Studies*, 3.1(1974): 1-18; Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption*, 9.

³Stephen Johnson, "Corruption is Costing the Global Economy \$3.6 Trillion Dollars Every Year," *World Economic Forum* (Dec 13, 2018): 1; Shakir Akorede, "Here Are Three Ways African Youth Are Defeating Corruption," *World Economic Forum* (Nov 8, 2018): 1; Anna Bruce-Lockhart, "Africa's Top 10 Countries for Anti-Corruption," *World Economic Forum* (Jul 27, 2015): 1; Uwimana, "How Corruption is Stifling Africa's Growth," 1-3; Daniel Kaufmann and Pedro C. Vicente. *Legal Corruption*. Second draft (October 2005), 2; Daniel Kaufmann and Aart Kraay, "Growth Without Governance," *Economia*, 3(2002): 169-229; Paulo Mauro, "Corruption and Growth," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 110.3(1995): 681-712.

⁴Josephine Moulds, "These Are the World's Least-and Most-Corrupt Countries," *World Economic Forum* (Feb 5, 2019): 1.

⁵See Delia Ferreira Rubio, "CPI 2019: Global Highlights," *Transparency International* (Jan 23, 2020): 2, 7.

⁶Sean Fleming, "Corruption Costs Developing Countries \$ 1.26 Trillion every Year-Yet Half of EMEA Think It's Acceptable," *World Economic Forum* (Dec 9, 2019): 2.

⁷Gaspar, Mauro, and Medas, "The True Cost of Corruption," 1-3; Petrus Marais, "Africa Must Use Tech to Chase Corruption Out of the Shadows," *World Economic Forum* (Aug 26, 2019): 1-2; Silvina Moschini, "Transparency is Key to Inclusive Employment and Government Integrity," *World Economic Forum* (Apr 25, 2019): 3-4; Rubio and Andvig, "Serious about Sustainability? 1-7; Nelson Sobrinho and Vimal Thakoor, "More Sand than Oil, Sub-Saharan Africa Stands to Gain More from Reducing Corruption than Any Other Region," *International Monetary Fund-Finance and Development* 56.3(Sep 2019): 2; Soraya Narfeldt, "Why Corruption in Africa Can No Longer Be Tolerated," *World Economic Forum* (Mar 27, 2018): 1-2; Michael Meyer, "Is Africa Winning the Battle against Corruption?" *World Economic Forum* (Jan 11, 2016): 1; Sebastian Gatimu, "Why African Need to Find New Ways to Fight Corruption," *World Economic Forum* (May 28, 2015): 1-3; Uwimana, "How Corruption is Stifling Africa's Growth," 1-3.

⁸Jefcoate O'Donnell and C. K. Hickey, "How Africans Are Dealing with Everyday Corruption," *Foreign Policy* (July 12, 2019): 1-4.

⁹O'Donnell and Hickey, "How Africans Are Dealing with Everyday Corruption," 1-4.

¹⁰O'Donnell and Hickey, "How Africans Are Dealing with Everyday Corruption," 1.

¹¹Fleming, "Corruption Costs Developing Countries \$ 1.26 Trillion every Year," 2.

¹²Akorede, "Here Are Three Ways African Youth Are Defeating Corruption," 1.

¹³Nalini Tarakeshwar, Jeffrey Stanton, and Kenneth I. Paragament, "Religion: An Overlooked Dimension in Cross-Cultural Psychology," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 34.4 (Jul 2003): 377; Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (New York: Free Press, 2015); Robert J. Schreiter, "Faith and Cultures: Challenges to a World Church," *Theological Studies* 50(1989): 774; Aylward Shorter, *Towards a Theology of Inculturation* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1988), 1; Louis J. Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1988), 1; Robert Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1985), 1; Charles Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1979), 1; Paul Tillich, *Theology and Culture* (New York: Oxford University, 1959), 42.

¹⁴S. Douglas Beets, "Global Corruption and Religion: An Empirical Examination," *Journal of Global Ethics*, 3:1(2007), 69-84; Laila Shadabi, "The Impact of Religion on Corruption," *The Journal of Business Inquiry*, 12(2013): 102-117; Omer Gokcekus and Tufan Ekici, "Religion, Religiosity, and Corruption," 1.

identified as a potent force that affects the way people live.¹⁵ Research has also revealed that over ninety per cent (90%) of Africans profess to belong to religious faiths.¹⁶ Religious leaders are championing the fight against corruption.¹⁷ Africans trust their religious leaders more than other public officials.¹⁸ Empirical research has also revealed that religiosity can better help fight corruption.¹⁹

Matthew 28:11-15 gives a narrative of an incident of bribery and corruption, and its dire effect on society. The church in Africa may take some precautions from the implications of the story in Matt 28:11-15. The paper advocates religion as a potential panacea to curb bribery and corruption in Africa. As such, using religion to counter bribery in Africa may be in order. The paper adopts an exegetical study that focused on the text-centred approach to biblical interpretation. This approach includes the following: (1) Textual (syntax and text-grammar), which investigated the grammar of some keywords and how they relate to each other in the text; (2) Lexical and semantics, which included an investigation of the lexical meaning of some keywords in the text; (3) Literary (style and structure), which investigated the genre, purpose, theme, and structure of the text in Matthew's Gospel, and how they contribute to the meaning of the text; and (4) Textual analysis which investigated the text and how it contributes to the understanding of the subject under study.²⁰

For this study, the following terms are defined:

Social diffusion: "a social process through which cultural knowledge, practices, and materials spread from one system to another."²¹

The church: The Christian community, in this article, in Africa.

Religiosity: as the level of devotion to religion.

