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The Parable of the Good Samaritan Retold in Kenya: The Violence of Corruption and Tribalism

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The narrative of the Parable of the Good Samaritan is found in Luke 10: 25-37. It is Jesus' response to a Jewish teacher of the Law who inquired from Jesus what he could do to receive eternal life. According to the Lawyer's understanding, all that was required was to "love your neighbour as you love yourself". But the Lawyer went on and asked Jesus yet another question about who his neighbour was. This prompted Jesus to use the Good Samaritan parable to make his point. In brief, the story is about this man who was travelling down Jerusalem-Jericho Road and was attacked by robbers, stripped naked, beaten, and left half dead on the roadside, wounded and bleeding. In the Parable of the Good Samaritan Jesus invites us to make, or turn, the other, into a neighbour, even when it involves taking risks, even if we do not know that person My neighbour is not only the one whom I know or is of my tribe or religion. Probably the priest and Levite did not stop because they might not have recognised one of theirs in the wounded person, might have feared to get attacked in the same place, or were prevented from stopping because of their commitments of rituals. True love, universal love, that does not discriminate would help us to fight violence and corruption. In this case, the Good Samaritan, not appreciated by the Jews, most likely came to the aid of a Jew since Jericho is geographically located in Judea, and not far from Jerusalem. This chapter has argued that the parable of the Good Samaritan retold in Kenya underlines the truth about the violence of corruption and tribalism which are some of the moral vices that are highly pronounced in contemporary Kenya to the extent that they have assumed dangerous and destructive proportions. Corruption and tribalism combine to produce a society characterized by gross inequalities in all aspects of life.

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INTRODUCTION

The narrative of the Parable of the Good Samaritan is found in Luke 10: 25-37. It is Jesus' response to a Jewish teacher of the Law who inquired from Jesus what he could do to receive eternal life. According to the Lawyer's understanding, all that was required was to "love your neighbour as you love yourself". But the Lawyer went on and asked Jesus yet another question about who his neighbour was. This prompted Jesus to use the Good Samaritan parable to make his point. In brief, the story is about this man who was travelling down Jerusalem-Jericho Road and was attacked by robbers, stripped naked, beaten, and left half dead on the roadside, wounded and bleeding. Apparently, there were several earlier passers-by on that same road but Jesus named only three: a priest, a Levite, and a Good Samaritan. While the priest and the Levite saw the man in pain and went on with their own journey, the Good Samaritan went over to the bleeding and hurting man on the roadside, poured oil and wine on his wounds, bandaged him, and took him to an inn for treatment. He then paid his bills and even committed himself to pay whatever would be added thereafter. Violence is increasing in our society because of not caring about those who are not of our tribe, religion, or political party. This biasness also leads to corruption. In the Parable of the Good Samaritan Jesus invites us to make, or turn, the other, into a neighbour, even when it involves taking risks, even if we do not know that person My neighbour is not only the one whom I know or is of my tribe or religion. Probably the priest and Levite did not stop because they might not have recognised one of theirs in the wounded person, might have feared to get attacked in the

same place, or were prevented from stopping because of their commitments of rituals. True love, universal love, that does not discriminate would help us to fight violence and corruption. In this case, the Good Samaritan, not appreciated by the Jews, most likely came to the aid of a Jew since Jericho is geographically located in Judea, and not far from Jerusalem.

Thesis

The thesis that runs through this chapter, namely promoting universal love, is that as much as Jesus was speaking to a particular social context which in this case was the Jewish society, through the above parable, he was also speaking to contemporary Kenyan society. Through this parable, Jesus painted a society that inflicted pain and suffering on others, especially the poor, and pretended that everything was normal. One section of the society was grieving while the other one was celebrating its achievements. This kind of society is manifest in the man who had been beaten and abandoned on the roadside, on the one hand, and several others, including those holding religious offices who were either indifferent or oppressors. The priest and Levite were unbothered about the plight of the dying man on the roadside. But for Christ, hope was not entirely lost. A good man in the person of a Good Samaritan came by. He went over to the dying man on the roadside and gave him the help he needed. We can also take Jesus to be good the Good Samaritan *par excellence*. He forfeited the heavenly comfort to die on the cross for those who are oppressed as were unbothered symbolized by the suffering man on the roadside. Christ's continuous presence and execution of the mandate of the Good

Samaritan in the world is concretized in his spiritual community, the Church.

