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As the first quarter of the twenty-first century comes to an end, the world continues to witness an increasing and almost unprecedented challenge caused by corruption and the injustices it brings to global society. These challenges are clearly presented both to the global community and the church. The question arises: how best can Christians and the church demonstrate their calling as one which includes speaking against corruption and injustice? Scholarship has engaged fruitfully with this question, on both the themes of justice and corruption. Theologians, both lay and ordained, have identified a need to consider corruption and lack of justice as an issue not only for the secular world but also the church. This article is a biblical, theological, and ethical discourse on justice and corruption, and a proposal for a model for the church to respond to corruption and injustice so as to bring about a just social order and make the gospel relevant today. This article draws on public and systematic theology to present theological-ethical perspectives on justice and corruption. Questions about justice and corruption in light of God's plan for humanity and the rising ethical anomalies in a global society are two issues which every society has struggled with throughout human history.

The article begins with an attempt to define and explore the meaning of and interplay between justice and corruption from a biblical, theological, and ethical perspective. Then it locates the role of the church and, building from a Christian traditional framework and modern church practice, proposes ways in which the church can see itself as an alternative community, one that uses prophetic utterance and creative action to respond to the two distinct but related issues of justice and corruption that impinge upon twenty-first century communities. In drawing on the need for church to set an example by actively caring for justice and the common good, the article calls for a renewed ecclesiological attention to justice and corruption by the church, and encourages it in equipping and sending ministers and or lay people so as to create space for addressing the refusal of justice that allows corruption to flourish. Through its discussion, this article also seeks to help the church to work towards crafting a new life characterized by a flourishing, just, and corruption-free global society.

Keywords: Justice, Injustice, Corruption, Shalom, The Christian church, Public theology, Political theology, Sin, Ethics, Imago dei (image of God)

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1 Introduction

This article draws on public and systematic theology to present theological-ethical perspectives on justice and corruption. Questions about justice and corruption in light of God's plan for humanity and the rising ethical anomalies in a global society are two issues which every society has struggled with throughout human history. Contemporary debates on the complex and deeply intertwined relationship between corruption and justice, and their multidimensional nature, are understood in terms of emerging models of engagement, casting them in a new light. This has led to an increasing worldwide public awareness of the concepts and the damage associated with injustice and corruption. This awareness calls for a fresh examination of these two universal social and theological phenomena. This article begins by echoing the prophet Habakkuk's concept of 'the wicked surrounding the righteous' (Hab 1:4) in order to introduce the public systematic theological nexus on justice and corruption. To do this, it first sketches and analyses past and present traditional voices and their response to the challenge of justice and corruption, identifying ways in which corruption can and has been understood, especially as being detrimental in societies. The article then examines how, and in what ways, key concepts and ideas about justice and corruption drawn from the historical roots of Christianity have informed and contributed to Christian responses to corruption. A fresh exploration of the expanded link between corruption and justice, together with the moral and ethical influences at play, seeks to add value to the ongoing discussions among Christian churches and denominations. As the discussion progresses, guiding-posts are identified for re-examining how Christian scriptures have been used to address issues of justice and corruption. This is done by classifying ideas, scholars, and texts which have been influential for theologians, Christian leaders, and Christian communities around the world as they sought to deal with different forms of corruption – locally, nationally, and globally. Finally, before concluding remarks, some suggestions are offered from a public theological point of view on how the church, amidst the modern rapid changing nature of justice, corruption, and injustice, can and should live up to its mission of spreading the gospel of Christ in the twenty-first century.

A careful reflection on the interplay between justice and corruption is of paramount importance. The expression 'when the wicked surrounds the righteous' is taken from Hab 1:4 and used here to help the reader connect the discussion on justice and corruption with the prophet who was disturbed and heartbroken by what he saw in his society, a world characterized by injustice and wickedness. The following summary of the contemporary situation justifies quoting at some length:

> *[The p]olitical environment* characterised by weak and often poor national governance structures, politically instigated conflict, corruption and repetitive cases of flawed elections;

> *[the e]conomic environment* indicates that Africa's economy has severely deteriorated over the past decade due to a multiplicity of factors including import/export restrictions, harsh lending conditions, skyrocketing unemployment, rampant poverty, HIV and AIDS, donor fatigue and rapid globalization; *[the s]ocial environment* is characterised by infiltration of negative dominant foreign culture, HIV and AIDS scourge and its effect on productivity, retrogressive cultural practices such as female circumcision and wife inheritance; *[the t]echnological environment* is characterised by lack of technical expertise, poor power supply and use of outdated technology within a fast changing information communication technology (ICT; *[e]cological trends* [are] recognized as major environmental problem facing the globe; *[the r]eligious environment* where the concern is on ecclesiastical issues, such as those of pastoral care for those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS; reconciliation and mediation amongst those affected by conflict and war; evangelism amongst millions of poor people; polarization with the western Church regarding issues of human sexuality; and within Africa an acute need for pastoral care for those affected by HIV & AIDS and victims of poverty, conflict and war. (Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa 2010: 9–10, original emphasis)

The phrase from Habakkuk is meant to convey the prophet's vivid concern for human justice in the face of oppression, in relation to how and what a godly person's attitude should be towards the presence of injustice in the society they live in. The expression helps also to address the nature of God's justice in dealing with moral evil of corruption, and challenges the reader to see the issues of justice and corruption with great sensitivity and a deep concern. In addition, the key terms 'wicked' and 'righteous' are important, in that 'the wicked' is associated with violence, injustice, wrong, strife, conflict, paralysis and perversion of the law, oppression, destruction, pride, and idolatry (Hab 1:1–4, 13–17; 2:4a, 5–8). In Habakkuk's time, injustice and corruption was a general phenomenon, most similar to the injustice between the powerful and the powerless in the modern era – the powerful as perverters of justice and the source of breakdown of order.

On the other hand, the righteous, well-identified based on God's righteous standard (Hab 2:4–5), live by their trust in God, and are the innocent people who are oppressed by those in power (compare Hab 1:4, 13 with Amos 2:6; 5:12; Isa 5:23; 3:10; 29:21; Gowan 1998: 95). They 'are those courageous enough to accept God's word of promise in a world dominated by the horrors of […] power […]. The righteous are those whose lives correspond to God's leadership' and those who 'live according to the demands of their relationship with God' (Barker and Bailey 1998: 325). The righteous are called to remain faithful during the present time where there is no visible support for faithfulness, and they are offered life if they persevere (Gowan 1998: 96). Unlike the wicked, who are the causative agents of problems and sufferings, the righteous are associated with 'life' (see

Ezek 3:21; 18:5–9, 24; 33:12–13). For Ernst Wendland (1999: 596), the righteous were individuals who remained forever ‘faithful’ to their covenant vows with Yahweh (Ezek 2:4b).