Bribery: as "the crime of giving someone money or something else of value, often illegally to persuade that person to do something you want."²²

Corruption: "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain."²³

Public sector corruption: as an abuse of public office for private gain.

Private sector corruption: as an abuse of private office for private gain.

¹⁵Kraft, Christianity in Culture, 1.

¹⁶Brian Howard, "Religion in Africa: Tolerance and Trust in Leaders Are High, But Many Would Allow Regulation of Religious Speech," *AFRO BAROMETER* 1999-2019, 339(28 January 2020):1-19; D. B. Barrett, and T. M. Johnson. *Religion: World religion statistics*. (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1998

¹⁷Beets, "Global Corruption and Religion," 69-72.

¹⁸Howard, "Religion in Africa," 9.

¹⁹Gokcekus and Ekici, "Religion, Religiosity, and Corruption," 15.

²⁰John H. Hayes and Carl R. Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook*, rev. ed. (Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1987), 59-72; Ekkehardt Mueller, "Guidelines for the Interpretation of Scripture," in *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach*, ed. George W. Reid (Silver Springs, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2006), 111-112; Ganoune Diop, "Innerbiblical Interpretation: Reading the Scriptures Intertextually.," in *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach*, ed. George W. Reid (Silver Springs, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2006), 135-151; George E. Rice, "Interpretation of the Gospels and the Epistles," in *Understanding Scriptures: An Adventist Approach*, ed. George W. Reid (Hagerstown, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2006), 205-222.

²¹UNDP, 2010; A. Crossman, *Diffusion*, 2012. Accessed August 21, 2018. http://sociology.about.com/od/D_Index/g/Diffusion.htm

²²Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), accessed Feb 5, 2019, from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/>

²³Transparency International, 2019, https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/cpi_2019_global_highlights

Bribery and Corruption in the First-Century Greco-Roman World

The section investigates the socio-political setting of the Gospel of Matthew. It is worthy of note that corruption has existed since the time of recorded history.²⁴ The way of life of the Greeks, Romans, and Jews shaped and influenced Christianity in the first century.²⁵ Bribery was regarded as the worst form of corruption in both Athens and Rome. Both Greek and extant Roman documents point to corruption as major cancer to handle.²⁶

Corruption in Ancient Greece

Ancient Athenians were sceptical about corrupt officials.²⁷ Thucydides observed that corruption, which they termed “present,” was rampant among the Odrisian Thracians.²⁸ Plato suggested the death penalty for convicted corrupt officials who accepted bribe “gifts” from citizens before attending to their official duties.²⁹ The priests in ancient Greece were perceived as corrupt. Socrates and Plato championed policies to mitigate political corruption in the history of Greece and modern Europe.³⁰ Plato and Aristotle lamented corrupt officials.³¹ Socrates bemoaned the political corruption of that time in Greece. For Plato and Aristotle, the essence of politics is the common interest of the people.³² As a result, corruption became a crime and was severely punished when it went against the public interest.³³ Both those who offered bribes in kind and promises, and those who accepted bribes were punished accordingly.³⁴ Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-143 BC) also championed an anti-corruption campaign and anti-corruption policies in Greece. He considered corruption a heinous crime.³⁵ He accused some Greek politicians and magistrates of engaging in corrupt practices.³⁶

Athenian law prescribed confiscation of the properties of perpetrators of corruption and those of their sons and also disfranchised them.³⁷ Athenian punishment for corruption also included the death penalty.³⁸ Athenian magistrates and judges were made to swear the Archon oath not to take bribes

²⁴Caprian Rotaru, Dumitru-Alexandru Bodislay, and Raluca Georgescu, “A Review of Corruption Based on the Social and Economic Evolution of Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome,” *Theoretical and Applied Economics* 23.2(607) (Summer 2016):240; Johann Graft Lambsdorff, Markus Taube, and Matthias Schramm, *The International Economics of Corruption* (New York: Routledge Publishing, 2005), 2.

²⁵Lars P. Qualben, *A History of the Christian Church* (NY: Thomas Nelson, 1949), 12-13; Benjamin Abotchie Ntrel, “The Bible, Culture Identity and Mission: A Biblical Appraisal,” in *The Bible, Cultural Identity and Missions*, ed. Daniel Berchie, Daniel Kwame Bediako, and Dzedzorm Reuben Asafo (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars, 2016), ix.

²⁶Lisa Hill, “Conceptions of Political Corruption in Ancient Athens and Rome,” *History of Political Thought*, 34.4(2013): 569, 578.

²⁷B.S. Strauss, ‘The Cultural Significance of Bribery and Embezzlement in Athenian Politics: The Evidence of the Period 403–386 B.C.’, *The Ancient World*, 11 (3–4), 73.

²⁸Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. R. Crawley, rev. & ed., Donald Lateiner (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2006), 3-4; Hill, “Conceptions of Political Corruption in Ancient Athens and Rome,” 578.

²⁹Rotaru, Bodislay, and Georgescu, “A Review of Corruption,” 240.

³⁰Rotaru, Bodislay, and Georgescu, “A Review of Corruption,” 241.

³¹Plato, *The Republic*, trans. A.D. Lindsay (London, 1995), 390d; Hill, “Conceptions of Political Corruption in Ancient Athens and Rome,” 569.

³²Richard Mulgan, “Aristotle on Legality and Corruption,” in *Corruption: Expanding the Focus*, ed. Barry Hindess, Manuhua Barcham, and Peter Larmour (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2012), 25-36; Rotaru, Bodislay, and Georgescu, “A Review of Corruption,” 241.

³³Rotaru, Bodislay, and Georgescu, “A Review of Corruption,” 241.

