
Protestant Christianity and Control of Corruption, Past and Present

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This article is structured around five key statements about corruption:

1. Corruption is a major obstacle to ending extreme poverty.
2. The World Bank strategy for reducing corruption lacks focus on incentives and hazards.
3. Protestant Christianity has motivated individuals to control corruption in the past.
4. Protestant Christianity continues to motivate some individuals to control corruption in the present.
5. There are, however, serious weaknesses in the wider Protestant response to corruption.

The article concludes with a sixth point, that Christians have a major role to play in the fight against corruption, but they must address three areas if they are to realize their potential: adequate funding, reflection on their current status in relation to corruption in society, and good theology. Finally, interested readers are invited to connect with the Faith and Public Integrity Network (<https://fpinetwork.wordpress.com/>).

Introduction

Corruption is widely understood to play a causal role in the persistence of global poverty. The World Bank makes this argument, as do Christian scholars such as Gary Haugen and Victor Boutros (2014) and Roberto Laver (2018). True, corruption may not be poverty's only cause, but the important role it plays requires us to fight it. After some introductory comments about how corruption and poverty are linked, this paper outlines the World Bank's strategy for controlling corruption, but critiques the Bank for being slow to acknowledge the lack of incentives for rulers to control corruption, or the hazards faced by champions of reform. If the World Bank is not up to the task, from whence might help come? The paper points out that Protestant Christianity has played an important role in the past in limiting corruption and goes on to argue that at least some Protestant Christians are taking up the task of fighting against corruption today. Two such organizations are introduced, one from the Philippines and the other from Honduras. Unfortunately, we must acknowledge that Christian organizations today are not as engaged in fighting corruption as their secular counterparts. Why is that? The paper explores three reasons why Christians are not taking up the fight as they should, and concludes with a call to Christians everywhere to take the Bible seriously and to get involved.

Corruption Is a Major Obstacle to Ending Extreme Poverty

Let us begin with a look at the nature of corruption, and its powerfully negative impacts, especially on the poor. There is no universally agreed definition of corruption, but this one developed by Transparency International is widely used: "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain." Transparency International classifies corruption as grand, petty, or political, depending on the amounts of money lost, and the sector where it occurs:

Grand corruption consists of acts committed at a high level of government that distort policies or the central functioning of the state, enabling leaders to benefit at the expense of the public good.

Petty corruption refers to everyday abuse of entrusted power by low- and mid-level public officials in their interactions with ordinary citizens, who often are trying to access basic goods or services in places like hospitals, schools, police departments and other agencies.

Political corruption is a manipulation of policies, institutions and rules of procedure in the allocation of resources and financing by political decision makers, who abuse their position to sustain their

power, status and wealth (Transparency International 2019a).

The discourse on corruption is located within the broader concept of governance, which has to do with the way decisions are made and implemented and with how citizens and other organizations are involved in that process. Control of corruption depends on good governance, in which the legislature, the executive and the judiciary – the three main institutions of the state – operate as they should.

The World Bank considers corruption a major challenge to its twin goals of ending extreme poverty by 2030 and boosting shared prosperity for the poorest forty percent of people in developing countries:

Corruption has a disproportionate impact on the poor and most vulnerable, increasing costs and reducing access to services, including health, education and justice ... Corruption erodes trust in government and undermines the social contract. This is cause for concern across the globe, but particularly in contexts of fragility and violence, as corruption fuels and perpetuates the inequalities and discontent that lead to fragility, violent extremism, and conflict. Corruption impedes investment, with consequent effects on growth and jobs. Countries capable of confronting corruption use their human and financial resources more efficiently, attract more investment, and grow more rapidly (World Bank 2018).

Although corruption is often seen as a problem that mainly affects lower-income countries, there are no grounds for complacency in high-income countries. Using a scale where 100 represents perfect control of corruption, Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) score for the USA fell from a high point of 76 in 2015 to 69 in 2019. More fundamentally, some observers raise concerns about the influence of global finance on government policies, particularly in high-income countries (Monbiot 2015), but such issues require a discussion that is beyond the scope of this article.

