

Examining Prophet Amos Message to Israel in the 8th Century B.C. and Its Relevance in Challenging Corruption in the 21st Century Governance in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Prophets are men and women who lived above board; they were non-conformists who never settled for the status quo, they were bold, courageous, compassionate and decisive. Prophets are risk takers who were ready to pay any price for a cause they believed in. They did not serve their own interests but others and never sought recognition or human approval. They were often blessed with high energy and tough skills. They rarely observed protocols and is often restless and combative of evil. Prophet Amos was one of such Old Testament prophets, whom God raised to confront the issues of national sin and disruption of social norms that led to inequalities and oppression of the downtrodden in the society, a situation that is capable of hindering any meaningful development in any country. This paper examines prophet Amos, historical situation of his times, such as social, political and religious crises. It also looks at Nigerian problems such as corruption display of high level inequality where the rich become richer and poor errand brings out the relevance of Amos message in order to enhance meaningful development in the 21st century Nigeria. Our findings revealed that the political, social and religious situations of the Israelites when Amos was called were polluted and corruption was the order of the day, poor were denied justice, rich became richer and poor and poorer, this is a similar situation in Nigeria. The researcher calls on Nigerians to join hands together and fight corruption in all sectors of the economy, return to God and repent so that God can heal our land.

Keywords: Prophet, leader, Corruption, Relevance, Wealth, Distribution, Justice, etc.

INTRODUCTION

Prophets are men and women who were called for a specific task. They were bold, courageous, compassionate and decisive. They were risk takers who were ready to pay any price for a cause they believed in. They never served their interests and never sought recognition or human approval. They were often blessed with high energy and enduring skills. In the Old Testament records show that prophets such as Daniel, Deborah, among others were class of leaders found among administrators such as Daniel and Deborah. Politicians such as Moses and Nehemiah. King and Queen such as David and Esther, military general such as Gideon among others.

According to Everett the word prophet comes from the Greek "propheteo", from "pro" (before of for) and "phemi" (to speak). The prophet is thus, the one who speak before in or proclaim or the one who speak for that is in the name of God. He says in Old Testament there are three terms for the prophet, "roah", "nabi", and "hozeh". The first and the last are distinguished by nuances bearing on the habitual or temporary character

of the visions. Nabi is best adapted characterize the prophet mission.¹ Therefore, a prophet proclaims or speaks what he or she gets from the divine. His mission is to fulfil the purpose of the divine. He or she is not on his/her own, but on the divine side.

The Old Testament Bible has various descriptive functions of prophets.

Adeyemo suggests five basic functions used to describe biblical prophets such as:

Servant of God, (Zach.1:6), because they are sent to do God's cause and purpose.

Seers (Ezek.3:17), because they are God's watch men with telescopic vision and insight.

Spokesmen for God (2 Chro.36:15), because they boldly declare the mind of God saying "Thus says the Lord" (Nathan in 2 Samuel, 12:7, Elijah in 2 Kings1:4 etc.).

Statesmen (Ezra, 5:2), because they stand for justice, righteousness, moral and ethical purity and equity.

Supernatural or Spirit filled beings, (Acts14:11 compared with Daniel 2:10-11), because they struggled with both God and man in solving enigmas, revealing secrets, healing their land and saving their Kings.²

However, Douglas says that the title of the prophet appeared to have been used as the man of God, described how they appeared to their fellow men. Hence the title was first used of Moses (Deu.33:11), and continued in used till the end of monarchy. That it was intended to express the difference of character between prophets and other men is made perfectly clear by the Shunammite, "I perceived this is the holy man of God"... (2Kings, 4:9). The other title was His, or your or my servant. There are three Hebrew words used for the prophet, nabi, roah and hozeh. The first of these is always translated prophet, the second which is in form an active participle of the verb "to see" is translated "seer" and the third also an active participle of another verb "to see" unfortunately without distinctive English equivalent and is translated either "prophet", (Isaiah, 30:10) or "seer" (1Chron.29:29).³

The word prophet can be seem as "nabi", "roah" and "hozeh", which equally means prophet ,seer and seer respectively. Thus means the same term. Prophets in our generation are Reverends, Pastors, Men and Women of God. People who are mainly call to preach the word of God.

This paper will examine prophet Amos the political and social situations of his times, Nigerian situation, message and the relevance of prophet Amos message to Nigerians in order to enhance development.