³⁴Hill, “Conceptions of Political Corruption in Ancient Athens and Rome,” 565-587; Rotaru, Bodislay, and Georgescu, “A Review of Corruption,” 241.

³⁵Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Officiis*, trans. W. Miller (London, 1990), II:77.

³⁶Cicero, ‘Pro Flacco’, in *Orations*, 43; Cicero, ‘Letter 116’, in *Letters to Atticus*, Vol. 1, ed. and trans. D.R. Shackleton Bailey (Cambridge MA, 1999), 6.2.5, 137; Cicero, *De Officiis*, trans. W. Miller (London, 1990), I. xxv. 85; Cicero, *De Officiis*, trans. W. Miller (London, 1990), II:77; Rotaru, Bodislay, and Georgescu, “A Review of Corruption,” 240; Hill, “Conceptions of Political Corruption in Ancient Athens and Rome,” 577.

³⁷Demosthenes, ‘Against Meidias’, *Demosthenes*, 21.113; Hill, “Conceptions of Political Corruption in Ancient Athens and Rome,” 570.

³⁸Plutarch, *Lives*, vol. VII, *Demosthenes and Cicero, Alexander and Caesar* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 417-419; Rotaru, Bodislay, and Georgescu, “A Review of Corruption,” 241, 242; Kellam Conover, *Bribery in classical Athens* (Ann Arbor: ProQuest LLC, 2010), i, ii, 1.

from the people. Offending magistrates and judges were made to pay ten times the bribes they took.³⁹ Athenian law later prescribed ostracism as punishment for corrupt officials.⁴⁰ The Spartans introduced iron bar currency to replace gold and silver to check corruption.⁴¹

Corruption in Ancient Rome

Corruption adversely affected the economy and politics of the Roman Empire.⁴² Mark Antony is alleged to have granted the Sicilians citizenship after he received a bribe from them.⁴³ There was rampant corruption in the judiciary in ancient Rome. Vote buying was a common practice in the Roman Empire.⁴⁴ Corruption was also widespread in the sporting competitions of the Roman Empire. Provincial administrators both received from the people and paid bribes to Roman officials.⁴⁵ Appointment into public office and promotion were fraught with bribery and corruption.⁴⁶ In response, most Roman Emperors promulgated anti-corruption laws to check the menace. The Emperors included Calpurnia (149 BC), Acilia (123 BC), Servilia (110 BC), Cornelia (81 BC), and Yulia Repetundarum (59 BC).⁴⁷ With the passage of *Law Ciencia de Donis et Muneribus* in 204 BC, members of the judiciary were forbidden to receive gifts and bribes. Julius, Augustus, Claudius, and Nero subsequently enforced laws that discouraged bribery and corruption.⁴⁸ Bribery and corruption also existed in the Roman Senate and the Roman army.⁴⁹ Julius Caesar reorganized the Roman Senate. He removed corrupt Senators and increased the number of Senators to nine hundred (900).⁵⁰

Bribery and corruption also existed in the Roman provinces. To check rampant corruption in Spain, the Roman Senate regulated the Spanish tax system to stamp out corruption among Spanish governors. Moreover, Iugurtha, King of Numidia, bribed Roman army generals and Roman Senators to spare him and his province/kingdom from threats and destruction from Rome.⁵¹ As a result, Iugurtha was able to threaten the Roman state for six years, between 111-106 BCE.⁵² The Roman province of Egypt also witnessed corruption in government. Provincial corruption in the Roman Empire prompted an edict by Vergilius Capito in AD 48. Convicted corrupt officials were charged threefold as a penalty for over-invoicing of travel expenses and false claims in the Roman province of Egypt.⁵³

³⁹Rotaru, Bodislav, and Georgescu, "A Review of Corruption," 242.

⁴⁰Rotaru, Bodislav, and Georgescu, "A Review of Corruption," 242.

⁴¹Rotaru, Bodislav, and Georgescu, "A Review of Corruption," 242.

⁴²Rotaru, Bodislav, and Georgescu, "A Review of Corruption," 242-244.

⁴³Rotaru, Bodislav, and Georgescu, "A Review of Corruption," 243;

⁴⁴Andrew Lintott, "Electoral Bribery in the Roman Republic", *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 80 (1990), 1, 5-6; Seneca, 'Letter 118', in *Moral Letters to Lucilius (Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium)*, Vol. 3, trans. R.M. Gummere (Cambridge MA, 1917); Cicero, *Laws*, III.xvii.39-49; Lisa Hill, "Conceptions of Political Corruption in Ancient Athens and Rome," *History of Political Thought*, 34.4(2013): 573; Linderski, 'Buying the Vote', 90.

⁴⁵Rotaru, Bodislav, and Georgescu, "A Review of Corruption," 243.

⁴⁶Averil Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity AD 395-600* (New York: Routledge Publishing, 1993), 93-95.

⁴⁷Rotaru, Bodislav, and Georgescu, "A Review of Corruption," 243.

⁴⁸Rotaru, Bodislav, and Georgescu, "A Review of Corruption," 243.

⁴⁹Saddington, 2012, pp. 124-130; Durant, 1944, p. 118; Rotaru, Bodislav, and Georgescu, "A Review of Corruption," 244-245; Averil Cameron, *The Later Roman Empire, AD 284-430* (Cambridge MA, 1993), 107.

⁵⁰Rotaru, Bodislav, and Georgescu, "A Review of Corruption," 244.

⁵¹Rotaru, Bodislav, and Georgescu, "A Review of Corruption," 244.