The World Bank Strategy for Reducing Corruption Lacks Focus on Incentives and Hazards

The World Bank's official engagement with corruption began in 1996 when James Wolfensohn, President of the Bank at the time, delivered a groundbreaking speech in which he called on the world to take action against the "cancer of corruption" (Wolfensohn 1996). Over the next few years Bank staff developed a

strategy for reducing corruption that comprises reforms intended to achieve the following:

- Capable, transparent, and accountable states.
- Multi-stakeholder engagement with civil society, media, and communities.
- A competitive and responsible private sector (World Bank 2007, 47-54).

In its early assessments of progress with the strategy, the Bank was candid about the enormous difficulty of combating corruption: "global trends in governance and corruption indicate that, while some progress may have been made in strengthening state capacity and accountability worldwide, there is little evidence that this has had a significant aggregate impact on reducing corruption overall" (World Bank 2007, 40). To tackle the more deep-rooted institutional and political problems that underpin grand corruption and political corruption, the strategy pinned great hopes on "the key role of country-level reformers in moving forward the governance reform agenda" (World Bank 2007, 47).

While it is certainly true that leadership by country-level reformers can be very important, the Bank's strategy pays little attention to factors that might generate or strengthen the motivation those reformers need. Several writers have noted the lack of incentives for rulers to control corruption, as well as the hazards faced by champions of reform. The economist Robert Neild observes that the institutions required to keep corruption in check are well known, but poses the question "What has sometimes given rulers the will and the ability to introduce these institutions which, in their very nature, constrain the degree to which they, the rulers, can pursue power and wealth?" (Neild 2002, 201). In his assessment of the task faced by country-level reformers in the most corrupt countries, the economist Paul Collier gives a stark account of the challenge they face (Collier 2007, 180, 192):

Within the societies of the bottom billion there is an intense struggle between brave people who are trying to achieve change and powerful groups who oppose them. The politics of the bottom billion is not the bland and sedate process of the rich democracies but rather a dangerous contest between moral extremes... Although the reformers have truth on their side, truth is just another special interest, and not a particularly powerful one. The villains willing to lie in order to defeat change have an advantage over those constrained by honesty. Reformers do not have it easy.

To be fair to the Bank, some of their more recent statements have been more forthcoming about the dangers inherent in fighting corruption, and the moral nature of the task. For example, in his speech at a 2016 Anti-Corruption Summit in London, Bank President Jim Yong Kim said:

While information is becoming more accessible, it is troubling that the space for citizens and non-state organizations to voice their objections is often diminishing. The death of activists, such as Berta Caceres, Nelson Garcia and so many others in Honduras, has had a chilling effect on accountability. We must do all we can to protect the defenders of transparency ... We will rededicate ourselves to fighting the cancer of corruption and move ahead with urgency to stop those who are stealing from the poor. This is both our moral duty and one of the best possible strategies for economic development (Kim 2016).

Protestant Christianity Has Motivated Individuals to Control Corruption in the Past

It is thus of great importance to discover what it is that motivates people to live with integrity in public office and to establish a civil society that protects against corruption. Historically, there is evidence that Christianity, particularly Protestant Christianity, has played an important role in controlling corruption. Consider the work by two contemporary social scientists, Francis Fukuyama and Robert Woodberry. Fukuyama provides a narrative account of the top-down reforming role of political leaders motivated by their Christian faith. Woodberry uses the power of statistical analysis to show that Protestant missionaries have played a major role globally in improving control of corruption through strengthening civil society.

Both these scholars emphasize the role of Protestants, rather than Roman Catholic or Orthodox Christians, and this emphasis is consistent with statistical evidence that, after adjusting for other factors, countries with a Protestant majority tend to do slightly better at controlling corruption (Treisman 2000). Proposed explanations for this finding range from the religious, in which Protestants are characterized as people who emphasize personal responsibility for avoiding sin, to the cultural, according to which Protestant societies are more likely to discover and punish abuses by government officials because dissent is the norm in the religious sphere. Attempts to find statistical support from international datasets for any of the proposed explanations have so far not proved successful (Ko & Moon 2014), but the fact remains that there is a small, but significant, relationship between Protestantism and control of corruption.