Although corruption is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon, in this article the word will be used in its in scriptural terms, i.e. extending to all depravity of the heart. It is not only an old issue, but a multifaceted and complex phenomenon that has always been difficult to define. Many commentators and institutions have tried to define corruption, each from their own perspective. For example, while Ken Kojder (quoted in Kubiac 2001: 3) sees corruption as that which ‘consists of diverse actions as well as social situations and interpersonal relations’, the United Nations, Transparency International, and the World Bank define corruption as ‘a misuse of public power, office or authority for private gain’ (World Bank 2020).

These efforts have not led to a single adequate global definition for measuring corruption in an all-inclusive way. This is because in most situations corruption takes various forms, and it affects all segments of society anywhere. Secondly, corruption is a hidden crime, meaning detection of corrupted behaviours can be more challenging than detecting other types of crimes. Most individual and institutional victims of corruption tend not to be willing or able to report the incidence. Those who experience, witness, and are able to identify the different types of corruption tend to be silent. Among the key issues that one should bear in mind when thinking about corruption is the fact that the crime is universal, it has no boundaries, no institution is immune to it, and is known to be widespread in many countries, as evidenced in the increased number of scandals and improper conduct observable in the media. Its serious adverse impact on humanity stands as a major cause for concern, leading to increasing public interest and attention as evidenced in the large amount of research available on the subject. People throughout the world not only view it with disfavour but believe that it should receive significant attention in any country’s agenda. This background demonstrates the need for further reflection on the meaning, causes, and impact of corruption.

2 Definition, causes, and consequences of corruption

The best entry point to defining corruption is to look first at some selected secular definitions. In trying to help him understand the meaning of corruption, the present author’s late father used to tell him that the simple way to know what corruption is, and how to avoid it, is simply not to take what is not yours. In this framing, corruption is taking what does not belong to you. This implies that corruption, apart from speaking of stealing, theft, and dishonesty, refers more broadly to other forms of behaviour, such as moral corruption by means of laziness; negligence of the poor and suffering; wasting others’ time; indulgence in drugs that others have paid for; pleasure that is always paid for but

inordinate; and a lack of care for creation. If this is the case, corruption is an unacceptable behaviour in any society. Beginning from the idea of behaviour or people's conduct, one discovers the root of something crucial for defining corruption. Corruption comes from the original Latin word *corruptio* which means, according to Transparency International, 'moral decay, wicked behavior, putridity or rottenness' (2009: 15). Looking at *corruptio* from a moral angle, it means 'moral deterioration or decay, perversion or destruction of integrity in the discharge of public duties by bribery or favour' (2009: 15).

When considering how corruption can be vicious, it is helpful to consider the proposal that corruption is about 'the destruction or spoiling of anything, especially by disintegration or by decomposition with its attendant unwholesomeness and loathsomeness; putrefaction' (2009: 15). According to Bryan R. Evans (Evans 2009; Discussion Paper 3) it is 'fraud (theft through misrepresentation), embezzlement (misappropriation of corporate or public funds) and bribery (payments made in order to gain an advantage or to avoid a disadvantage)'.

When looked from a regulatory perspective, corruption can be understood as nonconformity to – or deviation from – the formal rules of a particular system responsible for a regulatory mechanism of the behaviour of public and private officials. Commonly-known major categories, according to Transparency International (2009: 15–16) include: *grand corruption* or 'the corruption of heads of state, ministers, and top officials and usually involves large amounts of assets'; *petty or incidental corruption* committed by public officials when they abuse public services such as hospitals, schools, local licensing authorities, police and tax offices; *political corruption* which involves law- and policy-makers who buy their way to public offices through bribes; and *administrative corruption* which includes the payment of bribes in the awarding of contracts and tenders. From these secular definitions it is clear that corruption, across its diverse forms, natures, and types, has common features. For the crime of corruption to happen, it must involve giving or taking in a corrupt relationship, theft of public resources, and misappropriation of public funds. In most cases, trickery, swindling, deceit, bias, coercion, intentional violence, and threats to use force tend to be part of the corruption cycle.

Beyond the areas of politics and governance, corruption is also a general human problem of sin or evil. It may take the form of lies among children and adults, pride and greed in all spheres of life, both religious and secular, and as forgetfulness in the minds of people called for responsibility.

From this secular perceptive, we now turn to turn to a biblical, theological, and ethical understanding of corruption. According to biblical record, the problem of corruption has always been present in the record of human history. In the Old Testament, for example, we read that when the Israelites accepted the king, who was chosen by Samuel for the

purpose of demonstrating his own personal integrity, Samuel spoke to them and asked: 'From whose hand have I accepted a bribe to make me shut my eyes?' (1 Sam 12:3). Samuel's question indicates that bribery was not only already known but practised in ancient Israel. Likewise, we also read that as soon as King Jehoshaphat appointed judges for the people of Judah, his words of commissioning include a warning to them: 'Judge carefully, for with Yahweh our God there is no injustice or partiality or bribery' (2 Chr 19:7). King Jehoshaphat's counsel is an important reminder that throughout the scriptures God is the source, foundation, and moral basis for justice. This applies both to the contents of the Old Testament books and to the lives of the people (Deut 16:19; Exod 23:8; 2 Chr 19:7). In other words, the Old Testament is also concerned with human activities associated with the implementation of justice, in the context of the use of the law. In terms of justice and corruption, this use of the law is supposed to be fair, impartial, unbiased, and following the content of the law itself.

In the New Testament, acts and practices of corruption are also evident. We read of the corrupt Roman tax collectors and soldiers (Luke 3:1–20), the theft and betrayal by Judas Iscariot (John 12:1–8; Matt 26:14–15), and the story of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1–11). From both the Old and New Testaments, the problem of corruption cannot be separated from sin and its impact leading to human moral depravity. The concept of depravity or wickedness can well be understood in acts of selfishness, a behavioural problem caused by hearts being overrun by the devil and driven by greed. When corruption occurs, it means moral benchmarks in people's lives are violated; there is a lack of obedience to God's will and a deliberate denial of the standard of truth.