PROPHET AMOS' PERSONALITY

According to the Old Testament Bible:

This message was given to Amos a shepherd from the town of Tekoa in Judah. He received this message in visions two years before the earthquake, when Uzziah was king of Judah and Jeroboam ii the son of Jehoash was king of Israel, (Amos, 1:1).

The question is who was Amos and what was his message?

Holman says Amos personal name means "burdened" or more likely, "one who is supported by God" was a prophet from Judah who ministered about 750 BC. However, Amos was a lay person who disclaimed professional status as a prophet, I am not a

prophet, not a prophet's son, but a herdsman and a dresser of Sycamore trees and the Lord took me from followed flock and the Lord said to me "go prophesy to my people Israel," (7:14-15). Because of God's call, Amos assumed his prophetic responsibilities as a lonely voice prophesied from both desert and villages. He indicted both Judah and Israel challenging the superficial qualities of religious institutions. For Amos, his call and continuing ministry rested in God's initiatives and his sustaining power. "The Lion has roared who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken who can but prophecy (3:8)?"⁴

Amos lived in a time of relative peace on the international political scene. Both Egypt and Assyria were in a period of decline, although Assyria was beginning to expand its power.⁵

According to Marshall Ec'tal;

*Amos was a fig farmer of Sycamore (7:7), the significance of this Information is that Amos had no background in prophetic ability, he had not previously considered himself a prophet, nor was he trained in the prophetic schools (7:14). We know from Amos 1:1 that he lived during the reign of Uzziah king of Judah (779-740 BC) and Jeroboam II king of Israel (763-743 BC). We do not know the date of the earthquake (1 :!). And can place the ministry of Amos only by general indications. The level of prosperity and security which seems to have been enjoyed by Israel would indicate a date possibly about the middle of the reign of Jeroboam 760BC.*⁶

The Bible says Amos was not a trained prophet, and then who is a prophet? What are his roles? There are various terms designated for the office of a prophet. The first one is "nabhin" which means an appointed speaker for a divine superior whose speech carries the authority of the latter. The prophet stood from the beginning to the end as the authoritative speaker for Yahweh. In the other words, the prophet is a speaker to other.⁷

Other terms for the prophet are "roah" and its synonym "chozeh" Geerhardas says, these two names are translated into the biblical English by seer without distinction. The word seer refers to an extra-ordinary influence brought to bear on the seeing faculty of the prophet by which made to see things instead of hearing them, with the same result that through this seeing a message of divine provenience was introduced into his consciousness.⁸ Other designations for a prophet are man of God, Messenger of Yahweh, the man of the spirit, shepherd and watchman.⁹

In the Old Testament the distinction between the prophets and the priests lies in the fact that the former received the word of Yahweh while the latter taught the word of Yahweh to the people. However since the word, which is the instrument of the prophetism, has a fixed form, and it is also the instrument of the preacher, the modern day religious leaders have therefore, combined the two offices of both priest and prophet. Religious leaders, therefore, have double responsibilities of ensuring faithful and effective delivering of God's word to the people¹⁰

THE STRUCTURE OF THE SITUATION OF ISRAEL AT AMOS TIME, (8TH CENTURY BC).

According to Holman, internally, the political structure of both Israel and Judah were stable. Beginning prophet Amos prophetic activity during the reign of Jeroboam II in the Northern Kingdom of Israel Amos lived during an era that reviled Solomon's'

generation in its stability and economic prosperity (2 Kings 14:23-27). Yet it was precisely the social, moral and religious problems attending that prosperity that became focus of for Amos voice of judgement.¹¹

Holman further states that morally Israel and Judah were suffering under corruption generated as a by-product of Canaanite and Tyrian Balaalism as well as infidelity to the Lord's covenant. Israeli society had experienced the inevitable decay that characterizes misdirected prosperity. It may appear strange that the corruption of the Israelite society could be traced to its contemporary religious structures and the material prosperity, which Israelite often interpreted as a sign of divine favour.¹² Exploitation of the poor occurred throughout the land (Amos 2:6,3:2,4:1,5:11,8:4-6), Justice was distorted. The dynamism of personal religious experience gave way to the superficiality of the institutional religion as demonstrated in the conflict between Amos and Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, (7:10-13). Amos's opposition to those moral and religious evils led him to emphasize the primary theme of the book "let justice roll down like water and righteousness like an everlasting stream, (5:24).¹³ Amos lived in a time of relative peace on the international scene. Both Egypt and Assyria were in period of decline, although Assyria was beginning to expand its power.¹⁴

Prophet Amos' ministry and message were intimately bound up with the condition in which the people to whom he preached lived. For instance, the political and social conditions were bad.