Reform from the top down

Fukuyama seeks to explain why the state performs better in Germany, Britain, and America than in Greece or Italy. Of the former countries, he writes:

In each of these countries, individual leaders of reform movements were motivated by personal religiosity. They included the Great Elector and Frederick William 1 of Prussia, whose Calvinism induced them to import coreligionists from abroad and gave them a disciplinary vision of an austere and moral society led by an upright state ... From well before the English Civil War, Puritanism was an important driver of reform in England, and it continued to shape the behavior of the new middle classes in the nineteenth century. This was true as well of the upper-crust Progressive Era reformers in late-nineteenth century America, who did not think merely that political bosses and patronage politics got in the way of making money. They were morally outraged that public offices were being perverted for private ends ... Individual leaders like Gifford Pinchot were driven by a kind of Protestant religiosity that has largely disappeared from contemporary American public life (Fukuyama 2014, 206).

The Protestant King Frederick William 1 of Prussia (1688-1740) is remembered for transforming Prussia from a second-rate power into an efficient and prosperous state, through reforms that included dissolving his extravagant court, freeing all serfs and abolishing hereditary leases, encouraging industry and manufacture, and instituting compulsory primary education (Britannica Library 2019).

Gifford Pinchot (1865-1946) was a conservationist and Chief Forester of the United States. He is remembered as part of a generational cohort that one historian has called “ministers of reform,” who eschewed the Protestant ministry but invoked Protestant values to push for social reform. His concern to use forests and rivers for “the greatest good for the greatest number for the longest time” thrust him into battles against monopolistic corporate abusers of the land and cast him as a crusader for the public good (Naylor 2005).

The so-called Clapham Evangelicals exemplify the influence of Puritanism in nineteenth century England. The historian Herbert Schlossberg described their activities in these terms:

Apart from the issue of slavery, their most consistent legislative activity was directed at economic and administrative issues. They were

invariably proponents of reforms that would make the government more honest and efficient, and they and their allies made significant contributions in reforming the navy, chancery law, the East India Company, and abuses such as bribery and purchase of governmental offices. They found offensive the corruption that was endemic in the government and had long been tolerated, and they did what they could to bring the problem to the forefront of debate (Schlossberg 2000, 253).

These individuals and groups illustrate some of the diverse ways in which Christians occupying leadership positions within the state have been motivated by their faith to reform the state and control corruption.

Reform from the bottom up

The sociologist Robert Woodberry analyzed a large global dataset to generate evidence that the Christianity practiced by “conversionary Protestant” missionaries over the past 200 years fostered democracy, rule of law, and control of corruption through their efforts to enable people to read the Bible in their own language and to facilitate lay religious involvement:

As conversionary Protestants tried to spread their faith, they catalyzed mass education, mass printing, and civil society—hampering elite attempts to monopolize these resources ... These resource transfers to non-elites helped alter the class structure, fostered the rise of political parties and nonviolent political movements, and facilitated broader political participation.

Non-state-supported Protestant denominations historically suffered from discrimination and persecution by governments and state churches. Thus, they fought for religious liberty and against state interference in civil society.

Finally, nonstate missionaries moderated colonial abuses, particularly when abuses undermined conversions and in British colonies (where conversionary Protestants had greater influence). To reach their religious goals, nonstate missionaries punished abusive colonial officials and counterbalanced white settlers ... When missionaries were financially independent of the state, of slave owners, and of white settlers, missionaries undermined these elite co-religionists in ways that fostered democracy (Woodberry 2012, 244).