From a biblical, theological, and ethical perspective, someone is corrupt when one is defeated by the 'desire of the flesh' (1 Pet 2:11) – that is, evil or sinful desires – and not walking in the Spirit (Rom 8:1–13). This biblical, theological, and ethical explanation of corruption is used as a key guide to addressing corruption through biblical, theological, and ethical formulations. While J. T. Noonan contends that corruption involves '[…] bribes, judges, and the responsible exercise of power' (1984: 66), A. J. Gamble suggests that corruption as 'bribery and extortion [also has] effect in destroying proper and impartial justice' (1987: 217), and A. Hanke suggests that corruption is 'anything given to a person to induce him to do something illegal or wrong, or against his wishes' (1975: 653).

Corruption has its consequences. The common powerful pictorial language, used by various commentators from diverse walks of life to explain the concerns and magnitude of the effect of corruption, is helpful to conceptualize corruption, its forms, and effects on the society. A few common metaphors can help elucidate the consequences of corruption.

In the book *Corruption in Africa: A Threat to Justice and Sustainable Peace*, edited by Elizabeth Nduku and John Tenamwenye (2014: 11), contributors have summarized

pictorial language proposition and use. They all agree that corruption is an injustice in itself. They also agree that it comes in many shapes and stages. The pictorial language used includes: corruption '*gives rise*' to injustice and poverty; '*paralyzes*' efforts for the promotion of justice and sustainable peace in Africa; '*impairs*' political, economic, and social development; '*retards*' development efforts; '*hinders*' administrative development in the bureaucracy; '*breeds*' waste; '*aggravates*' budget deficit problems; '*reduces*' resources available for infrastructure, public services, and anti-poverty programs (see Robinson 1998: 90); '*undermines*' political institutions by '*weakening*' the legitimacy of accountability of governments; is a '*threat*' to justice and sustainable peace; is an '*obstacle*' to transparency and the pursuit of justice in public life; '*chokes*' the fundamentals of democracy and development; '*delays*' and '*subverts*' the cause of justice; '*creates*' a sense of insecurity, '*exacerbates*' poverty and 'adds' to the misfortune of the vulnerable segments of the society; '*instills*' a sense of hopelessness and despondency; '*slows*' human capital growth; and '*erodes*' the social fabric of societies, especially for the poor. These examples, though secular in nature, portray the devastating nature of corruption and injustice and provide an entry point for understanding the biblical-theological aspect of the consequences of corruption.

3 Justice: definition, meaning, and implication

Although there are a number of urgent topical issues that clearly call for attention from Christians in the twenty-first century, that of 'justice' and/or 'fairness' and their counterparts, 'injustice', 'unfairness', and 'inequality', is becoming more crucial and pressing than ever before. The heart of the conversation on justice is the need to capture its meaning and reflect on its implications, faces, and consequences. However, from a secular perspective, the meaning of 'just', its use, application, and measure, has for centuries been debatable. The most common concern is the challenge of finding a suitable definition or conceptualization which everybody would approve. This appears to be too ambitious a task. Every definition is largely contingent and contested. Any effort at providing a universal definition of justice has been made more complicated due to the changes taking place in the global community and the associated entrenched inequalities, which are key issues and challenges for justice. This has led to various dimensions and approaches being proposed: for example, people who advocate for trust and confidence as key terms to help conceptualize justice, while others would say effectiveness and efficiency of any justice system are the best determinants of justice delivery. This leads to questions such as: how just is justice? Justice according to whom? How do we define justice, and how can experiences of justice be captured, quantified, and qualified? These questions lead to justice repeatedly being perceived as a relative term, indicating that a sense of justice as having a proper and appropriate standard and principle is lacking in these definitions.

The word ‘justice’ appears as a common and prominent part of the vocabulary of many communities. Reflection on justice, in all walks of life and places, never goes out of style, and ‘justice’ has gained more prominence now than ever before. The reasons for this can be attributed to the evils of poverty, conflicts, oppression, exploitation, injustice, and alienation in the present age and, in response, an increased call to foster community resilience and address the roots of these evils, most of which are due to lack of justice and fairness. This increased attention has also led to contemporary thinking about justice involving diverse approaches as people seek to explain its meaning and significance. These approaches have gone beyond the commonly-known criminal justice perspectives and continue to capture the attention of scholars, organizations, and communities.

Depending on where a person is located, or what they are interested in, their approach to understanding, applying and protecting the value of justice is directed towards a particular focus. For example, there are those interested in concern for people who suffer from many forms of abuse and injustice, or those who would speak about ensuring the value of justice is delivered without delay, while others would stand firm on advocating for the independence of the criminal justice system, promoting gender justice, struggling non-violently for justice, and tackling the root causes of war arising from social and economic injustice. This method is based on discipline-specific definitions from, for example, political science, anthropological, judicial, and legal perspectives as well as social, environmental, climate, and economic or economists’ explanations.

In sum, it is the array of approaches and contexts, as well as continual philosophical reflection, which make the value of justice a challenge to some. For example, while in most cases many see the value of justice as a vital and realizable goal, Hans Kelsen disagrees and concludes that ‘[j]ustice is an irrational ideal. However indispensable it might be for man’s will and action, it cannot be reached by knowledge’ (Kelsen 1934: 15–16). To others, it has helped in raising attention to the global vision for justice. Miroslav Volf (1996: 196–207) proposes three conceptions of justice: first is the universalist claim that there is only one justice; second, the pluralist concession that justice bears many names; and third, the practical acceptance that justice can only be understood and enacted within a specific interpretative tradition. The list of approaches used seeking to help people understand justice could be expanded, and different scholars use similar words quite confidently.

For this article, which employs a Christian theological lens, the framework for the use of the term justice will be one which locates it within God’s intention for all creation to flourish. Based on this focus, the discussion of justice shall be geared towards offering considerations that might guide and encourage the reader to rediscover real justice as that

which should be grounded in the principles of divine justice. A few decades ago, T. Watson described divine justice this way:

> God's holiness is the cause of his justice. His will is the supreme rule of justice and the standard of equity. His will is wise and good and wills nothing but what is just […] God does justice voluntarily, [He] will not be bribed, because of his justice; He cannot be forced, because of his power. He does justice out of love to justice. Justice is the perfection of the divine nature […] God is not only just, but justice itself […] God has not only authority on his side, but equity […] It is below him to give an account to us of his proceedings. Which of these two is more fit to take place, God's justice or man's reason? […] The plumb line of our reason is too short to fathom the depth of God's justice. (Watson 1974: 88)

Within the context of this article, the concept of justice and its relevance and application require a more detailed explanation in relation to the nature and consequences of *injustice*. We shall now do this from a biblical-theological perspective.