The concretization of Christ's ministry to the poor and marginalized finds expression in a Church that actively identifies with and works for the poor and marginalized in society. In Kenya and Africa in general, this would mean fighting all social structures and practices that have consigned so many citizens to a life of squalor which included the effects of corruption and tribalism. It is argued that the Church cannot afford passivity or impartiality. Like its master; it must deliberately take a bold step and side with the poor and marginalized. It must articulate what Tarimo¹ calls "preferential love for the poor" and be actively involved in alleviating their pain and suffering. It must prevail upon the powers, especially the state, to obey God in service to citizens. Failure of the Church to execute this divine mandate renders it an accomplice in the oppression and marginalization of the poor.

Definition of Concepts

The key concepts in this section are violence, corruption, and tribalism. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines violence as "behaviour intended to hurt or kill somebody". However, in this discussion, violence is defined beyond physical harm to the victims to include all behavioural aspects that undermine humanity. It is given from Biblical creation narrative in the book of Genesis that humanity is God incarnate in terms of the divine image. The same God said, "...love one another as I have love you" (John 15:12).² Corruption and tribalism are negations of the divine will and image and constitute forms of violence. When Jesus Christ told the Parable of the Good Samaritan, his concern was on the people who did the actual harm to the man on the roadside and the "good men and women" who went down that same road but ignored the hurting man. His point was that both the muggers and the passers-by were guilty in equal

measure, guilty of sins of omission and commission. This chapter treats deals with omissions and commissions as violent behaviours in relation to corruption and tribalism in Kenya.

The term corruption has been defined conventionally by various institutions for purposes of their operations. These institutions include the Anti-Corruption and Economic crimes Act (ACECA) 2003 and the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption (IACAC).³ The definitions include such concepts as bribery, fraud, embezzlement, abuse of office and solicitation among others. However, in this discussion, the term corruption includes care-free attitudes, negligence, irresponsibility, low regard for others, sectarianism, biasness, greed, and selfishness.

All these notions are evident in the story of the Good Samaritan as exhibited mainly by the priest and the Levite who just passed by the man in pain. Jesus implicitly condemned them. *The Collins English Dictionary-complete unabridged 2012 Edition* defines tribalism as "loyalty to a tribe or tribal values or strong loyalty to one's tribe, party or group". In this space, the term tribalism, along with its sister concept "ethnocentrism", is understood as an ideology which entails differential treatment of non-tribal members and disregard for their values. *The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* defines the term ethnocentrism as "belief in the intrinsic superiority of the nation, culture, or group to which one belongs often accompanied by feelings of dislike for other groups".⁴ While the ethnicity of the hurting man in the good Samaritan narrative is not disclosed, it is conjectured that he was not a member of the nobility. That could be the possible reason for the negligence exhibited by the Priest and the Levite.

Thus, a combination of corruption and tribalism is capable of harming humanity in a manner worse than physical harm. They cause artificial socio-

¹Aqualline Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa's Social Reconstruction*. Nairobi, Kenya; Acton Publishers, 2005, pp. 46-47. See also Nthamburi, Zablon, *The African Church at the Crossroads: Strategy for Indigenization*. Nairobi: Uzima Press, 1991, pp. 37-38

² Victor Zinkuratire and Angelo Colacrai, eds., *The African Bible: Biblical Text of the New American Bible*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 1999.

³ Gitonga, Nyaga and Theuri, Matthew, 2011 *Corruption; Is it an Elusive War in Kenya?* Book 1, Nairobi; Rotech Enterprises, pp. 1-8 See also, Mwareke, Thadei, *Poverty, Corruption and Disease in Africa South of the Sahara A challenge to Catholic Social Teaching*. Nairobi; CUEA Publications, 1996, pp. 21-22.

⁴ For further reading on this, see Nyaundi, Nehemiah, *rethinking God: Exploring the Interface Between Religion Social Reality*. Limuru, Kenya: Zapf Chancery, 2015, pp. 54-84

economic inequalities, unemployment, unequal distribution of resources, hostilities, and animosities among citizens. In a nutshell, they destroy the moral fibre of society and result in actual physical violence and other moral vices. In Kenya, corruption, and tribalism as forms of violence are undermining nationhood.⁵ They constitute negations of ethics of care⁶ and the Biblical notions of loving one another as the Lord loved us (John 13:34-35) and being mindful of each other (Rom. 13: 8-10). Ethics of care entails being responsive and listening carefully to different voices and respect for each other regardless of any other considerations including religion, race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status.

THE VIOLENCE OF CORRUPTION IN KENYA

Corruption can refer to many different types of illegal acts, though they will usually involve individuals using office and authority bestowed upon them by the public, or using personal endowments, for their own benefit, or for the benefit of family and friends. This can be government officials using public money for their own personal gain, or corporate executives improperly awarding contracts or taking other decisions in exchange for bribes.⁷ Transparency International (TI) ranked Kenya 147 out of 175 worldwide in the corruption perception index.⁸ When he visited Kenya in 2015, the US president, Barack Obama, stated that corruption cost Kenya 250,000 jobs annually.⁹ This is painful in a country where, according to the United Nations (UN), four out of every ten people are unemployed¹⁰.