Emmanuel and George say that:

Over 40 years before his ministry Assyria had crushed Syria, Samaria's neighbour. This permitted Jeroboam II to extend his frontier (2Kgs.14:25), and to build up a lucrative trade which created powerful Merchant class in Samaria. Unfortunately, the wealth that came to Samaria was not evenly distributed among the people. It remained in the hands of the Merchant prince who spent the new found riches on improving own their living standard,(3:10,12,15 6:4), and neglected completely the peasant class which had hitherto been the back bone of Samaria economy. The unmistakably symptoms of a morally sick society began to declare themselves in Samaria. In Amos' day oppression of the poor by the rich was common (2:6ff), and heartless indifferences among the wealthy towards the affliction of the hungry (6:3-6), Justice went to the higher bidder (2:6, 8:6). In drought (4:4-9) the poor had recourse only to the money-lenders (5:11, 8:4-6), to whom he has often compelled to mortgage his land and his person.¹⁵

The state of religion in Israel, Emmanuel and George hold that:

Naturally the social condition in Samaria affected religious habits. Religion was being not neglected but perverted. At the national religious shrines (5:5), ritual was being maintained (4:4ff), but it went hand in hand with godlessness and immorality. Far from pleasing Yahweh it invited his judgement (3:14,7:9, 9:14). It did not remove, but increased transgression,(4:4). God was not to be found at the national shrines (5; 4),

because he could not accept the worship there, the true preoccupations of the people was with expenses of the poor, 92:5, 5:11).¹⁶

THE NIGERIA SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY A.D.

Nigeria as a nation is blessed with abundant wealth, but this wealth is not evenly distributed, thereby creating a distinctive class as was seen in the days of prophet Amos. Nigeria is socio-economic corrupt. According to Samson:

A critical look at the nation Nigeria in this twenty-first century will reveal nothing dissimilar to the situation of the northern Kingdom of Israel of Amos' day. The social, economic, political and religious sphere of the country have been bedevilled by numerous social vices such as corruption in both public and private places, poverty which has propelled widened class difference in the society, manipulation, distortion, and perversion of justice in favour of the wealthy and to the detriment of the less privileged, to mention but a few. Unfortunately, the religious circles that supposed to serve as an example of morality and champion course of social justice are themselves enmeshed in all kinds of corruption, ritual practices and all forms of social injustice. Sadly enough, Nigeria has been rated the 3rd most corrupt nation in the world. The Federal government's efforts to see to the eradication of all forms of corruption had led to the birth of Independent Corrupt Practice and other Related Offences (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).¹⁷

The implication of this social vice is the scaring away of foreign investors who could have entered into serious investment in the country and through which the economic sector of the country would have witnessed tremendous development,

Corruption has jeopardized the chances of national development. It is seen in all sectors such as in politics, economic, socio-cultural, and religion. It has created under-development in the country. Ango says corruption is one of the greatest obstacles to national development, because it is not simply a "bribery" but is a "loot of purity in the minds and actions of Nigerians."¹⁸ According to Hussein a government plagued by systemic corruption neglects various duties essential to an efficient administration, this neglect eventually leads to welfare crisis, which may in turn engender loss of lives and property or cause break out of epidemic.¹⁹

The socio-economic situation in Nigeria has bred poverty in the country. The social stratification into the upper, middle and lower classes became pronounced. Like the northern Kingdom of Israel, the rich are getting richer while the poor are getting poorer. Nigeria problem is compounded in incessant increment in the price of fuel without corresponding improvement in the people's living condition. Therefore, in this kind of situation one cannot find wanting social oppression, perversion of justice and social disorder. Religious leaders in Nigeria what are your roles as spokesmen of God?

THE MESSAGE OF PROPHET AMOS

According to Amos, the Lord is the creator of the world (4:13), but he is still actively present as it's sustained. He is the one who brings day and night to pass and

controls the waves of the sea (5:8,9:6). He determines famines (4:9-11) or plenty,(9:18) shall prevail. God also controls the destinies of nations. He restrains this nation (1:5), rises up that (6:11), and pulls down another (2:9). He also controls the distribution (9:7). He is therefore, their judge (1:3,2:3), when they offend against his moral laws.