Injustice stands against fairness; it is the opposite of justice. Injustice can be described as any wrongdoing which can easily be identified as, or resulting in, unfairness, bias, discrimination, and prejudice. As with justice – which God is concerned about and which is shown throughout the scriptures (Deut 15:1–18; 24:14–15), especially to the oppressed – God is also concerned with injustice and enmity, and therefore in a special way is 'the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged' (The Belhar Confession, 1986; see World Council of Churches 2002). Hence the calls for the church to 'stand where the Lord stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged' (The Belhar Confession). We also learn from Moses that concern for the underprivileged is of paramount importance (Exod 22:22–27; 23:6–9; Lev 19:9–10). God hates injustice, and he therefore expects the church to raise its prophetic voice, knowing that he cares for the poor and marginalized, and that his desire throughout salvation history has been to give abundant life to his people.

Additionally, injustice is also understood in this article as a breeding ground for human social ills, meaning that whenever there is any kind of injustice in a society, other social ills tend to be born out of the wrong committed. In the case of justice and corruption, the present author's three decades of pastoral field experience in sub-Saharan Africa show that common outcomes of injustice due to corruption tend to be persecution or abuse, ethnic and tribal conflicts, violence or oppression, bad governance, religious competition, and poverty. In the case of poverty, what is experienced in Africa is that, when it becomes extreme, poverty clearly illustrates how injustice lies behind vulnerability, helplessness, mistrust, and marginalization. Of most other social ills mentioned, the Bible indicates that poverty is most strongly linked with injustice. The prophet Amos describes this link as he puts emphasis on God's anger towards those who oppress the poor (Amos 4:1–2;

5:11–12, 24; 8:4). From a biblical-theological perspective, according to (Skeen 2016: 1), Christians are commanded not to participate in the many sins that surround them. One of which is the economic sin of the greedy and [dishonest] Ephesians 5. Skeen (2016) adds, the 'Old Testament records several passages that state God's displeasure at economic fraud and His respect for those who are honest'. For example, economic dishonesty, or fraud is emphasized in the context of weights and measures being detestable to the Lord God (Deut 25:13-16); people being like crafty merchants selling dishonest scales, they love to cheat (Hosea 12:1-8); cheating or being dishonest toward others (Phil 2:14-15). The linkage between injustice as sin in the form of dishonesty is well summarised in the words: 'They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice' (1 Sam 8:3); see also Ezek 18:8; 33:15; Lev 19:15, 35; Deut 25:16.

Accordingly, injustice has various faces with diverse effects. Practically, therefore, the church cannot claim to be immune to injustice. Its vulnerability to injustice has been manifested in many areas across its mission and service to humanity. To this end, therefore, in considering the implications of corruption and the injustices it facilitates, the need for a theological response to the problem – and for Jesus' call for his disciples to go to all nations, and be his witnesses to the ends of the earth, as part of that pursuit – it is important to recognize that injustice takes many forms. It is through grappling with this diversity that a model of theological engagement may be formed. Among the many injustices affecting people around the world are economic, environmental, structural, historical, and racial injustice, which tend to bring violent attacks, and colonial injustices which stand for past crimes. When speaking of these injustices as social sin, G. Baum (1975: 201) makes a summary comprising dehumanizing trends built into the various institutions – social, political, economic, religious and others – that embody people's collective lives. The mention of religion serves as a reminder that the church is also not immune to injustice, either as its source or as a victim. Elizabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza (1999: 33) looks at history and asks us to consider how scripture has been used to marginalize certain people, to legitimate racism and other languages of hate, or to intervene in discourses of injustice.

Injustice has its theological and non-theological implications. Any injustice done to a human being, community, or nation tends to have serious consequences. It can make a matrix of pain and suffering which intersect from a number of different angles. For example, in the case of economic injustice, it breeds poverty, which in turn brings suffering and pain when measured from 'its social and psychological effect': one who is poor may not only feel 'helpless, desperate, and hungry' but also experience shame, feeling 'inferior and deprived of their human dignity. The sense of shame and indignity is subjective but depends to a great extent on the attitude of others towards them' (Nicholls and Wood 1996: 70). Injustice has implications for human rights, as seen for example in development studies (cf. Philip and Robinson 2005), in political science (cf. Michael 2005), and in

studies on poverty (cf. Alsop 2004), which have emphasized the connection between corruption and the violation of human rights.

From a more direct theological perspective, injustice not only hinders God's vision of society being actualized in human relationships, be they social, economic, or spiritual, but also makes it difficult or – in extreme situations – impossible for God's will to be reflected in day-to-day life. There is also the toll of injustice, something which tends not to recognized or sidelines in most discussions, be an injustice produced by oppression, dehumanization, or exploitation has the potential to upset people's minds to the point of being unable to experience God's love. As one thinks of injustice, it is also important to remember that there is a need for peoples' minds to be made free of the minds from the corrosive influence of injustice. Likewise, and in relation to the mission of the church, tthroughout human history, injustices have proved to be a powerful barrier to most efforts by the church to enliven people's spiritual and social lives, and inspire them to strive for God's kingdom of peace, love, and justice. Injustice, especially where it is entrenched in or has its foundation built on corruption, can seriously hinder people (mostly the poor and powerless, but also the rich) from experiencing God's abundant life.