⁵²Sallustius, *Bellum Iugurthinum* (War against Iugurtha); Salustiu (Caius Sallustius Crispus) (86-35 cent. B.C.), Roman politician and historian. Caesar's Partisan. He wrote "About the war with Iugurtha", "About Catalina conspiracy" and a history (5 volumes) of the Roman Republic, between 78 and 67 B.C., kept fragmented. Source: DE - encyclopaedic dictionary (1993-2009); Rotaru, Bodislav, and Georgescu, "A Review of Corruption," 244.

⁵³Naphtali Lewis, "On Official Corruption in Roman Egypt: The Edict of Vergilius Capito", *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 98 (2) (1954), 153; Lisa Hill, "Conceptions of Political Corruption in Ancient Athens and Rome," *History of Political Thought*, 34.4(2013): 577.

Bribery and Corruption in the Bible

The section investigates the religio-cultural setting of the Gospel of Matthew. The Old Testament (OT) gives evidence of bribery and corruption in Israel (and in Judaism).⁵⁴ The OT forbade bribery and corruption in Ancient Israel. In the Torah, ancient Israel is warned of the dangers associated with taking rewards. They are informed that rewards can corrupt the mind, lead to the falsification of facts and obstruct justice. The Hebrew word (רָשָׁוּת) translated as a bribe, is used in the negative sense throughout the OT. In Deuteronomy 10:17 (2 Chron 19:7), the Lord God of Israel shows no partiality nor takes a bribe (רָשָׁוּת). He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow and deals kindly with the stranger (Deut 10:18). Moses instructed the children of Israel to appoint judges and officers to judge the people in the city gates in Palestine (Deut 16:18). He further admonished them not to pervert justice. They should not show partiality or take a bribe (רָשָׁוּת). In the view of Moses, a bribe “blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous” (Deut 16:19). Justice, in the opinion of Moses, would preserve the children of Israel on the land (Deut 16:20). In Deuteronomy 27:25, a person who takes a bribe to twist justice against the innocent (to slay the righteous) is cursed. This is in the context of the covenant blessings and curses (Deut 27-30). The sons of Samuel, Joel, and Abijah, who became judges in Israel, took bribes and perverted justice (1 Sam 8:3).

In 1 Kings 15:19, Asa, king of Judah, sent a bribe (present of silver and gold) to Ben-Hadad, king of Syria, to lure him to break ties with Baasha, king of Israel. As a result, Ben-Haddad attacked Israel, forcing Baasha to retreat from attacking Judah (1 Kgs 15:16-21; 2 Kgs 16:8). In Job 15:34, a fire will destroy the tent of bribery. In Psalm 15:5, a person who dwells with the LORD does not take a bribe against the innocent. In Psalm 26:10, bloodthirsty men (sinners) give and receive kickbacks. In Proverbs 6:35, a husband whose wife commits adultery will not be satisfied with a bribe (many gifts). In Prov 17:23, a wicked person accepts a bribe in secret to pervert justice. In Isa 1:21-23, Jerusalem has degenerated from glory to harlotry. It has deteriorated from a place of justice and righteousness to a place of murderers. The noblemen had become rebellious and thieves. As a result, they take bribes and follow after unjust gain (vs.23). They do not defend the fatherless and the widow who come before them. In Isa 5:21-23, people who are wise in their eyes (drunkards), take a bribe (vs. 23) to justify the wicked and deny the righteous justice. In Ezekiel 22:12, the inhabitants of Jerusalem take bribes to shed innocent blood. Thus, the OT warns against the giving and receiving of bribes in Israel. Despite the warnings, bribery and corruption existed in Israel, especially among the ruling class of society.⁵⁵

Other New Testament (NT) books, besides Matthew’s Gospel, provide evidence of bribery in Israel. In Luke 3:13, John the Baptist admonished the tax collectors not to collect more than was required from the people. In Luke 3:14, John the Baptist told the soldiers who came to him to be content with their pay. In Acts 8:20-23, Simon, the sorcerer, attempted to bribe Peter and John in exchange for the power to cast out demons (“he offered them money, saying, ‘Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit’”). In Acts 24:26, Felix expected a bribe from Paul to set him free (“he hoped that Paul would give money to him”). 1 Timothy 6:10, the love of money is the root of all evil. The Bible provides evidence of bribery and corruption. It also includes advice and laws to minimize bribery and corruption.⁵⁶

Bribery and Corruption in Matthew’s Gospel (Matthew 26:14-16; 28:11-15)

The two bribery and corruption narratives in Matthew’s Gospel portray the priesthood as corrupt. In 26:14-16, the priests bribed Judas Iscariot with thirty pieces of silver. In Mathew 28:11-15, the priests bribed the guards who reported the resurrection of Jesus to them. The two narratives portray the priests as agents of corruption.

Literary Analysis of Matthew 28:11-15

⁵⁴ Rotaru, Bodislav, and Georgescu, “A Review of Corruption,” 240; Ronald L. Kotesky, *Missionaries and Bribes* (Wilmore: GO InterNational Publishing, 2012).

⁵⁵M.Costas, *Grecia Partenonului*. (Bucharest: Prietenii cărții Publishing, 2001).20-22.

⁵⁶Kotesky, *Missionaries and Bribes*; Rotaru, Bodislav, and Georgescu, “A Review of Corruption,” 240.