Woodberry tested these arguments using a wide array of statistical data and found that the most powerful predictor of a country’s mean democracy scores, and of indicators of rule of law and control of corruption, during the period 1950–94 was the number of Protestant missionaries per 10,000 population in 1923. He concluded that Max Weber was correct in his intuitions about the importance of religious beliefs and institutions: “What we consider modernity was not the inevitable result of economic development, urbanization, industrialization, secularization, or the Enlightenment, but a far more contingent process profoundly shaped by activist religion” (Woodberry 2012, 270).

Protestant Christianity is Motivating Some Individuals to Control Corruption in the Present

Moving from the past to the present, this section briefly describes two examples of ways in which Protestant Christians are contributing to controlling corruption today: a top-down approach in the Philippines, pursued by the Fellowship of Christians in Government (FOCIG), and a bottom-up approach in Honduras, adopted by the Association for a More Just Society (AJS). These two organizations warrant attention because they have been established for a relatively long period, and because there is some evidence that they have made an impact on a national scale.

A top-down approach in the Philippines

Since 1989 FOCIG has been pursuing a Christian faith-based approach to countering corruption in the Philippines. Although they initially pursued a bottom-up approach that involved public education and support for legal cases, in 2005 they shifted to a top-down strategy, seeking reform from within the state itself. Recognizing the huge influence of the military in the Philippines, they began there. Their founder, Niels Riconalla, described their approach as follows:

If you want to solve a lot of problems in this country, notably corruption, then we as Christians in the government should play a key role. We’re on the inside and we can do something about it. In 2005 the Secretary of National Defense approved our proposal to conduct moral values training for the top brass of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. We have seen amazing results in the Army (Allaby 2013, 74-5).

Generals who have been influenced by conversion to Christ describe changes in their behavior that include refusing large kickbacks on high-value contracts for military hardware, and adopting a zero-tolerance approach to extra-judicial killings. Probably the most dramatic impact of this approach came during the Philippines Presidential election in 2010. The Army Chief at that time, General Bangit, had been converted from nominal Catholicism to active Christian faith in 2005 through attending FOCIG moral values training seminars.

In 2010, subversive political forces offered him the opportunity to lead a military junta, provided he would promise to lead a coup in the event of victory by the reform candidate Benigno Aquino. But General Bangit maintained that his duty as a Christian was to protect the Philippine constitution, so he refused the offer to lead a military junta. Instead, he facilitated a free and fair election by ordering the army to assist in the distribution of electronic voting machines, and Benigno Aquino was duly elected.

Although the incoming president Aquino decided to replace General Bangit as Army Chief, his decision to support a free and fair election had a continuing impact. According to the Asian Development Bank (2016, 3), Aquino's administration made the fight against corruption one of its major thrusts, pursuing major corruption cases and creating more trust in the functioning of the state. These efforts resulted in higher tax collection, increasing investment, and stable economic growth.

It is difficult to measure changes in corruption over time, but Transparency International's CPI score is a widely used measure of the perceived extent of corruption. During Aquino's time as president, the Philippines CPI ranking among countries in the Asia Pacific region improved from 25th out of 33 in 2010, to 11th out of 27 countries in 2014, before falling back to 18th out of 30 countries by the end of his term in 2016 (Transparency International 2019b). Such dramatic changes in any country's CPI ranking are rarely seen over such a short period of time.

Limitations of FOCIG's approach to reform include the relatively high rate of turnover among the Philippine generals, who typically spend only a few years in the post before facing compulsory retirement at age 56, and the risk that a reform-minded president will be succeeded by one who lacks such goals. Since Rodrigo Duterte was elected president in 2016, the Philippines CPI ranking has fallen to 22nd out of 31 countries in the Asia Pacific region (Transparency International 2019b). Turnover of senior personnel causes similar problems in other government agencies with which FOCIG has worked, such as the Philippine National Police, the Bureau of Internal Revenue, and the Bureau of Customs.