On the basis of the violence of corruption, some commentators have tried to argue that successive post-colonial regimes in Kenya might not pass the integrity test. They use the term kleptocracy or rule by thieves.¹¹ According to the Independent Kenya

Travel Guide,¹² the administrations of the first three post-independence presidencies failed to return lands surrendered by the fleeing British colonialists to the former owners, especially in the rift valley. It is reported that the first president of the independent Republic of Kenya instead chose to distribute such lands to the members of his own community. In post-colonial Kenya, this has crystallised into what is commonly referred to as historical injustices in matters of land. This fact has often set two communities in the rift valley region of Kenya, the Kikuyu and the Kalenjins, against each other. This was one of the major factors that precipitated the 2007/8 Post Election Violence (PEV) in which several members of Kikuyu ethnic extraction were hounded out of their homes and farms in the region. Many people lost their lives and property.

It is alleged that the other beneficiaries of such lands were state functionaries around the president. This was so in spite of the fact that the British colonial office gave money to the Kenyan state to compensate peasants who had lost their pieces of land.¹³ It suffices to say that the land question in post-colonial Kenya remains sensitive and explosive. The state has been unable to deal with it conclusively, to date. Arguably, this is one of the worst forms of violence a government can feast on its citizens. It entails permanent displacement, homelessness, and landlessness. These are sticking realities in contemporary Kenya regardless of the causes. It is no wonder that slums are on the increase in all urban places where the poor live in squalor and exposed to diseases.¹⁴ Corruption undermines preferential option for the poor.¹⁵

During the reign of President Daniel arap Moi, Kenya's second president, corruption was widespread. It is alleged that in the 1990s, the Goldenberg scandal took place under his administration. In the scandal, non-existent gold

⁵ Currently, following the controversial 2017 Presidential election, some dissatisfied regions threatened to secede.

⁶ Gilligan, Carol, *The Deepening Darkness: Patriarchy, Resistance, and Democracy's Future*. Cambridge: University Press, 2009.

⁷ The Facts about Corruption in Kenya. www.kenya-advisor.com. Retrieved 17th Sept. 2016

⁸ www.finzy.com/economy/obama-tells-kenya-to-end-corruption-gender-inequality. July 26th 2015. Retrieved 17th Sept. 2016

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Thompson, Dennis, *Ethics in Congress: From Individual to Institutional Corruption*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1995.

¹² www.kenya-advisor.com, ibid.

¹³ Maxon, Robert, "Agriculture" in Ochieng, William ed., *Themes in Kenyan History*. Nairobi: E.A. Publishers LTD, 1990, pp. 29-34

¹⁴ Thadei, Mwareke. Ibid, pp.

¹⁵ Ibid, p 23

was smuggled and exported out of Kenya in exchange for high government subsidies.¹⁶ Described as one of the largest corruption scandals to date in post-colonial Kenya, the scandal involved nearly the entire government.¹⁷ To date, not a single individual has been convicted over the Goldenberg scam which creates the impression that it never was. Yet lots of Kenyan tax payers' money, estimated to be US\$ 820,512,820, was looted from treasury.¹⁸ To say the least, this is not only justice delayed but denied as well. But it should not be lost to readers that the second president of the republic of Kenya embraced what he called "Nyayo Philosophy" which meant following in the footsteps of his predecessor, Jomo Kenyatta. This would seem to mean that all the evils of the previous regime were perpetuated by his government.

Corruption remained a big issue during the regime of Mwai Kibaki. It is estimated that from 2003 to 2006, his cabinet spent US\$ 14,000,000 on new Mercedes cars for themselves.¹⁹ The Anglo-Leasing corruption scandal, one of the grand corruption cases ever in the history of independent in Kenya over which again, nobody has been convicted to date, happened during the Mwai Kibaki government. This scandal, which was about a security tender contract awarded to a non-existent foreign company involved US\$ 102,564,102.²⁰ Most importantly, Kibaki will probably be remembered for accepting to be president in fiercely contested presidential election results of the 2007, leading to riots that caused the death of 1,300 Kenyans. This is part of what corruption as a form of violence can do to a country.

President Uhuru Kenyatta's government has been described as the most corrupt ever in the history of Kenya.²¹ It has been riddled with a litany of

scandals, from the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) to National Youth Service (NYS) theft and the misappropriation of 5 billion Kenya Shillings at the Ministry of health.²² Things have never been worse for Kenyans in as far as the violence of corruption is concerned. Their president, the most powerful human being in the land, elected to deal with their most complex challenges, declared that he was unable to deal with the monster of corruption.²³ Was not that violent behaviour, adding salt to a paining injury?