The periscope of the priests' bribing some guards who reported the resurrection of Jesus to them is sandwiched between Jesus' instruction to some women to inform his disciples to meet with him in Galilee, 28:9-10, and Jesus' subsequent meeting with his disciples in Galilee, 28:16-20. The two narratives occurred after his resurrection from death. The position of the bribery scandal heightens the tension of the announcement of Jesus' resurrection in Matthew's Gospel. The triad of human witnesses of Jesus' resurrection in Matthew's Gospel from the women (cf. 28:5-8), some of the guards (28:11), and the eleven disciples (28:17) reinforce the resurrection of Jesus from death (see Deut 17:6). In both narratives, Jesus' followers worshipped him (they prostrate, 28:9, 17). Also, in both stories, Jesus spoke to his followers (28:9, 10; 28:18-20). Moreover, in both narratives, Jesus gave instructions to his followers to carry out (28:10-11; 28:19-20). Amid Jesus' interaction with his followers, the priest and the guards are introduced. The priests would have the guards introduce falsehood into the resurrection narrative. This attempt, if successful, has the potential to discredit the witnesses of the disciples that Jesus had risen from death.

The genre of this periscope is a narrative. It narrates the interaction between the priests and some of the guards at Jesus' tomb. The story recounts the priests and elders of the Jews bribing the guards of Jesus' tomb to tell a lie about the resurrection of Jesus. After witnessing his resurrection, some of the guards at Jesus' tomb, came to the city to report to the priests. The priests, after consulting with the elders, offered to bribe the guards and instructed them to say that the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus while the guards slept. The priests assured the guards that they would influence the governor not to punish the guards if the false information got to him. The guards consented, received the bribe and probably spread the falsehood. The Evangelist's comment that the falsehood had a lasting influence on the Jews gives weight to the dire consequence of the planned lie by the priests.

Syntactical Analysis of Matthew 28:11-15

Matthew 28:11-15 records the priests bribing the guards to lie about the information regarding Jesus' resurrection. It relates to some guards' visit to the priest and reporting Jesus' resurrection to them (28:11). The priests consulted with the elders and bribed the guards with a large sum of money (28:12). The priests and elders coached the guards to peddle lies about the guards, Jesus, and his disciples (28:13). The priests and elders assured the guards of their protection from punishment (28:14). The guards took the bribe and peddled the lies. The result of their schemes was that the lies gained ground among the Jews (28:15).

The genitive absolute, Πορευομένων δὲ αὐτῶν (*poreuomenôn de autôn*), 28:11, shifts the narrative from the women to the guards (the guards are introduced in 27:62-66). The Greek construction emphasises ἀπήγγειλαν (*the announced*). All the other verbs, πορευομένων, and ἐλθόντες are participles. Thus, some of the guards announced to the priests what had happened, possibly, the resurrection of Jesus. The syntax implies that τοῖς ἀρχιερεῦσιν (*chief priests*) in v 11 is inferred in v. 12. Thus, the chief priests conferred with the elders to bribe the soldiers with money to falsify the resurrection of Jesus. The emphasis in v. 12 is ἔδωκαν (*they gave*); other verbs (συναχθέντες and λαβόντες) are participles. Thus, the chief priests and the elders resolved that they give money to the soldiers to influence them to falsify the resurrection of Jesus. This constitutes an attempt to bribe. In v. 13, the chief priests fabricated the falsehood the soldiers should peddle around concerning the body of Jesus. The chief priests commanded what the guards should say: εἶπατε ὅτι οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ νυκτὸς ἐλθόντες ἔκλεψαν αὐτὸν ἡμῶν κοιμωμένων. (*Say that his disciples came and stole him while we slept.*) The irony of this lie is that the guards purportedly saw the disciples steal Jesus' body while still asleep. Besides the imperative εἶπατε (*say*), the main verb is ἔκλεψαν (*they stole*) which links Jesus' disciples with stealing. The conditional sentence in v. 14 is a more vivid future condition.⁵⁷ Thus, the offence of neglect might reach the government, which would punish the guards. The crime of negligence by the guards could be punishable by death.⁵⁸ The chief priests, however, assured them that the chief

⁵⁷Norman H. Young, *Syntax Lists for Students of New Testament Greek*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 99.

⁵⁸Tom Hale and Steve Thorson, *Applied New Testament Bible Commentary*, new ed. (India: 2007), 210.

priest would secure their safety. They could probably also attempt to bribe the governor to set the guards free. This promise of protection, together with the money, might have lured the guards into taking the bribe (corruption) and spreading the falsehood about Jesus' resurrection.

Verse 15 shifts the narrative back to the guards. The guards yielded to the corrupting influences of the high priests and the elders. They took the money and did as their corruptors instructed them. The Evangelist adds a comment that the falsehood spread by the guards did influence the Jews for some time. If Matthew's Gospel dates to the AD 70s, the falsehood might have remained with the Jews for about forty (40) years. So far, the syntactical analyses have shown the following: (1) the narrative in Matt 28:11-15 provides evidence of bribery and corruption. (2) the religious leaders of Judaism perpetrated the bribery and corruption in Matt 28:11-15. (3) the bribery and corruption incident in Matt 28:11-15 influenced the guards of the tomb of Jesus to distort the resurrection narrative of Jesus. And (4) the effect of the bribery and corruption incident in Matt 28:11-15 adversely affected the potential power of the resurrection narrative of Jesus. The next section deals with the implications of the study.

Implications

The following implications can be drawn from the analysis of the bribery and corruption narrative of Matt 28:11-15: (1) workers in religious organisations are not immune to evil. (2) the dare influence of bribery and corruption can destroy lots of good (3) The Bible frowns upon bribery and corruption.