To help address this limitation, in 2019 FOCIG entered a partnership with Trident Integrity, a Malaysia-based consultancy that helps governments develop comprehensive national integrity programs, which typically include the design and installation of software that makes it much easier to detect theft or fraud from public accounts. At the time of writing it is too early to say whether this combination of the personal approach (encouraging Christian leaders to apply their faith to the challenge of corruption) with technical innovation will succeed in institutionalizing better control of corruption, so that if reform-minded leaders are replaced by corrupt officials it will be harder for them to revert to corrupt practices.

A bottom-up approach in Honduras

Moving from a top-down to a bottom-up approach to controlling corruption, the Honduran organization AJS was founded in 1998 by a group of four Hondurans and a North American couple working in Honduras. Their mission statement is: 'We strive to be brave Christians, dedicated to doing justice in Honduras and to inspiring others around the world to seek justice in their own contexts' (Association for a More Just Society 2019a). Their anti-corruption work encompasses land rights, investigative journalism, reform of education and public health services, a corruption hotline, and legal assistance. Their successful track record in these areas is evidenced by the decision of Transparency International (a non-religious organization) to designate AJS as its national chapter in Honduras.

An important part of AJS strategy involves empowering local citizens to know their rights and to hold their local governments, including their schools, accountable. They train people in communities on their civil rights and the role they can play as monitors of educational practice in their local schools. These empowered citizens initially focused on monitoring the presence of teachers and principals in the schools. In recent years, however, in response to student weakness on standardized test scores, they have started training local teams of monitors to assess the quality of education (Hernandez et al. 2019, 26). AJS efforts in education reform have produced particularly impressive results:

AJS helped discover how corruption was preventing Honduran children from getting the education they deserve. Although 200 days of class are required by law, children in Honduras met for school an average of only 125 days per year, significantly preventing their opportunities for learning. Additionally, 26% of teachers that were on the payroll weren't in the classroom. Because of corruption and poor management, Honduras was

spending more per capita on education than any other Latin American country, but their test results were the lowest in Latin America.

By making these reports public and working with the Ministry of Education, we helped open up an opportunity for education reform: days in class have increased to over 200 on average, and teachers missing from classrooms have dropped from 26% to 1%. We continue to push for a quality education so that Honduras' children have opportunities for a bright future (Association for a More Just Society 2019b).

Although the relationship between these reforms in the education sector and corruption as a whole needs further exploration, it is noteworthy that the education reforms coincided with a modest improvement in Honduras' CPI ranking, from 25th out of 28 countries in the Americas in 2010, to 19th out of 26 countries in 2015 (Transparency International 2019b).

There are, however, Serious Weaknesses in the Wider Protestant Response to Corruption

Despite the evidence that Protestant Christianity has helped to control corruption in the past, and is inspiring some Protestants to fight corruption today, Christian scholar Roberto Laver noted that, on the whole, corruption is receiving far more attention from secular organizations than religious ones (2010); and recent research suggests that Protestants today are not seen as particularly effective in opposing corruption (Allaby 2013). What might account for the lackluster contemporary Protestant response to corruption?

This important question can usefully be explored from three different perspectives: The economic strength of Protestants; whether they form a majority or minority in society; and their guiding theology.

Economic strength

As noted above, taking a stand against corruption is often costly. Although almost everyone is better off when corruption is controlled, apart from a few elites who lose out financially, efforts to fight corruption are hindered by a "prime mover" problem: anyone who starts to fight against corruption is likely to face personal losses. So potential reformers may be more likely to act if they start out with sufficient economic strength to be able to accommodate such losses.

That was the situation of all the top-down reformers described in this article and also, but less obviously, for the bottom-up "conversionary Protestant" missionaries described by Woodberry, and for AJS in Honduras. In the nineteenth- and early

twentieth-centuries, Protestant missionary organizations dwarfed most commercial companies, and they were institutionally and financially independent of the state; this gave them an ability and willingness to challenge the state when it abused its power (Woodberry 2011). In a similar way, AJS receives substantial support from international donors, which gives them a strong economic base from which to campaign against corruption.