The Kenyan economy qualifies for being capitalist. The fundamentals of a capitalist economy such as guarantees of individual freedoms and rights as well as protection of private property are evident in the 2010 constitution.²⁴ However, capitalism normally requires that the wealth that individuals have is genuinely created and distributed. Capitalism is an economic system that lays emphasis on production of wealth and re-investment to create more wealth. However, capitalism cannot survive in the context of wild levels of corruption. It cannot survive in a situation where lots of wealth in the hands of individuals is stolen rather than created²⁵. The former Chief Justice of the republic of Kenya, Dr Willy Mutunga, described Kenya's economy as a "bandit economy".²⁶

One cannot imagine any worse kind of moral violence against society than when some individuals have access to ill-gotten wealth when others have nothing. Four out of every ten Kenyans are unemployed and over 40% live below the poverty line, earning less than \$1.25 per a day.²⁷ Thus the effects of ill-gotten wealth in the hands of a few in society are not very pleasant. For one, it discourages and frustrates genuine wealth producers as it creates a longing for quick and ill-gotten wealth. In my

¹⁶ www.kenya-advisor.com, *ibid*.

¹⁷ *ibid*

¹⁸ Nyaga, and, Theuri, *ibid.*, p. 9

¹⁹ *Ibid*

²⁰ Gitonga, Nyaga and Theuri, Matthew *ibid*.

²¹ Githongo, John. Daily Nation, August 2nd 2015

²² See Daily Nation, October 27, 2016

²³ On 18th October 2016 the President convened a session with senior government officials including EACC and judiciary officials and declared he was unable to deal with corruption. The event was covered live on local television screens. See The Standard October 31st 2016.

²⁴ See Chapter Four on the Bill of Rights in The Constitution of Kenya (2010)

²⁵ For further discussion of this, see Kimua, Tegakimwa, H. *Let Socialism Come of Itself; A message to Black African Continent.*, Nairobi; Gideon Were Press, 1986

²⁶ See africanarguments.org/2016/Kenya-has-become-a-bandit-economy-says-chief-justice-. I choose to describe it as "a robber economy" because majority of so called rich Individuals in Kenya have used opportunities in public service to loot from public coffers. So, they have illegally acquired wealth.

²⁷ See www.kenya-advisor.com, *ibid*. 01/11/kenya

opinion, this is one way of explaining escalating property crimes in Kenya. There are so many young people in Kenya who want to get rich quickly through illegitimate means. After all, this seems to be the norm. This is what widespread corruption can do in society. It brutalizes and criminalizes the entire society. I think that most of the passers-by that Christ described in the parable of the Good Samaritan were products of a corrupt society, Individuals whose sense of moral responsibility had been blurred by a corrupt society in which they lived.

In recent times, the President of the Republic of Kenya declared corruption a national security threat.²⁸ He went ahead and indicated that some public officials could accept bribes to facilitate terrorist operations in the countryside. At the time the president made this declaration, the country was in the grip of increased *Al-Shabaab*²⁹ sponsored terrorist attacks in various parts of Kenya, and more especially Nairobi, the coast and North Eastern area. On 2nd April 2015, gunmen attacked Garissa University College campus and killed 148 Kenyans who included 142 students, 3 soldiers and 3 police officers. 79 more others were injured and 700 were taken hostage.³⁰ The country had previously experienced attacks since the 1998 when the US Embassy in Nairobi was attacked killing several people. More other attacks followed including: a Mombasa tourist Hotel (2002), Westgate Shopping Mall, Nairobi (2013), bus station in Nairobi (2014), Gikomba Market (2014), and Mpeketoni in Lamu (2014).³¹ As the Head of State of Kenya intimated, it is often logically correct to suspect that some security agents in the immigration department receive bribes to allow terrorists to carry out operations in the country. This cannot be a far-fetched claim in a country where appetite for ill-gotten wealth is so strong. Thus, corruption is the very foundation of violence in Kenya just as it was in Roman society which informed Jesus' parable.