4 Justice and corruption in Christian tradition and practice

In the Christian tradition, humanity, sin, and the image of God are significant – even imperative – themes for a biblically engaged conversation on justice and corruption. Throughout the history of Christianity, a concern for justice has been at the heart of Christian tradition. This is reflected in the history, theology, spirituality, and many ecclesiastical confessions, as seen in the writings and teachings of Aristotle, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, Immanuel Kant, Reinhold Niebuhr, John Rawls, and Nicholas Wolterstorff. Christian tradition cannot be separated from confessions of faith and the practice of seeking justice established by centuries of ecclesiastical tradition. More essentially, it is connected to the people – past and present – who are concerned with matters of the inner life of the individual, the spiritual realm, and the ongoing involvement of Christians in the affairs of the world. Perhaps the most important movement in Christian tradition, which provided a new direction for Christian responses on justice, injustice, and the sheer need to deal with corruption, is the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation. The Reformation incorporated a number of unique elements, covering diverse human actions of the time. Alister McGrath (2012) sums up these key areas as: the reform of both the morals and structures of church and society; new approaches to political issues; shifts in economic thinking; the renewal of Christian spirituality; and the reform of Christian doctrine. Notably, the Reformation started within the church but was meant to impact the global society: according to Christian tradition, everything that happens in the world matters to God. This conviction has even

had a role to play in establishing the fundamental human rights of equality, freedom, and love. In emphasizing the impact of Christian tradition, Ferguson writes that:

> the Christian tradition has persistently claimed that there are laws of morality which are known out with the visible church and which Christians share with all other human beings […] anyone who wishes to learn a practice to achieve those goods towards which it is directed must espouse justice, courage, and honesty. The social nature of the goods we seek entails a commitment to these virtues in one form or another […] the achievement of our human good is dependent upon observance of principles, respect for which is a necessary condition of social well-being. (Fergusson 1998: 129)

Despite the Reformation's complex views about beliefs, doctrines, and principles of ethics, its impact can be seen today in terms of the wide-ranging effects (through many different approaches) on, the social, political, economic, and religious landscape. By and large, from its focus, content, and call for practice, the Reformation was concerned about the whole world and all creation. It is from this background that the church's attempts to address issues of justice, injustice, and corruption in the present day have tended to echo the Reformation tradition, its key theological concepts, and its ideas as related to Christian responses to corruption and justice and their connections to the church's mission in the world as revealed in the scriptures. D. J. Smit (2009: 3) writes of John Calvin's major emphasis on scripture and impact on life: for Calvin, the Holy Scripture is the ultimate norm not only for the life of faith but with regard to the formation of human life in community and society, again warning that social institutions should also be subjected to the critique of the Word of God. With similar emphasis, but also considering biblical, historical, and systematic theology's potential to play an important role in developing a specific theological contribution to justice as related to God's truth, Max Stackhouse locates the task of ethics as 'operating values and norms' which form 'scaffolding for organizing of common behaviour and moral debate in an institution, movement, organization, or tradition, even if many people hold, as personal convictions, other values and norms' (2000: 10). In sum, Christian tradition teaches and understands God to be compassionate about justice. As has been the case throughout the history of Christianity, God calls the contemporary church to follow, to be involved, to live, and to represent the same compassionate justice and truth in the world. The church is called to stand up for truth and proclaim the reign of God in the world. The concept standing up for truth evokes the need for believers to know this truth. David Fergusson remarks:

> [T]he truth is what God wills for us and all people, although this may only be known through divine revelation in history and the patterns that this establishes in the traditions of Israel

> and the church. Truth is thus not relative to a particular framework, although knowledge thereof is available only to those who inhabit the framework. (Fergusson 1998: 7)

This article explores a particular framework for how the church can best witness in the twenty-first century challenges of corruption and justice. First, at this stage, it is helpful to remember that Christian tradition is an important tool to help speed a renewed ecclesiological attention to justice and corruption.

Before turning to a discussion of the need for theological attention by the church, we begin by proposing some principal questions: why does the church exist? Why should it be concerned about corruption, justice, and injustice? Is there any role that religion – and specifically the Christian faith, tradition, and community in societies, especially today – can play in the context of corruption, justices, and injustices? If any, is it related to an intentional purpose of contributing to justice? Is there any evidence showing the degree of engagement by churches in God's global and holistic mission? What could the crucial role of the church be in the process of theological articulation and engagement? In the context of corruption and justice, which other activities could churches undertake as mission endeavours that are geared towards addressing corruption and injustice?

These and other related questions are pertinent for believers, churches, theologians, and faith communities. They are useful because, when reflected upon comprehensively, they can pave the way for these groups to think about what corruption, justice, and injustice may mean in the twenty-first century. They also have the potential to help them use their Bibles, doctrines at various levels, traditions, and to consider how they can best operate in public life, as they seek to bring light to the world by assuming the prophetic role against corruption and injustice. Similarly, such questions will help them understand why their churches and theology did not or do not promote justice, or where their churches or themselves as individuals are doing well. Individuals and faith communities may also seek to understand whether they need another level of clarity regarding how fighting corruption and injustice relates to the mission of churches, especially when changes continue to emerge in the landscape of theological discourses in the four areas suggested by Verkuyl, that is: communicating the gospel, fulfilling diaconal responsibility, establishing fellowship, and/or serving the cause of righteousness and justice (1978: 205).

For questions around corruption and injustice in relation to the humanity, sin, and the image of God, the place to begin is the creation narrative. Here, the Bible describes human beings as made in the image of God (Gen 1:26–27). This biblical-theological affirmation provides a theological framework from which the church may act in relation to others. Indeed, the word 'image' forms a central focus in Christian theology. This theology is open to and ever wrestling with questions of corruption, justices, and injustices, as related to God's plan for salvation. As Christian theology grapples with these issues, it has

interpreted the concept of the image of God in different ways, based on and appropriate to doctrinal backgrounds and foundations. For the purpose of this article, to be created in the image of God is used to refer to the way human beings share in God's goodness, God's life, God's wisdom, God's power, and God's justice (Zachman 2012: 35). In this view, corruption and injustices that continue to threaten humanity and cause wide-ranging distortions to human dignity, across the world, are not only unacceptable but contrary to the will of God. It follows therefore that, according to Christian tradition, corruption leads to injustice. This is the result of sin, that is, turning away from grounding life in the creator God.

Notably, theological reflection on corruption and injustice includes the soteriological premise that, in Christ, God has dealt with the alienating power of sin and created a new reality, which includes, to use David Kelsey's words, 'a new age of justice and communion with God' (2009: 442). For J. Murray, this new reality is 'a basis for the justice that ensures communion' (Murray 1998: 56). As well as being the will of God, it is, for Gustavo Gutiérrez, the 'will for life' well manifested in a 'a society of equals in which justice and rights are established' (2003: 5). In sum, human beings in the 'image and likeness of God' is one of the key teachings in Christian theology, deeply embedded in the scriptures and well-cherished in Christian tradition. The image therefore stands as a reminder that we are not only loved by God but we are all entitled to respect, regardless of our other identities, and we deserve to be treated with dignity. Likewise, we exist as agents of God's will.