This contrasts with the relative poverty of many Christians and churches in the Global South today. Indeed, Christian leaders report poverty and fear of poverty as among the most significant factors that lead Christians and churches to act in corrupt ways themselves (Allaby 2013, 182).

Protestants as a majority or minority in society

An important factor that can influence the ways in which Protestants interact with corruption is whether they constitute a majority or a minority in society. A century ago, the German Protestant theologian Ernst Troeltsch used the terms "church" and "sect" to describe these two different circumstances:

The church is an institution which is able to receive the masses, and to adjust itself to the world, because, to a certain extent, it can afford to ignore the need for subjective holiness for the sake of the objective treasures of grace and of redemption.

The sect is a voluntary society, composed of strict and definite Christian believers bound to each other by the fact that all have experienced "the new birth." These "believers" live apart from the world, are limited to small groups, emphasize the law instead of grace, and in varying degrees within their own circle set up the Christian order.

Whenever a particular Christian denomination or church forms the majority in society, they are at risk of accepting prevailing social norms that may be contrary to justice and integrity, despite the strong emphasis throughout the Bible on upholding justice and living with integrity (King 2018). My own research finds that Protestants in two countries where they represent a majority of the population (Kenya and Zambia) correspond to Troeltsch's "church" type: they are seen as no less corrupt than anyone else, having lost their moral authority, particularly through being compromised through co-optation by the state. The same research shows quite different findings for Protestants in two mainly Catholic countries (the Philippines and Peru). They correspond instead to Troeltsch's "sect" type: although they have a reputation for honest

behavior, they are seen as too detached from society to have much impact on corruption (Allaby 2013, 189).

Most of the Protestant reformers described in this article correspond to the “sect” type: the conversionary Protestant missionaries were “strict and definite Christian believers” who volunteered to join a missionary society. Additionally, the leaders of FOCIG and AJS are Protestants operating in Catholic countries, and as minority groups they can be characterized as “strict and definite Christian believers.” Where FOCIG and AJS differ from many “sect” types is that their theology encourages engagement with social problems, including the challenge of corruption.

Theology

That brings us to the third major influence on the relationship between Protestantism and control of corruption: theology. Although Martin Luther’s program of reformation gave birth to Protestantism and arguably contributed to modern democracy, his dualistic doctrine of the “two kingdoms,” in which the kingdom of God deals with that which is spiritual and inward, while the worldly kingdom has authority over that which is bodily and outward, has been associated with passivity in the face of abuses of power, including corruption (Phillips 2012, 62). The continuing widespread influence of this dualism was acknowledged in the final statement from the 2010 global meeting of the Lausanne Movement in Cape Town:

The falsehood of a ‘sacred-secular divide’ has permeated the Church’s thinking and action. This divide tells us that religious activity belongs to God, whereas other activity does not ... We name this secular-sacred divide as a major obstacle to the mobilization of all God’s people in the mission of God (Lausanne Movement 2010, 28).

This framing of Christianity as a spiritual or otherworldly religion has continued despite official statements from several international Protestant bodies, from the 1970’s onwards, that have attempted to correct it. In 1974 the International Conference on World Evangelization (Lausanne Movement 1974) affirmed that

(evangelism and socio-political) involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and man, our love for our neighbor and our obedience to Jesus Christ.

In 1983 the World Evangelical Fellowship made this declaration in their Wheaton ’83 Statement (Lausanne Movement 1983):

Evil is not only in the human heart but also in social structures ... The mission of the church includes both the proclamation of the Gospel and its demonstration. We must therefore evangelize, respond to immediate human needs, and press for social transformation.

In 2001 the Micah Network produced a declaration that articulated a more integrated understanding of the relationship between evangelism and social involvement for evangelical Protestants:

It is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other. Rather, in integral mission our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. And our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ.