Apart from economic corruption as discussed above, politics can also be corrupted. Political corruption, with such malpractices as rigging elections in favour of preferred individuals has the

potential of ruining societies completely. Whenever elections are not perceived to be free and fair, countries explode in violent chaos. Kenya has over the years since 1992 experienced more than its fair share of elections-related violence on suspicion of stolen elections. The climax was in 2007/8 when so many Kenyans, especially the poor, lost their lives and property. At the time of writing, 2018, Kenya is divided down the middle because of the perception that the August 8th 2017 presidential election was rigged in favour of the Jubilee party candidate, Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta. Indeed, the Supreme Court of Kenya (SCOK) confirmed such suspicions when it nullified the election of president Kenyatta on 1st September 2017 and ordered a repeat presidential election on 26th October 2017. However, the majority of Kenyans, especially the opposition sympathizers, boycotted the repeat poll on suspicion that it would be rigged again. Evidence of a divided country was on display on 12th December 2017 when extremely few Kenyans turned up to celebrate Jamhuri Day fete.³² This was against tradition. Generally, election seasons have become highly sensitive times in Kenya mainly because of the seemingly entrenched rigging culture born of corruption.

This kind of society where corruption reigns is self-evident in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Corruption thrives in a mindless society. A society where individuals mind their own selfish interests and blatantly ignore the needs and sufferings of others. Jesus' hurting and abandoned man on the road side had probably been there for several hours and many of the passers-by minded their own businesses except the Good Samaritan. This underlines the need to care for one another. The need to use public, or otherwise resources to alleviate the suffering of others. The need to be responsible citizens whose actions are motivated by common good or public interest and not purely individualistic ones.

Furthermore, corruption undermines public confidence in the state and instruments of governance e. g. the police and judiciary. It also undermines democracy and good governance by

²⁸ See The Standard November 23rd 2015

²⁹ An Islamic and Al-Qaida based terror group based in neighbouring Somalia.

³⁰ Wikipedia, accessed 20th October 2016

³¹ See Wikipedia Ibid.

³² See The Nairobiian, Friday December –Thursday 21st 2017, p. 16

flouting, or even subverting, formal processes. Corruption in elections and in the legislature reduces accountability and distorts representation in policymaking. Corruption in the judiciary compromises the rule of law, and corruption in public administration results in the inefficient provision of services. More generally, corruption erodes the institutional capacity of government if procedures are disregarded, resources are siphoned off, and public offices are bought and sold. Corruption undermines the legitimacy of government and such democratic values as trust and tolerance. According to Tarimo,³³ corruption cripples' administrative capability and impedes the realization of the ideals of human rights and social justice. Corruption produces a man –eat –man society.³⁴

Corruption undermines the rule of law especially when it appears that the law does not treat all citizens equally. One example is the theft from the National Youth Service (NYS).³⁵ During the 2014/15 financial year in Kenya, some senior officers including the then Cabinet Secretary (CS) were suspected to have colluded to steal money estimated at 1.8 billion from the NYS.³⁶ However, in spite of apparent public perceptions that the CS was at the centre of the theft,³⁷ there were apparent quick moves in official circles to declare the cleanness of the CS.³⁸ Only junior officers who were answerable to the CS were charged with the theft. To date, the cases are yet to be concluded and have since disappeared from public domain.

There are no indications that the said CS will ever face justice even when it had become clear that the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) team that cleared the CS was chaired by yet another suspect in the NYS theft. There had been unconfirmed allegations to the effect that the then Chairman himself may have been a beneficiary of

the stolen money from the NYS. A company associated with his family was reported to have received 34.4 million Kenya shillings out of the money stolen from NYS.³⁹ How are Kenyan citizens supposed to respond to this blatant, violation of the rule of law which is a form of violence?

Generally, when government is reluctant, or fails, to punish criminals, and in some cases of corrupt public officers, it stands guilty of the crime of omission or passivity. This undermines its own credibility in the eyes of the public. Consequently, public confidence in its institution's wanes. Thus, government is as guilty as its own public officials who go unpunished for the crimes they have committed. In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, there is evidence of passivity and indifference which Jesus condemned. The individuals who passed by and ignored the hurting man on the roadside were as guilty as the actual robbers themselves. Government's passivity in the matter of fighting corruption stands condemned by Christ in his parable.

The Violence of Tribalism

Ethnicity entails group consciousness based on factors such as shared language, culture and history, origins, and sometimes religion.⁴⁰ There is nothing intrinsically wrong with being a member of a given ethnic community. Such groupings can be used for promoting the common good.⁴¹ Human beings are social animals. They naturally form and associate with groups for different social psychological purposes including social support and identity. However, ethnicity may turn violent when it promotes ethnocentric⁴² attitudes among different groups. Ethnocentric attitudes entail a view of things in which one's own group is the centre of everything and all others are scaled and rated with

³³ Aqualline, Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa's Social Reconstruction*, Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2005, p.95

³⁴ Mwereke, Thadei, *ibid* p. 23

³⁵ This is a paramilitary government youth training facility meant to impart vocational skills to young Kenyans to prepare them for gainful employment.