It is important at this juncture to counter theologies which suggest the loss of the image of God. The image of God in humanity, suggests Barnette (1961: 14–16), was not lost at the fall (Gen 5:1–3; 9:5–6), but the fall left people with corrupt and wicked hearts (Gen 8:21). As a reminder of the implications of our likeness and identity – that is, a call to live like beings made in the image of God – Mangalwadi (2011: 63) links the image of God in the creation narrative with Christ's becoming human in the incarnation. The incarnation conferred enormous dignity on the human race, which means that we as human beings must accord equal dignity to fellow humans. This involves fighting corruption and doing justice to one another as an essential element of our identity. For a Christian believer, the image and likeness of God not only speaks of an important intrinsic value, and that humans share the essential attribute, guaranteeing a true identity, but it also gives knowledge and understanding that a believer is one of those whom Christ loves and for whom he died. To this end, connecting Christian tradition and current church practice in the fight against corruption is important. Two churches will be used in the conversation, namely the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church.

4.1 The Roman Catholic Church

The work of the Roman Catholic Church in fighting injustice and corruption in Africa and the world at large bears an important witness to why and how the church continues to be known as the moral and social force that compels and encourages believers to participate in the fight against corruption, bribery, and other related injustices. Key in this is Roman Catholic Social Teaching (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, Rome 2004), a central and essential element of faith, preserving and propagating the biblical prophets' message of God's special love for the poor.

Roman Catholic Social Teaching's approach to addressing the problem of corruption and injustice is based on God's calling his people to a covenant of love (Taylor 2007: 739) and justice. The teachings are biblical in that they are founded on the life and words of Jesus Christ, who according to the Gospel of Matthew identified himself with 'the least of these', the hungry and the stranger (cf. Matt 25:45), whose mission according to Luke's Gospel was 'to bring glad tidings to the poor […] liberty to captives […] recovery of sight to the blind' (Luke 4:18–19). This is also known as a doctrine concerned with human dignity and the church's vision for the wider common good in every society. Beyond addressing oppression, being a constant reminder on the role of states, this doctrine drives a social organization built on the Catholic faith, and is a foundation for the ongoing work of the church in fighting injustice and corruption in Africa.

The Catholic Church has used and continues to use various approaches to this work, including (but not limited to) promoting dialogue with the reality of corruption and injustice, and emphasizing that the anti-corruption movement is a collective goal and can best be achieved if believers live out the Catholic faith. The teachings of the Roman Catholic Church have encouraged and facilitated believers to tackle corruptive mentality by emphasizing that corruption is against Catholic faith. Across Africa, therefore, the movement is helping believers to participate actively at the grassroots/local church level in developing a corruption-free society as a result of God-fearing people being involved in the social justice system in the society.

To reiterate of the wisdom of Catholic Social Teaching, it is important to note that the emphasis placed by the church on certain core principles, which include human dignity, the concept of the common good, and a non-negotiable philosophy of preferential option for the poor. These are key to providing the church with a solid integral and comprehensive response to the reality of systemic corruption. In sum, within Catholic Social Teaching, it is the core social principles which offer the ethical framework for interpreting the Church's approach to its work of fighting injustice and corruption.

4.2 The Anglican Church

Based on the Anglican Church's tradition, and in relation its mission worldwide, the Anglican Communion continues to be proactive in creating plans to address the

contemporary global challenges that continue to arise within its mission field. On the issue of corruption and injustice, in line with the Church's mission and related to other issues facing humanity, at the Anglican Consultative Council of 1984 (Bonds of Affection; 1984: 49) the Anglican Communion developed a tool known as the 'Five Marks of Mission' as its signpost for mission.

These marks are: to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God; to teach, baptize, and nurture new believers; to respond to human need by loving service; to seek to transform unjust structures of society; and to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. Despite the ongoing debate around the 'five marks', leading to some modification and expansion of the terminology, the vital thrust of each remains, even under different use of terms. Some churches have adopted and now abbreviate the five marks to five words: tell, teach, tend, transform, treasure. It is under the fourth mark, namely, 'to seek to transform unjust structures of society', reframed by the Anglican Board of Mission in Australia (The Five Marks of Mission - ABM Anglican Board of Mission, www.abmission.org) as 'challenge violence, injustice and oppression, and work for peace and reconciliation', that the fight against corruption and injustice falls.

The Anglican Church sees its effort towards seeking justice as a reminder that the Lord Jesus Christ is the judge of all the earth. It involves the whole idea of serving society through compassion and justice, in response to Jesus sending Christians 'into the world', to love and serve, to be salt and light, to do good, and to 'seek the welfare' of the people around his people, as Jeremiah told the Israelites in Babylon (Jer 29:7; Wright 2006: 19) with hope that 'God will destroy the reign of death, corruption and violence when Christ returns to establish his eternal reign of life, justice and peace' (Cape Town Commitment; Lausanne Movement 2010).

Elsewhere, Alfred Sebahene has identified theological-ethical guidelines which inform and add theological content to the discourse on the role of the Anglican Church in the public sphere in general and in the fight against corruption in particular (Sebahene 2017). To understand and appreciate the global Anglican Church's stance on corruption and injustice, a statement by the GAFCON [Global African Future Conference] Primates' Council in Jerusalem provides some guidance:

> *Our God is a God of justice* and He commands His people to 'act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God' (Micah 6:8). Throughout the Scriptures God insists on honesty and integrity at all levels of our dealings with one other (Exodus 23:6–7; Proverbs 11:1, 17:15, Micah 6:8). *God is also the ruler of the kings of the earth. Christians are called to be loyal citizens of their country*. They are also called to be loving critics and critical lovers of their country. *Corruption needs to be dealt with appropriately*. In mixed societies, Christians have a responsibility to demonstrate just dealings *in their own lives*, and to do

> all they can to promote justice *on the larger scale. The church must engage with, and prophetically challenge, political and community leaders, in order to bring about change in society that will benefit all* (Jeremiah 29:7). Of particular concern will be the persecuted minorities, where love and justice call for prayer and protest on their behalf (Galatians 6:10). (GAFCON 2008: 58–59, emphasis added)

5 Biblical, theological, and ethical nexus between corruption and justice

As an entry point to the dynamic link between justice and corruption, God's peace (*shalom*) is a good starting point for fruitful reflection. One of the modern emphases in theological discourses about the nexus between justice and corruption is the proposition that the two concepts can best be understood if deliberated in line with shalom – the Hebrew word meaning holistic peace and prosperity, which in its broader sense embraces notions of wholeness, unity of relationships, and healing.