Bribery and Corruption in Africa

The issue of bribery and corruption has bedevilled almost every country in Africa.⁵⁹ The corruption situation in Africa has been described as endemic.⁶⁰ Thus, bribery and corruption is a threat to the development of African countries. It can hinder economic growth, increase inequality and lead to poverty.⁶¹ The Transparency International Global Corruption Perception Index (CPI) has revealed that African countries rank low, with more scoring inferior than the average score.⁶² In 2014, five out of the ten most corrupt countries were in Africa.⁶³ In 2015, six out of the ten most corrupt countries were in Africa.⁶⁴ In 2016, five out of the ten most corrupt countries were in Africa.⁶⁵ In 2017, four out of the ten most corrupt countries were in Africa.⁶⁶ In 2018, four out of the ten most corrupt countries were in Africa.⁶⁷ In 2019, five out of the ten most corrupt countries were in Africa.⁶⁸ In 2020, five out of the

⁵⁹Meyer, "Is Africa Winning the Battle against Corruption?" 1.

⁶⁰Uwimana, "How Corruption is Stifling Africa's Growth," 1.

⁶¹Rubio and Andig, "Serious about sustainability? 3; Kaufmann and Vicente, "Legal Corruption," 2; Kaufmann and Kraay, "Growth without Governance," 169-229; Mauro, "Corruption and Growth," 681-712; Sobrinho and Thakoor, "More Sand than Oil," 2; Gaspar, Mauro, and Medas, "The True Cost of Corruption," 1-2.

⁶²Transparency International, "Global Corruption Perception Index, 2019," 1; Transparency International, "Global Corruption Perception Index, 2018," 1; Transparency International, "Global Corruption Perception Index, 2017," 1, 2; Akorede, "Here Are Three Ways African Youth Are Defeating Corruption," 2.

⁶³Gatimu, "Why African Need to Find New Ways to Fight Corruption," 2.

⁶⁴Transparency International, "Corruption Perceptions Index 2015," (Jan 2016): 5. The countries were Somalia (167), Sudan (165), South Sudan (163), Angola (A63), Libya (161), and Guinea Bissau (158), scoring 8, 12, 15, 15, 16, and 17 respectively. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2015>

⁶⁵Transparency International, "Corruption Perceptions Index 2016," (Jan, 2017): 5. They were Somalia (176), South Sudan (175), Sudan (170), Libya (170), and Guinea Bissau (168), with the score of 10, 11, 14, 14, and 16 respectively. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2016>

⁶⁶Transparency International, "Corruption Perceptions Index 2017," (Jan, 2018): 5. They were Somalia (176), South Sudan (175), Sudan (170), and Libya (170), with the score of 9, 12, 16, and 17 respectively. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2017>

⁶⁷Transparency International, "Corruption Perceptions Index 2018," (Jan, 2019): 5. They were Somalia (180), South Sudan (179), Sudan (173), Equatorial Guinea (173), and Libya (168), with the score of 10, 13, 16, and 17 respectively. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2018>

⁶⁸Transparency International, "Corruption Perceptions Index 2019," (Jan, 2020): 5. They were Somalia (180), South Sudan (179), Sudan (173), Equatorial Guinea (173), and Libya (168), with the score of 9, 12, 16, 16, and 18 respectively. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2019>

ten most corrupt countries were in Africa.⁶⁹ In 2021, four out of the ten most corrupt countries were in Africa.⁷⁰

Table 1 below is the statistics of the ten most corrupt countries in 2021. The table gives a snapshot of how the ten most corrupt countries in Africa in 2021 have fared on the Corruption Perception Index for the last ten years, since 2012.

Table 1. The Ten Most Corrupt Countries in Africa According to the Corruption Perception Index.⁷¹

Year/ Rank- Country	2012 (Out of 176 count ries)	2013 (Out of 177 count ries)	2014 (Out of 175 count ries)	2015 (Out of 168 count ries)	2016 (Out of 176 count ries)	2017 (Out of 180 count ries)	2018 (Out of 180 count ries)	2019 (Out of 180 count ries)	2010 (Out of 180 count ries)	2021 (Out of 180 count ries)
Congo	144	154	152	146	159	161	165	165	165	162
Guinea Bissau	150	163	161	158	168	171	172	168	165	162
Sudan	173	174	173	165	170	175	172	173	174	164
Chad	165	163	154	147	159	165	165	162	160	164
Burundi	165	157	159	150	159	157	170	165	165	169
Democra tic Republic of Congo	160	154	154	147	156	161	161	168	170	169
Equatori al Guinea	163	163	-	-	-	171	172	173	174	172
Libya	160	172	166	161	170	171	170	168	173	172
Somalia	174	175	174	167	176	180	180	180	179	178
South Sudan	-	173	171	163	175	179	178	179	179	180

Table 1 above shows that except Sudan, the 2021 top ten corrupt countries of Africa are becoming increasingly corrupt since 2012. Sudan was ranked 173rd out of 176 countries in the world in 2012. In 2022, Sudan has improved to 164th out of 180 countries in the world. In 2012, South Sudan was ranked 173rd out of 177 countries in the world. In 2021, South Sudan was ranked 180th, out of 180 countries in the world. Equatorial Guinea was ranked 163rd, out of 176, in 2012. In 2021, it was ranked 172nd out of 180 countries. Somalia ranked 174th out of 176 countries in 2012. In 2021, it was ranked 178, having been ranked the most corrupt country in the world in 2017, 2018, and 2019. There is, therefore, an urgent need to remedy the situations of most of these countries, shown in Table 1, and others where corruption has become rampant in society.