³⁶ See *The Star* September 30th 2016.

³⁷ See *The Standard* October 7th, 2016

³⁸ Sometime in 2015, the EACC declared the then CS for Devolution clean and even issued the officer with a certificate to that effect.

³⁹ See *Daily Nation* August 26th 2016

⁴⁰ Theo Tschuy, *Ethnic Conflict and Religion: Challenge to the Churches*, Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1997, p. 156 cited in Nyaundi, Nehemiah, *Rethinking God: Exploring the Interface Between Religion and Social Reality*. Limuru, Kenya: Zapf Chancery, 2015, p. 54

⁴¹ See Aqualline, Tarimo *ibid*, pp. 65-76 and Nehemiah, Nyaundi, *Ibid*, p. 94

⁴² Nehemiah, Nyaundi, *ibid*, p. 75

reference to it. That is the very definition of tribalism. These ethnocentric behaviour patterns quite often manifest themselves in public space in the hiring of one's own for state jobs in public institutions such public universities even though the 2010 Kenya constitution is categorical on the principles of non-discrimination of Kenyans on any grounds including ethnicity.⁴³

An example of discrimination of a Kenyan on grounds of ethnicity happened at Moi University in the western part of Kenya in 2016. The university is a public institution located among members of the Kalenjin community. The Education Cabinet Secretary then constitutionally appointed a Prof Laban Ayiro who is not from the Kalenjin community, as acting Vice Chancellor at the institution instead of Professor Isaac Kosgey, a Kalenjin. Two governors from the neighbouring counties led their supporters, mainly Kalenjin folks, into the university and demanded that the CS rescinds his decision and appoint Professor Kosgey to the position. Note that Professor Ayiro had what it takes to be appointed Vice Chancellor. His only 'crime' was, being an outsider, a non-Kalenjin.

Tribalism remains a violent aspect in Kenya. The post-election violence (PEV) that swept across Kenya after the announcement of presidential election results in December 2007 led to the killing of 1300 Kenyans, thousands of others maimed and property worth billions of Kenya shillings destroyed. The violence was not necessarily caused by political disagreements between the combatants but by underlying ethnocentric attitudes. The humanity of minority ethnic groups who were non-members of the regional dominant ethnic groups was undervalued and were subjected to violent treatment. Luis⁴⁴ has defined a minority group as a group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination.

⁴³ See the 2010 *Constitution of the Republic of Kenya* article 27 subsection (4).

⁴⁴ See Luis, Worth 'The Problem of Minority Groups in the World' in Ralph, L. ed., *The Science of Man*, Columbia University Press, 1945).

Jesus did not disclose the ethnic identity of the man on the roadside. However, from the way many passers-by ignored him, we can decipher the existence of some form of discrimination.⁴⁵ The Good Samaritan whatever could have been an obstacle and intervened. That was an exemplary act that Kenyans should emulate: being at the service of others regardless of their racial, ethnic, religious, or otherwise backgrounds.

The themes of Corruption and Tribalism in the Bible

Corruption is explicitly disapproved in the Bible. It is seen to be at the very foundation of the broken relationship between God and the first man, Adam. Out of greed, the first family coveted and ate the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:1-19). God rejects Cain's offering because he was dishonest and corrupt (Gen. 4: 1-12). In Exodus 20:16 -17, stealing and greed are condemned. The prophet Nehemiah criticized and condemned leaders and officials of the state of Israel for oppressing the poor among them. The leaders had apparently embraced a taxation system which made life difficult for the poor. The latter had limited options and gave away their farms and vineyards for survival. Others were forced into slavery because of reckless policies (Neh. 5: 1-12). In the same vein, the prophet Isaiah pronounced God's disapproval of the evil indulgences of the leaders and people of Judah. He accused them of being greedy, unjust, drunkards and turning values upside down. This amounted to disobedience of God (Isa. 5: 8-25).

The most explicit illustrative incident of God's disapproval of corrupt leaders is the way he dealt with King Ahab (1 Kings 21:1-26). At the behest of Jezebel, his wife, King Ahab had Naboth killed and then grabbed his vineyard. For this action and others, King Ahab was condemned as the most corrupt king of Israel.

In the New Testament, Jesus' public ministry laid emphasis on integrity. He used metaphorical language, parables, and phrases to express his

⁴⁵ An ideology in this case is a collectively held principle or philosophy that binds members of a group and informs their attitudes and treatment of non-group members.

disapproval of the contemporary social system. For example, his reading from the book of Isaiah 61: 1-4 in Luke 4: 18-19 left his audience puzzled. It could be argued that Jesus was simply talking about spiritual liberation of captives of sin. However, Mugambi⁴⁶ argues for temporal liberation using the same text and I think it is in order. Both interpretations are acceptable. Jesus also used parables to describe his society including the parable of the Good Samaritan which is the basis of this discussion.