Building from a consideration of the consequences of corruption, corruption is in all senses a sinful act. It is a sin which causes suffering and is a root of many ills in society. In identifying injustice with sin, the theological discussion equates justice and corruption. This is because corruption and lack of justice – that is, conditions within which injustice can flourish – are forms of sin and evil, thus threatening shalom. Cornelius Plantinga's summary on the author of shalom is pertinent:

> […] God hates sin not just because it violates law, but also because it violates trust. Sin grieves God, offends God, betrays God, and not because God is touchy. God hates sin against himself, against neighbors, against a good creation, because sin breaks the peace – in the first place between the sinner and God. Sin interferes with the way God wants things to be. That is why God has laws against it. God is for shalom and *therefore* against sin. (Plantinga 1995: 14, original emphasis; cf. Plantinga 2002: 3)

A careful look at the principles of biblical shalom in relation to justice and corruption can shed more light here. In his book *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be* (1995), Plantinga writes that corruption is nothing else but fallenness, a state which leads to what he calls the 'vandalism of shalom' (1995: 30). Plantinga has a compelling definition of shalom which serves our discussion:

> […Shalom is] the webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in justice, fulfilment, and delight […] In English we call it peace, but it means far more than just peace of mind or ceasefire between enemies. In the Bible *shalom* means universal flourishing, wholeness, and delight – a rich state of affairs in which natural needs are satisfied and natural gifts

> are fruitfully employed […] *Shalom*, in other words, is the way things are supposed to be. (Plantinga 1995: 12)

On a related definitional emphasis, Nicholas Wolterstorff picks up the idea of vandalizing shalom and insists that

> […] shalom which corruption vandalizes is not peace as we normally call it, it means far more than mere peace of mind or a ceasefire between enemies. In the Bible, shalom means universal flourishing, wholeness, and delight – a rich state of affairs in which natural needs are satisfied and natural gifts fruitfully employed, a state of affairs that inspires joyful wonder as its creator and savior opens doors and welcomes the creatures in whom he delights. (Wolterstorff 1983: 69–72)

Other commentators add to Plantinga and Wolterstorff's propositions. Christopher Wright, in his book *Knowing Jesus through the Old Testament* (1992: 179), understands shalom as the 'complete well-being of a society' and 'a rightly ordered society'. Tarimo (2005: 25) gives examples of what constitutes God's intended society under the framework of shalom: '[s]halom, […] is witnessed in healthy human relationships (1 Kgs 5:12), wellbeing (Gen 37:4), prosperity (Jer 33:6, 9) and moral character (Ps 37:37)'. Additionally, Wright reminds us of God's salvation plan:

> […] for generation after generation, century after century, the God of the Bible was passionately concerned about social issues. […] So passionate, indeed, that the laws he gave and the prophets he sent give more space to these matters than in any other issue. (Wright 2006: 96, 280)

Bryant L. Myers uses injustices caused by poverty to as an example of the outcome of vandalized shalom, suggesting that '[p]overty is a result of relationships that do not work; that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable' (1999: 86). He concludes that poverty is, in essence, 'the absence of shalom in all its meanings' (1999: 86). Likewise, Elmer A. Martens (1986: 308) puts together the propositions on shalom and insists that the word is comprehensive, in that it entails wholeness, peace, harmony, protection, serenity, health, and prosperity. Shalom is made possible by God himself. Bethany Hoang and Kristen Johnson, authors of *The Justice Calling* (2016), affirm this position when they write: 'Because of his grace, we can live the way of life God intended for his holy people, the way of justice and righteousness, the way of shalom' (Hoang and Johnson 2016: 28).

6 Justice, corruption, and the church in the twenty-first century

At this juncture, and for the purpose of opening up and reinforcing current and future discussions, it is useful to highlight a number of important points in regard to justice, corruption, and the church. These are an emphasis on need for a just social order; awareness raising on justice in relation to corruption free society; the role of the church, which is a, 'sign, instrument and foretaste' (Newbigin 1989: 233) of God's shalom; and a special call around equipping and sending the church for justice and anti-corruption initiatives. These propositions allow a refutation of any theoretical framework that separates justice and corruption. The theological nexus which finds its source in the concept of shalom coheres with the gospel message, and can help redress injustice at its roots. To this end, and as reflected in 2 Cor 5:19–22, it is important to locate the role of believers, the church, and human participation in the work of making a society reflect God's shalom. God's will is for justice and order because, as Wright puts it:

> Justice is at the heart of God's plan for humanity. God's actions in history as referred to in the Bible and God's laws demonstrate God's desire for justice and God's compassion for those who suffer. (Wright 2006: 96, 280)

Likewise, 'corruption' may be understood as the deliberate turning away from God, indicating how God engages with people with love and justice to heal and restore all people so that they experience shalom. Christians may thus seek to understand how justice incorporates the blessing of shalom, and how best they can stand against social ills, knowing that God in Christ has begun the work of reconciling the world to himself – as expressed in 2 Cor 5:18–19, where one reads that '[t]hose who are in Christ join in this marvellous work of reconciliation' (Wright 1992: 179).

At this point in the discussion, where our focus is on religion and spirituality as significant elements in the fight against corruption and injustice, some foundational ecclesiological considerations are important. Firstly, from a theological point of view, concern for justice and social and ethical conditions that tend to blocks it – especially corruption and the injustices it facilitates – is, and should always be, at the heart of Christian proclamation. Key theological terms used in the World Council of Churches' document on mission and evangelism, *Together towards Life* (2013), highlight the bigger picture of how justice manifests for a corruption-free society: these include fullness of life, abundant life, wholeness, affirmation of life, and flourishing life. These terms are useful in articulating why any kind of separation between justice and salvation, is theologically wrong. According to Pillay (2022: 2–3), '[y]ou cannot proclaim the gospel without engaging the

mission of Jesus. [For] individual salvation and justice are inextricably linked to each other, like two sides of a coin. In this context acts of corruption and of corruption stands as manifestation of injustice'. Again based on the biblical affirmation of God's redemptive work, moral transformation, prophetic witness and the cry for social justice, Pillay (2022: 9), insists: 'Whenever Christians speak out and act against injustice, inequality and the dehumanisation of the human being, they serve as the ambassadors and servants of Christ. This is why the church, according to Conradie (2012: 203), must be identified as 'the champion of socio-economic justice'.