⁶⁹Transparency International, “Corruption Perceptions Index 2020,” (Jan, 2021): 5. They were South Sudan (179), Somalia (179), Sudan (174), Equitorial Guinea (174), and Libya (173), with the score of 12, 12, 16, 16, and 17 respectively. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020>

⁷⁰Transparency International, “Corruption Perceptions Index 2021,” (Jan, 2022): 5. They were South Sudan (180), Somalia (178), Libya (172), and Equitorial Guinea (172), with the score of 11, 13, 17, and 17 respectively. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021>

⁷¹The table was adopted Transparency International, “Corruption Perceptions Index 2012 to 2021,”

The UN Economic Commission for Africa estimated that between 2000 to 2009 annual outflow of illicit finance through trade mispricing in Africa alone was US\$ 60 billion.⁷² The Mo Ibrahim Foundation has revealed that African countries lose over US\$ 148 billion every year due to corruption.⁷³ Transparency International has revealed that 75 million people in Africa paid bribes in 2017.⁷⁴ Research has also shown that 130 million (more than 25%) Africans have paid bribes before accessing essential services like schools, hospitals, the acquisition of identity cards, and police services in 2018.⁷⁵ The situation is worrying when about half of the working force in Africa thinks that during an economic crisis, bribery and corruption are acceptable.⁷⁶ Research has revealed that the most corrupt government agencies in Africa are the police and the judiciary.⁷⁷ The dire effects of bribery and corruption in Africa are worrying. The rampant corruption in the police force and the judiciary in Africa has resulted in injustices in the continent.⁷⁸ Corruption in Africa deprives the majority poor of their essential needs for food, health, education, housing, access to clean water, and sanitation in Africa.⁷⁹ Corruption can hinder the achievement of all the seventeen (17) Sustainable Development Goals in Africa.⁸⁰ Moreover, corruption is a threat to development and peace in Africa,⁸¹ thus, the need to remedy the corrupt situation of most African countries where corruption is on the ascendency.

Religion and Corruption

Some religious leaders in Africa are believed to be engaging in bribery and corruption. 16% of about 47000 citizens in 35 countries in Africa surveyed in 2019 believe that most or all religious leaders are corrupt.⁸² Though this is the lowest compared to the police (47%), government officials (39%), members of parliament (36%), business executives (36%), president/prime minister's office (34%), judges and magistrates (34%), local government officials (33%), traditional leaders (22%), and NGOs (20%).⁸³ Their roles as spiritual leaders and role models of their congregants demand that the issue is addressed.⁸⁴ Though this was an improvement from 2017 (18%) and against worsening percentages for the police (36%), elected representatives (36%), government officials (35%), business executives (34%), local government (33%), prime minister/president (32%), tax officials (32%), judges and magistrates (30%),⁸⁵ there is room for an improved perception about religious leaders in Africa on the corruption they are assumed to be exemplary lead lives.

The 2016-2018 Afrobarometer survey of 38 African countries on perceived corruption of key public officials also rated religious leaders at 15%.⁸⁶ It was also the lowest over against that of the police (46%), government officials (38%), business executives (35%), members of Parliament (35%), judges and magistrates (33%), presidency (33%), local government councillors (32%), non-

⁷²Uwimana, "How Corruption is Stifling Africa's Growth," 2.

⁷³Gatimu, "Why African Need to Find New Ways to Fight Corruption," 2.

⁷⁴Narfeldt, "Why Corruption in Africa Can No Longer Be Tolerated," 2.

⁷⁵O'Donnell and Hickey, "How Africans Are Dealing with Everyday Corruption," 1-4; Kate Whiting, "1 in 4 Africans Had to Pay a Bribe to Access Public Services Last Year," *World Economic Forum* (2019): 1.

⁷⁶Fleming, "Corruption Costs Developing Countries \$ 1.26 Trillion every year," 2.

⁷⁷José Ugaz, Former chair of Transparency International, quoted in Narfeldt, "Why Corruption in Africa can no longer be tolerated," 2; Bruce-Lockhart, "Africa's Top 10 Countries for Anti-Corruption," 1.

⁷⁸ Ugaz, "Why Corruption in Africa can no longer be tolerated," 2; Bruce-Lockhart, "Africa's Top 10 Countries for Anti-Corruption," 1.

⁷⁹ Ugaz, "Why Corruption in Africa can no longer be tolerated," 2; Bruce-Lockhart, "Africa's Top 10 Countries for Anti-Corruption," 1.

⁸⁰Rubio and Andig, "Serious about sustainability? 3

⁸¹Anton du Plessis, "Corruption Isn't Just a Developing World Issue, and It's Time Western Leaders Did More," *Quartz Africa* (May 12, 2016): 1; Coralie Pring, and Jon Vrushu, *Global Corruption Barometer Africa 2019: Citizen's Views and Experiences of Corruption, Afrobarometer* (Jan 28, 2020), 12.

⁸²Whiting, "1 in 4 Africans Had to Pay a Bribe to Access Public Services Last Year," 2.

⁸³Whiting, "1 in 4 Africans Had to Pay a Bribe to Access Public Services Last Year," 2.

⁸⁴Transparency International, "Global Corruption Perception Index, 2019), 1-10. (The higher an institution's number, the more corrupt it is deemed to be.

⁸⁵Transparency International, "Global Perception Barometer: Citizens' Voices from Around the World," (Nov 14, 2017): 2.

⁸⁶Howard, "Religion in Africa," 11.

governmental organizations (20%), and traditional leaders (18%).⁸⁷ Africans relate with their religious leaders more often than other public officials.⁸⁸ They also trust their religious leaders more than other public officials.⁸⁹ It is fair to propose that religious leaders can influence Africans for good and mitigate the evil influence of corruption in Africa more than other public officials.