In the Parable of Tenants in the Vineyard (Mat. 21: 33-45), Jesus is warning corrupt leaders of then and now against arrogance in thinking that they own this world and reject the rightful owner in their unjust dealings with other human beings, especially the poor. He is reminding them that they are mere tenants and the owner will chase them out any time. Finally, Christ condemned the Jewish leaders, including the Pharisees, Sadducees, and teachers of the law for their hypocrisy, dishonesty, and injustice in dealings with their subjects (Mat. 23: 13-28).

On the theme of tribalism, I find some parts the Old Testament hopelessly tribal. It gives the Jews preferential treatment over the surrounding communities who are treated as enemies of the Jews and their God. Killing of non-Jews even in their thousands was celebrated. On alleged instructions of the Jewish God, King Saul attacked, wantonly killed, and looted the Amalekites clean (1 Sam. 15:1-9). Samson bullied and killed several Philistines and was praised as a hero (Judges 15: 9-20). David killed Goliath, a Philistine hero and was celebrated as a hero and went on to become king of Israel (1 Sam. 17:1-54). Marrying of foreign wives was perceived as the cause of evil. For example, Jezebel, wife of King Ahab was a non-Jew. She was the daughter of King Ethbaal of Sidon (I Kings 16:30-32), and was blamed for her husband's sins, including the introduction of foreign religion in Israel. Moses' wife, Zipporah, was a Cushite. Moses was criticized by his closest associates, Miriam, and

Aaron, for this fact (Num. 12:1). This invited to be careful about how we interpret these texts, which cannot be understood that God is supporting discrimination and favouritism. The New Testament is a contrast of what was presented above. Both in his public teachings and actions, Jesus thrashed Jewish tribal inclinations. He taught his followers to love their enemies (Mat. 5: 43-48). His healing activities were impartial: among the beneficiaries was a Roman officer's servant (Mat. 8:5-13). Although the Jews and Samaritans were not on good terms, Jesus frequently associated the latter. His friendly encounter with the Samaritan woman surprised his mainly Jewish disciples (John 4: 1-42). Thus, Jesus' choice of the parable of the Good Samaritan was deliberate. It was born out of his determination to show that all people belonged to God and were equal in the creator's eyes. Jesus condemned tribalism. He declared the universality of his salvic mission in John 3: 16. The Apostle Paul later expounded on this in his epistles. He emphasized that salvation was by faith in Jesus Christ and that there is neither Jew nor Gentile for both are saved by faith (Rom. 10: 12). Thus, the Bible does not condone corruption and tribalism.

The Church in the Context of Corruption and Tribalism in Kenya

The Church draws its mandate from the word of God and in particular its head Jesus Christ who is the real Good Samaritan. His Church should emulate his words and actions, and can neither afford passivity nor neutrality.⁴⁷ In the face of the violence of corruption and tribalism in society, it is good to ask whether the Church has executed the mandate of its master. In my view, to a very large extent, it has not. In contemporary Kenya, hardly do we hear sermons from pulpits challenging these common place pitfalls in public life. In the matter of corruption, the voice of the Church is hardly heard except in isolated cases.⁴⁸ The Church has remained either silent or divided⁴⁹ in the face of the violence

⁴⁶ Mugambi, Jesse Ndwiaga, *African Christian Theology; An Introduction.*, Nairobi; Heinemann Kenya LTD, 1989 pp. 12-15 and 129-131.

⁴⁷ Gitari, David, *Let the Bishop Speak.* Uzima Press LTD, 1988, pp. 70-85 and Okullu, Henry, *Church, and Politics in East Africa.* Nairobi; Uzima Press LTD, 1974

⁴⁸ Mwareke, Thadei, *Poverty, Corruption and Disease in Africa South of the Sahara A challenge to Catholic Social Teaching.* Nairobi; CUEA Publications, 1996.