On the church's mandate in standing firm against the scourge of corruption, alleviating suffering and resistance towards injustice and oppression and pursuing peace, David Ford provides a key connection between salvation and doing theology:

> Salvation is not really one doctrine at all in most works of Christian theology [… but] is distributed through treatments of God, creation, human being, sin, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, atonement, justification, sanctification, vocation, church, ethics and politics, worship, sacraments, spirituality, ministry and eschatology: in fact, through all topics. (Ford 1999: 1)

Secondly, the church has a biblical-theological responsibility which has been and can be demonstrated through faithful prophetic discernment and engagement in various public issues of corruption, justices, and injustices. The church has the potential 'to bring prosperity, and to reduce suffering worldwide' (Taylor 2011: 174). To this point, a dimension that is often overlooked in these discussions is the nature and style of the church's engagement with the public sphere. It is important to consider what message the church has to give to the public, the sources of its message, and how that message is communicated. In principle, for Christians, it is and should always be a Christian message, since knowing God means doing justice (Jer 22:15–16). As such, it should include justice and the truth about the sin of corruption, extending to all depravity of the heart.

The next step is to seek to understand how best the church articulates the Christian message of justice as it stands against the suffering caused by corruption. The message which needs to be communicated should have a purpose, that is, is to be communicated for the attainment of people's self-worth and freedom from a life of dehumanization, injustice, and oppression to a life of dignity and justice. This theological task is possible for the church if it builds a clear theological foundation for seeking justice, while recognizing vulnerability and injustice that exists where it is located. As for the source of the message, the gospel, Scot McKnight writes: '[t]he gospel is the work of God to restore humans to union with God and communion with others, in the context of a community, for the good of others and the world' (2005: xii). A good example on the application of the gospel is in the book of James, where the apostle denounces the social injustices of the rich

who gain their goods through oppression (Jas 5:1). Myers sees the application of the gospel as addressing all injustices, including those which cause poverty ‘a result of relationships that do not work; that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable’ (1999: 86). Throughout the gospel narrative, the church is called to confront injustice and care for the victims of injustice.

Finally, this article would not be complete if the need for equipping and sending the church for justice and anticorruption were not stressed. Perhaps, having discussed and indicated that action for justice and the need for Christians to fully participate in combating corruption is an integral part of Christian mission by the church – and that that action is related to the proclamation of the gospel, – what is important now is reflection on the concepts of ‘equipping’ and ‘sending’ of the church as a theological impetus to the churches’ commitment to the mission of justice and the fight against corruption, needs which require a renewed attention. Coupled with the foundation that seeking a corruption-free society and justice lies at the heart of the Christian gospel, issues of corruption and justice cannot be overlooked among the other biblical-theological responsibilities of the church. Thus the question arises: to what extent has the church been equipped to integrate justice and an anticorruption mission into its praxis, so that it provides a satisfactory articulation of its place within Christian theology? Any theologically-affirmed shape and model of equipping the church should begin with the fact that God calls and equips some people to serve him across a wide range spectrum of ministry. That said, however, teaching is central to equipping. It is critically important begin with equipping believers with a more practical strategy with considerable impact: to equip them to apply their faith in the contexts in which they live. To do this successfully, Mark Greene (2001: 34) suggests that there is a need to enable churches themselves to help equip Christians to live as whole-life disciples of Jesus Christ every day of the week. From the present author’s three decades of ministry experience, this strategy is made possible when churches focus on the ministry of the word and prayer with a view of cultivating godliness on both individual and community levels. Through this ministry approach, diverse groups of local church members can be reached and equipped, for example, with basic Christian tenets and biblical messages and become more effective witnesses of the gospel in corruption and injustice contexts. As they do, they may trusting that God is still at work in the world, and that Christ is still engaged in ‘sustaining all things by his powerful word’ (Heb 1:3) and will continue to equip people through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This method of teaching and equipping is especially pertinent in modern times, when theological engagement is needed to respond to the ever-expanding world of theological and ethical questions that are emerging in relation to justice and corruption. This calls for the church think biblically and theologically about the importance and impact of the public witness of Christian faith.

7 Conclusion

This article provides a public theological-ethical reading of justice and corruption, highlighting and reflecting on pressing questions that emerge from the topic. Christian scripture has been used as a guiding post in the discussion, beginning with the dynamic link between the concepts of 'wickedness' (corruption) and 'righteousness' (justice) as used by prophet Habakkuk ('when the wicked surrounds the righteous', (Hab 1:4b). These concepts were used to highlight the meaning, place, and implementation of justice in the public space amidst the evil of corruption in society. The article expanded its theological reflection by classifying ideas, scholars, and texts which have been influential for theologians, Christian leaders, and Christian communities, paying attention to past and present Christian voices that have sought to address different forms of injustices caused by corruption locally, nationally, and globally. God's shalom has been offered as a key entry point to the nexus of justice and corruption, religion, and Christian faith as a significant theological principle in the fight against corruption and injustices it causes.

We have aimed at contributing to the development of thinking about and response to corruption and injustice by the church, and has offered suggestions on how the church can and should live up to its mission of spreading the gospel of Christ in the twenty-first century amidst the rapidly changing nature of corruption and injustice. These sources and frameworks are intended to assist readers from all walks of life in understanding the tension between justice and corruption in the modern global society. Likewise, the discussion serves as a reminder, especially Christians, of the call to work towards transforming society by engaging in the implementation and fostering of justice in the private and public spheres. This author encourages readers to seize every opportunity that comes their way for active involvement in the justice process, in the knowledge that God intends for people to implement shalom, a grand vision of a redeemed society for humankind, by seeking to live in right relationship with one another and with their creator. In this perhaps lies the potential for a just and corruption-free society characterized by whole-life transformation and restored relationships where we live. By standing for justice, Christians may address corruption knowing that justice is secured for believers by Christ's life, death, and resurrection. This divine assurance shows us how to live justly.

Attributions

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