Research has revealed a correlation between religion, culture and human behaviour.⁹⁰ Religion can contribute to one's susceptibility to engage in corrupt practices.⁹¹ Some religious leaders are championing the fight against corruption.⁹² As such, religion has been identified as a potent force that affects the way people live.⁹³ Research has also revealed that almost all Africans profess to belong to religious faiths.⁹⁴ Empirical research has also shown that religiosity can better help fight corruption.⁹⁵ Therefore, using religion to counter corruption in Africa may be in order.

However, the church in Africa is faced with the problem of bribery and corruption.⁹⁶ Crossman explained that practices could be transmitted from one culture to another.⁹⁷ When the clergy give a bribe and become corrupt, members of congregations in particular and the wider society in general, may learn from their bad example and lead similar lives in the church and society. The church in Africa could do society well if it could champion the fight against bribery and corruption. The church should demand accountability from its leadership as an example of the broader society. The church should stamp out bribery and corruption within the ranks of its leadership by exposing and firing corrupt leaders. The church leadership should lead to bribery and corruption-free life to exert a positive influence on their congregants and the wider society. Thus, contemporary Christian church organizations in Africa ought to be at the forefront of fighting bribery and corruption in Africa. With these, the church in Africa would be God's agent for stamping out corruption in Africa.

SUMMARY

The research has established that bribery and corruption was rampant in the first-century Greco-Roman world. Politicians, judges and soldiers received bribes from the people they served. In response, laws were enacted, and decrees were issued to help check the corrupt practices of the time. The analysis of the bribery and corruption narrative of Mathew 28:11-15 has provided some insight into the interpretation of the periscope which can serve as a warning for ministry in Africa. The priests and elders of the Jews bribed the guards at Jesus' tomb to falsify the resurrection of Jesus. The result of their action affected the testimony of Jesus' resurrection among the Jews. Bribery and corruption is rampant in Africa. Bribery and corruption in Africa has affected the political, social-economic and individual development of the continent. It has also led to mass poverty in the continent. It has denied people, especially the poor and the needy, their right to good education, health, justice, and other social amenities to better their living. The church in Africa is not spared of the cancer of bribery and corruption. Some religious leaders in Africa are perceived to be corrupt. The bribery and corruption episode in Matthew 28:11-15 can serve as a warning to church leaders in Africa. Their actions and inactions concerning stamping out bribery and corruption in Africa can affect how the continent deals with the menace since most Africans are religious and are church members. The church should serve

⁸⁷Howard, "Religion in Africa," 11.

⁸⁸Howard, "Religion in Africa," 8.

⁸⁹Howard, "Religion in Africa," 9.

⁹⁰Tarakeshwar, Stanton, and Paragament, "Religion," 377; Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*; Schreiter, "Faith and Cultures," 774; Shorter, *Towards a Theology of Inculturation*, 1; Louis J. Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1988), 1; Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 1; Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 1; Tillich, *Theology and Culture*, 42.

⁹¹Beets, "Global Corruption and Religion," 69-84; Shadabi, "The Impact of Religion on Corruption," 102-117; Gokcekus and Ekici, "Religion, Religiosity, and Corruption," 1.

⁹²Beets, "Global Corruption and Religion," 69-72.

⁹³Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 1.

⁹⁴Howard, "Religion in Africa," 1, 2; Barrett and Johnson, "Religion: World religion statistics."

⁹⁵Gokcekus and Ekici, "Religion, Religiosity, and Corruption," 15.

⁹⁶Tarakeshwar, Stanton, and Pargament, "Religion," 381.

⁹⁷Crossman, *Diffusion*, 2012.

as an agent to stamp out bribery and corruption in Africa.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the strength of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are drawn regarding how the exegetical analysis of Matthew 28:11-15 could serve as a warning for ministry in Africa. Though bribery and corruption have existed throughout recorded human history, the Bible frowns on it. The Bible teaches that people should emulate God's example by avoiding bribery and corruption. The Bible also exposes the corrupt leaders of God's people. The evil effects of bribery and corruption are recorded throughout the pages of the Bible. To ensure that the church in Africa champions the fight against bribery and corruption, the following are recommended: (1) that the church should demand accountability from its leadership to serve as an example for the wider society; (2) that the church in Africa should expose and fire corrupt leaders; and (3) that church leaders in Africa should lead bribery and corruption-free life as examples to members and the wider society. The above recommendations, in the view of the paper, will make the church in Africa relevant in dealing with the menace of bribery and corruption in the continent.

CONCLUSION

The study has examined bribery and corruption as well as its consequences with much focus on the biblical passage of Matthew 28:11-15. With a comprehensive review of literature that relates to bribery and corruption and its relation to the church in Africa, the study arrived at a justification to undertake this research. Through the use of the text-centred approach under the exegetical study, with much emphasis on the syntax and text grammar, lexical and semantics, literary, and textual analyses, as methodology, the study has arrived at several conclusions and recommendations.

The study noted that the church in Africa must take some precautions from the implications of Matthew 28:11-15 in addressing the menace of bribery and corruption.. the analysis of Matthew 28:11-15 reveals that working for God does not exclude the Christian or godly from evil vices such as bribery and corruption. This calls for a careful and intentional commitment of the Christian to live a godly life following biblical principles. Again, the dare influence of bribery and corruption can destroy lots of good in society. Therefore, the African church leader must commit himself or herself to bringing his or her life and that of his or her followers/member to imitate the lifestyle of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, the textual study of Matthew 28:11-15 serves as a warning to religious leaders in Africa. The religious leaders and the church are to demand accountability from its leadership to serve as an example for the wider society. Again, the church in Africa should expose and fire corrupt leaders. Also, the African church leaders should use their personal lives as examples to members and the wider society as they expunge bribery and corruption from their daily living.

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