⁴⁹ During the 2017 presidential election controversy, Church leaders took sides with regional popular political inclinations. Those in western part of Kenya identified with the National Super Alliance (NASA) course while those in Central Kenya identified with Jubilee party course.

of tribalism. One Kenyan theologian Nehemiah Nyaundi,⁵⁰ has said that the Church is the prominent birth place of negative ethnicity in Kenyan society. It is no wonder that during Post-Election Violence of 2007/8, the Church largely remained silent and even divided as Kenyans wantonly murdered each other mainly along lines of ethnicity.⁵¹

Consequent to the controversial August 8th 2018 presidential election and the resulting political stalemate in the country, the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) called for a change of to create an all-inclusive government argues that these chan.⁵² One would also wish to hear the voice of the Roman Catholic Church in this matter because it is not a member of NCCCK. Ultimately, one wished to have an ecumenical approach to such a national concern. I hold the view that silence, division, passivity, or impartiality are not options for the Church, individual Christian leaders, and theologians. The Church is the collective conscience of society and must come out boldly to condemn corruption and tribalism as major forces destructive to humanity in the contemporary Kenyan society. The gist of the parable of the Good Samaritan is Jesus' invitation to go and act beyond our closed identities and embrace those who are not like us to liberate humanity.

Solutions to the Violence of Corruption and Tribalism in Kenya

In recent times, the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) could not get the 'right' person to fill the position of its vacant position of Chairman. The immediate former Chairman was found wanting and his headship of this organization was found untenable. He resigned in public interest after being accused of benefitting from corruption scandals. The search for a suitable replacement went on for some time. In reference to this search, a commentator in one of the newspapers in Kenya titled his article; "Vacancy: Apply if only you know why we cannot end corruption".⁵³ This shows how corruption and tribalism has eaten into the social fibre of Kenya.⁵⁴ However, that should not mean

that we give up. The war against corruption and tribalism must be fought and won to salvage humanity and create a better society for all.

In dealing with the vices of corruption and tribalism, it is my view that the two are inseparable in Kenya. Tribalism shields and perpetuates corruption more especially in public offices. Corrupt deals such as misappropriation of public resources, dishing out favours or/and breaking the law is invariably conceived and carried out among members from the same ethnic group occupying decision making positions in the public space. For example, in the NYS scandal where 791 million Kenya shillings was literally stolen, almost all those involved were from the same ethnic community. The same may be true about the scandal in the Ministry of Health where 5 billion Kenya shillings was stolen. Thus, in dealing with corruption we must also considered in the dimension of tribalism.

Having said the above, I suggest a multipronged approach including, but not limited to the following:

- De-tribalization⁵⁵ or de-ethnicization of public office appointments, that is, appointment to state offices and its institutions by ensuring ethnic balancing based on merit.
- Recognition and appreciation of ethnicity as natural, but fighting against its abuse as a commitment.
- Conscientization of society to reject corruption and ethnocentrism. For the sake of the future of the Kenya nation, the citizens must be educated to consciously reject the vices of corruption and tribalism. This can be achieved through schools and all public institutions including Churches.
- The Church must wake up from its slumber and play its divine role as the conscience of society. To take sides with the poor and marginalized and remain faithful to its master Jesus Christ and ecumenically address the evils of corruption and tribalism in Kenya.

⁵⁰ See Nehemiah, Nyaundi, *Ibid.* p. 57

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 99

⁵² See *The Daily Nation* on 31st October 2017

⁵³ See *Daily Nation*, October 27, 2016. p. 14

⁵⁴ Nehemiah, Nyaundi, *ibid.*, p. 75 argues that the road to de-tribalization of Kenyan society is not 'paved' 'It is rather slippery all the way.

⁵⁵ This concept has been used by Prof. Nehemiah, Nyaundi, *ibid.* p. 74

- Stiffer penalties for those found engaging in corruption and negative ethnicity should be put in place.⁵⁶ It is not enough, for example, just to sack individuals who engage in corruption. They should be jailed without option of fine; they should moreover pay back what they have stolen.

From the Parable of the Good Samaritan, it is apparent that despite a rapidly decaying social system, there are a few caring and daring individuals among us who are ready to put aside their own comfort and confront moral vices in society. Contemporary Kenya is in dire need of individuals with the calibre of the Good Samaritan to turn around the evils of corruption and ethnocentrism for a better society for all.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued that the parable of the Good Samaritan retold in Kenya underlines the truth about the violence of corruption and tribalism which are some of the moral vices that are highly pronounced in contemporary Kenya to the extent that they have assumed dangerous and destructive proportions. Corruption and tribalism combine to produce a society characterized by gross inequalities in all aspects of life.

The violence of corruption and tribalism must be fought and destroyed through multipronged approaches. These include de-tribalization of public spaces, conscientization and stiffer penalties for those who engage in these vices. Most importantly, the Church must wake up to its divine mandate and remain faithful to its master, Jesus Christ, the good Samaritan *per excellence*, in condemning the moral evils of corruption and tribalism in Kenya. It must unite and speak boldly against corruption and tribalism in society. Silence, division, passivity, and neutrality are not options for the Church. The Bible does not condone corruption and tribalism.

I am not comfortable with this term. I prefer Ethnocentrism.