Amos' message betrays particular interest in Israel, such as disobedience to the law. He was also concerned to proclaim that the law broken through unrighteousness could not be mended by means of ritual, festival or offering alone. God was already standing at the altar waiting to smite it (9:1-4). The most elaborate ritual was an abomination to him so long as it was offered by a people who had no intention of measuring up to the ethical standard laid down in his holy laws, such a religion of ceremonial or ritual was divorced from morality and this God could only hate (5:21ff).

Amos demands righteousness in the name of the Lord from the people of the Lord (5:24). Righteousness was for Amos the most important moral attribute of the divine nature. Every outrage of the moral law, whether perpetuated by pagan nations (1:3,2:3) or by Israel (2:4-16) was an outrage upon the nature of God and was therefore, a provocation of divine justice. If Yahweh is righteous, the injustice, dishonesty, immorality, could be tolerated by him and must receive stern retribution from him.

Emmanuel and George hold that:

God's man (Amos) concerns here centre on the oppression of poor, perversion of justice and false religion. The poor of the land were oppressed (3:10, 4:1) crushed (4:1) tread upon (5:11) unfairly taxed (5:12) and claimed justice (5:12) Judges took bribe and sold judgement to the rich against the poor, (5:12)²⁰

These authors further say:

God's judgement will take away Israel's economic as well as religious base (3:14-15). Oppression of the poor will end with oppressors taken away into slavery (4:1-3) God would not accept such social injustice, so the whole system had to be brought to an end. Consequently, "the prophet announced prepared to meet your God o Israel."²¹

Samson states that:

Amos started his message by taken up oracles of indictment against Israel's neighbouring countries because they had violated one social justice or the other, they cannot escape Yahweh's judgement. Some scholars have seen the necessity of these oracles because, why would Amos address the nations that could not hear his message and consequently could not respond to the prophet's warning or word of judgement? However, the purpose of these oracles has been recognized as a device by Amos to let Israel know that if other nations that are not in covenant relation with Yahweh could be indicted and marked for judgement by Yahweh, how much more the Israelites on whom Yahweh has expended so much energy to deliver them from bondage and make them his people.²²

According to Bullock, the oracles against the nations obviously had cumulative effects, which sum was the absolute inescapable judgement of Israel. The oracles against the nations suggest that as none of these would not escape retribution for having broken the common and universally regarded dictates of morality, so Israel, for similar or greater

sins, (2:6-8), aggravated, indeed, in its case by ingratitude (vv 9-12), will not be exempted from the same law of righteous government.²³

However, David Tuesday has identified two advantages of that literary device or oracles used by Amos; First, the device ensures that the word of doom will be heard since audience's attention had already been gained by indirectly flattering them. Second, it makes harder for the audience to dismiss the prophet's message since they had already agreed that sin and judgement go together.²⁴

Erling says:

After Amos has indicted the other nations including Judah his hometown, he then moves to the northern kingdom for whom he has received direct message from Yahweh. After the usual introduction, For three transgression of Israel and for four, I will not turn away the punishment (2;6), which has been identified as a refrain and that it suggests that sin has been committed to excess. Amos x-rayed a more detail description of Israel offences consists of corrupt administration of the law, oppression of the poor, immorality and degenerate cult (vv6-8). Yahweh's kindness to the nations has only been rewarded with sin, (vv9-12). No one will be able to save himself with the punishment comes.²⁵

Erling further uphold that in verse 6, Amos mentions:

The perversion of justice on the part of Judges. The expression "they sold the righteous for silver and the poor for a pair of shoe" indicates that the Judges, having been bribed by the wealthy in the society, had declared their verdicts against the innocents and the poor who did not have the means to bribe. In another way, it could also be interpreted within the tradition where the rich creditors have been so hard hearted that they have sold their debtors. Verse 7 relays an incestuous immorality in which a father and his son go in to the same woman, the kind of immorality of which Paul says is never heard among the heathen, (1 Cor.5:1). This also reveals the ordeals of young women who were prostituting themselves in the temple under the influences of religion of the Canaanite. This form of worship had exercised so great an attraction on the Israelites that it won a place in the temple of Yahweh where both men and women dedicated themselves to it.²⁶

Samson upholds that Amos holds that:

Intercourse with this kind of women is a profanation of the name of Yahweh. He reminded them of the sacrilege acts they committed by giving wine to the Nazirite, who by nature are to keep away from any alcoholic drink that intoxicates (v 12). Amos declared to the people that God's judgement would definitely bounce on the northern kingdom. He said when the judgement starts; there would be nobody that would escape. The small and the great, the mighty and the weak, male and female would all have their fill of judgement. As a matter of fact, in a society smeared with all kinds of social moral and religious problem there would be no

significant development, rather there would be exploitation, extortions and widened socio-economic class difference.²⁷

THE NIGERIA SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The Nigeria nation in this century will reveal similar to the situation of the northern kingdom of Israel of Amos day. The Nigerian social, economic, political and religious spheres have been bedevilled by numerous social vices such as corruption in both public and private places, which has propelled widened class difference in the society, manipulation, distortion and perversion of justice in favour of the wealthy and to the detriment of the less privileged. Unfortunately, the religious leaders that supposed to serve as an example of morality and champion the course of social justice are themselves enmeshed in all kinds of corruption, ritual practices and all kinds of social injustice. The implication of this social vice is the scaring away of foreign investors who could entered into serious investment in the country and through which the economic sector of the country would have witnessed tremendous development.

Corruption has jeopardized the chance for national development. Abdullahi sees corruption as one of the greatest obstacles to national development. He defines corruption as bribery and loss of purity in the minds and actions of Nigerians.²⁸ Hussein says a government that plagued by system corruption neglects various duties essential to an efficient administration this neglect eventually leads to welfare crisis which may in turn engender loss of lives and property or cause break out of epidemic.²⁹ However, because of corruption, Nigerian economic is under recession. The question is what should be the role of religious leaders in this kind of situation?

The Federal government's efforts to see to the eradication of all forms of corruption had led to the birth of Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). These Agencies had tried to eradicate corruption in the country, but there are strong forces in and outside the government that are trying to thwart their efforts. In this end religion must strive, therefore, religious leaders must speak out to save Nigeria.

RELEVANCE OF AMOS MESSAGE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

According to Ellion:

The 8th century prophets were no philosophers uttering eternal truth in the abstract. They were God's spokesmen in given historical situation. Their messages are still valid today because rather the character neither of God nor of human sin has changed. Note these historical situations that brought about Amos prophetic preaching is traceable in the contemporary Nigeria. Secondly as Israelites identified themselves as having covenantal relationship with God, may Christians in Nigeria also see the country as having an important role in God's agenda for the end time? Many preachers in the Nigeria religious scene often express this mentality³⁰

Geerhardas argues that there are four terms through which a prophet being called. One of such terms is "Nabi" which means an appointed speaker for a divine

superior whose speech come with authority of the latter; He says that prophets stood at the beginning to the end as the authoritative speaker for God. He is a speaker for others. Other terms are "roah" and its synonyms "chazeh".³¹ Geerhardas further notes that:

These two names are translated into the biblical English by seer without distinction. The word seer refers to an extra-ordinary influence brought to bear on the seeing faculty of the prophet, by which he was made to see things instead of hearing them, with the same result that through this seeing a message of divine providence was introduced into his conscience Other designation for prophet are man of God, Messenger of God, man of the spirit, shepherd and watchman³².

In the Old Testament there are distinction between the prophet and the priest. The former received the "dabar" of God while the latter taught the "dabar" of God to the people. Olanisebe says:

Since the dabar which is the instrument of prophetism, has received a fixed form and it is also the instrument of the preacher, the modern day religious leader have, therefore, combined the two offices of both prophet and priest. Religious leaders therefore, have double responsibilities of ensuring faithful and effective delivering of God's word to the people.³³

James has identified the social role of the prophets as consisting in providing instruction for the kings and his subjects and strengthening the royal cult. They are responsible to call the people back to traditional values whether the dialogue legal injunction, protecting the poor or any social justice demanded by God.³⁴The concerns of a religious leader should be both spiritual and physical for humanity. He must understand that the social and economic aspects of the worshippers have a way of influencing the spirituality of a man. Olupona holds that the role of religious organizations and institutions can play in developing and shaping social policy cannot be over emphasized. He says: The church as a part of civil society has fundamental advantages over other social institutions in that it contains sources of legitimacy, truth and authority, independent of the state. Thus the church, depending upon the situation can be viewed as a supplemental entity of the state and a symbolic alternative. The church can be viewed as a source of opposition, rebellion and conflict to the state³⁵