Although a growing number of Protestants have embraced this kind of theology, which sees God as concerned with matters of earthly justice, they remain a minority among Protestants in many countries, which constitutes a major obstacle to their constructive engagement in the fight against corruption. For example, one Filipino Protestant campaigner for social justice reported this frustrating experience:

There’s only a minority of Christians in this country who would like to engage in good politics or good governance, who believe that part of their Christianity is a call to be involved in society. The belief that ‘politics is evil, Christians should not be involved in that, Christians should just pray about all this evil’ - that is a huge problem amongst Evangelicals in the country. Young people are being taught the theology of ‘You can grow as a Christian and not care about the world. God doesn’t care whether you’re helping the needy people around you; as long as you’re not hurting other people, as long as you’re doing Bible study and praying, that is alright’ ... You need a pastor who’s going to tell the congregation: ‘When you do not care about the poor around you and when you don’t care about society, you’re actually committing sin’. But no pastor would say that. It’s very difficult to break that theology (Allaby 2013, 97).

A second, and relatively novel, theological impediment to Protestants as they try to fight corruption is the so-called “prosperity gospel.” In this theology, selected “proof-texts” from the Bible are interpreted to

mean that God wills all believers to prosper in this life, and that he will bring this about by rewarding them financially in proportion to the amount they give away, particularly to the pastor (Asamoah-Gyadu 2004). This kind of theology not only distracts Christians from addressing the true causes of poverty, which include corruption, but also prevents the church being seen as a credible critic of corruption.

Even when Christians adopt a theology that can potentially equip them to fight corruption, careful attention is needed to the way that theology is used in the formation of the attitudes and behavior of Christians. As Heather Marquette (2010, 31), Professor of Development Politics at the University of Birmingham, has written:

There is little evidence to suggest that religion, in terms of religious content, impacts upon individuals' attitudes towards public morality. Membership of a religious community that rejects behaviour seen as being 'corrupt' seems more likely to have an impact, but a lot depends upon the way in which members of the community are encouraged (or discouraged) to engage in principled reasoning.

So, although the Bible can be a rich resource for fighting corruption, its potential can only be realized when Christian leaders and teachers derive sound theology from it, and use that theology to help Christians interpret and apply its teachings to the challenges of corruption in their own context.

Christians Have a Major Role to Play in the Fight Against Corruption

It follows from the analysis in the preceding sections that Protestants have a major role to play in the fight against corruption, but will only fulfil this God-given mandate if certain conditions are fulfilled.

First, individuals with economic resources need to take the lead as prime movers, recognizing that they are better placed than most to deal with the personal costs that reformers are likely to face. As Jesus said, "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded" (Luke 12:48). Christian donor organizations need to ask whether their funding allocations reflect the importance of controlling corruption for achieving development goals, and the God-given mandate of the Church to be salt and light in society. It is estimated that Protestants in Europe and North America donated more than US\$120 billion to Christian causes in 2015 (Johnson, Zurlo and Hickman 2015). Formal data are not available, but personal experience leads me to believe that only an extremely small proportion of that giving is focused on fighting

corruption. Even a small increase in the proportion of those funds allocated to fighting corruption could make a big difference.

Second, Protestants need to take stock of their status in relation to corruption in society. Do they match the "church" type, so that they are indistinguishable from others in terms of corruption? If so, no progress will be possible without serious reflection and internal reform. Or do they match the "sect" type and, if so, are they using their reputation for integrity to be salt and light in society?

Finally, we need to strengthen and promote theologies that reflect God's concern for justice in the here and now, as well as educate Protestants away from "dualism" and "prosperity theology." Theology needs to be taught in ways that lead the faithful to apply the Bible's teachings to the challenges of corruption in their own contexts.

One initiative that seeks to promote all these things is the Faith and Public Integrity Network (<https://fpinetwork.wordpress.com/>). This network convenes regular webinars and a biennial global summit of Christian anti-corruption activists, and publishes country profiles, case profiles of Christian anti-corruption initiatives, and other anti-corruption resources. It welcomes new members who are seeking to develop a Christian faith-based approach to fighting corruption. If reading this article inspires you to join forces with other Christians who are actively engaged in fighting corruption, please visit the website and introduce yourself.

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