According to Samson church leaders have responsibilities within the civil society where their constituencies are domiciled. They need to strive to get rid of the social, political maladies and the inhuman treatment of the doom trodden in the society. The cleansing work need to start from their immediate religious institution. Desirable moral and ethical values should be revisited and inculcated in their members who are part of the larger society. It is disheartening hearing and reading stories of embezzlement of both public and church funds by some church leaders and laities. This is an indication of the martyrdom of moral and religious values, even within the religious institutions which are supposed to uphold and enforce moral values. If the church leaders succeed in dealing with them and their members, they may then proceed to the public sphere and make a difference to the social disorder in the society. Religious leaders should not hesitate, like Amos to confront, if need be, the political hegemony and the afflicted in the society of their corruption, marginality of the poor and perversion of justice³⁶

Samson further upholds that Religious leaders should note that their weapon is no other than the “dabar” of God (the word of God) that legitimize their authority. They must constantly and continuously wield it to prick the conscience of the people. The result may not be immediate or encouraging, yet they must persist in declaring the word of God and the impending judgement on the recalcitrant. Frantic efforts should be made to correct the social anomalies in the country. This would be achieved through unrelated analysis of government policy in the light of God’s word.³⁹

In the Old Testament prophets functions were to direct, correct, instruct and give godly advice to the king and the entire populace. But some of these prophets failed woefully in this respect. They suddenly became praise singers of the administration in the face of wrong doings. At time, they kept mute so as not to utter any offensive statement against the king that may earn them disfavour. However, this is an indirect way of collaborating with the unjust, unconcerned and oppressive administration. Prophet Amos overcame this temptation when he spoke against the ruler ship of Jeeroboam 2nd and even told him that his lineage would be swept out with sword and Amaziah, the priest had to instruct Amos to leave Bethel at once.. This must be what religious leaders in Nigeria are.

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

1 John Cardinal Onaiyekan says Pope Paulvi in the 1960s challenged the world to take another path to peace- path of justice. He said:

*If you want peace, work for justice, for the development of the whole man and of all men. Blatant injustice and inequalities in the world build up social tensions, eventually leading to the breakdown of the in just structure abhorred by nature. Greater justice and sharing between and within nations create a more contusive environment for peace to reign in a sustainable way. The famous sustainable development Goals of the United Nations are therefore steps in the right direction.*³⁷

But since absolute justice is hardly achievable in our human society, we need to go beyond justice to ensure solid and durable peace Pope Paul II tell us,

*If you want peace, be ready to generously offer and humbly accept mutual forgiveness suffering some measures of injustice and injury for the sake of peace, forgiveness leading to reconciliation. Without forgiveness, there can be no peace and reconciliation,*³⁸

Nigeria as a nation has suffered from terrorism such as Boko Haram, Niger Delta militants, cattle rustlers among others. We need to show mercy in order to move forward. According to John:

On security and Boko Haram with effective and commendable armed response, our soldiers have “technically defeated “Boko Haram and routed them from their strongholds in the Sambisa forests. But much need to be done to achieve full and durable peace that will enable people to return in security of their homes and villages. Two areas comes in mind here, massive program of social development and justice in the north-east zone. Rather than aiming at killing them all off, can we not develop deliberate program of reaching out to ex-combatants of Boko Haram, with amnesty

and re-integrating? This is certainly a risk that is worth taking, for the sake of many who may actually be waiting for such an opportunity.³⁹

John further talk on corruption, He said:

On the war against corruption, can we go beyond public denunciations and arraignment before sensational tribunal? Can there be offer of channels for quiet repentance, refunds and amnesty? This is more likely to be effective, especially for repatriating funds lodged in foreign banks. The endemic corruption that we have seen may have sucked in many decent people with no real intention to steal public funds. Already we hear that Mr. President is applying this system quietly with some of his friends. This should be made a open policy available to everyone with good intention. Those who refuse to avail themselves of such an opportunity for amnesty should be pursued and prosecuted according to law and if found guilty, made to face the full wrath of the law..⁴⁰

CONCLUSION

Nigerians understand the importance of national development, cannot be achieved in a situation of endemic corruption, poverty, advanced fraud, moral decadence, and social unease. The country had tried in various ways to rescue her citizens by establishing some Agencies. However as the government is trying her best to find solution to the endemic social problems in the country, church leaders who are society watchman and custodian of moral and ethical values should join the struggle to find lasting solution to pave way for national development. They should behave like prophet Amos of the Old Testament by preaching fearlessly and stand by the truth.

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