

Combating political and bureaucratic corruption in Uganda: Colossal challenges for the church and the citizens

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This article formulates a new approach to combating corruption in Uganda. In pursuit of this research, the author highlights the chronicity of corruption in Uganda, which is uniformly political and bureaucratic. Bureaucratic corruption takes place in service delivery and rule enforcement. It has two sides: demand-induced and supply-induced. Political corruption occurs at high levels of politics. There are 'political untouchables' and businessmen who are above the law and above institutional control mechanisms. The established institutions of checks and balances in Uganda have assiduously continued to have a limited bearing on corruption. Neither coherent anti-corruption norms nor severe formal sanctions are able to dishearten certain politicians and civil servants in Uganda from the deviant behaviour of structural corruption. Corruption is a spiritual departure from the law and standard of God. It is an action conceived in the human mind and carried out by the corrupt. Therefore, corruption deterrence not only lies in sound public financial management systems but depends to a large extent on having people with positive human character in all aspects of national life. This article thus provides the framework of corruption and discusses the manifestation of political and bureaucratic corruption in Uganda. It also exegetes the biblical stance regarding corruption. Finally, it proposes a panacea for combating political and bureaucratic corruption.

Introduction and context: Situation analysis

Corruption is not a localised debacle but a globalised tragedy (Batchelor 2010:2). It is as old as the Bible (Gn 6:11–12). No country, however democratic, is liberated from the scourge and cruelty of corruption. The only disparity is the degree and the level of the vice and the systems in place to prevent it (Obura 2012:203). Its impact on any society in terms of socio-economic action is extremely detrimental (Werner 2010:161). Curbing corruption is exceedingly complex because it is not practised by trespassers and outsiders. Instead, it is often institutionalised within government agencies that ensure that corrupt activities are continued and reinforced. Individuals with good intentions cannot easily revoke the system. They will either be forced to compromise their integrity and dine with the corrupt, or allow the corrupt system to prevail if they want to keep their lives and jobs. Africa in general, and Uganda specifically, is a casualty to the menace of corruption (Berkman 2013:24). Transparency International (2013:408) annually publishes the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for countries around the globe. Five of the 10 most corrupt countries in the world in 2003 were actually African: Nigeria, Madagascar, Angola, Kenya and Uganda. The least corrupt African country by this report was Botswana. Corruption in Africa is synonymous with political process, economic exchange and social service (Uneke 2010:112). Transparency International (2013:427) asserts that the therapy for corruption is not simply accountability but also the collapse of the entire government or administrative system, for corruption is a symptom, not the disease itself.

According to the African Peer Review Mechanism, all the informants in Uganda, including political leaders and appointed officials, agreed that corruption is now institutionalised. This view is supported by a wide assortment of inquiries, investigations, assessments and reports, both national and international. This standpoint is also backed by public opinion, which consistently perceives high levels of corruption in political and public service institutions both at the national and local government levels (Mwenda & Tangri 2005:451). The 2007 annual CPI released by Transparency International ranked Uganda as the 11th most corrupt country out of a survey of 179 countries. With a CPI score of only 2.8, corruption in Uganda is still a full-size problem to effective resource utilisation and efficient service delivery. This viewpoint was also shared by Uganda's president, Yoweri Museveni, in the newspaper the *Sunday Monitor*,

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where he pronounced: 'It is easier to create an army than to fight corruption'. This is a reasonable admission that the fight against corruption is not an easy task (Gawaya 2011:6).

Alas in Africa, society has largely accepted corruption as a way of life, where corrupt public officials are glorified and honest civil servants are ridiculed. Furthermore, some scholars like Berkman (2013:27) and Simon Badru (2013:153) argue that corruption may promote economic growth by allowing enterprises to avoid cumbersome regulations with bribes, especially in developing countries. Nevertheless, a majority of the literature globally maintains that corruption devours economic growth, affects societal well-being and impedes democracy (Uneke 2010:114). However, with words of support and endorsement from society and some scholars, the Ugandan political machinery and bureaucrats have ensured that the practice of corruption thrives to benefit their interests at the expense of the poor majority (Badru 2013:159).

Corruption is a highly complex phenomenon. Sometimes the parties involved leave very little or nothing by way of irrefutable evidence to identify the culprit. As Werner (2010) states:

Most of the corruption in different countries and organisations takes place informally and under the cover of isolated contacts. At times it does not even require a verbal agreement. Mere eye contact can establish a relationship of corruption. (p. 163)

Corruption has put down roots in public institutions, its office holders and private social organisations, and in some cases even among the clergy. Mwenda and Tangri (2005:452) assert that there is tangible progress in the establishment of a legal and institutional framework to tackle corruption in Uganda, but political corruption scandals and lack of political will to fight corruption are increasingly visible.

The question therefore is: how can we combat the political and bureaucratic corruption in Uganda, which is a colossal challenge to the church and society? By all standards, corruption, whether political, bureaucratic or of any form, must not be viewed as a disease but as a symptom that needs to be treated, as stated above. Unlike chronic diseases, corruption is treatable (Mbabazi 2015:63). Political and bureaucratic corruption prevention in Uganda requires the juxtaposition of effective accountability and transparency, efficient anti-corruption structures, legal and institutional reforms, good governance, control mechanisms, citizen participation and sufficient exposition of God's word (as 85% of Ugandans indicated their religious affiliation as Christian in the 2014 census) to compress entrenched motives such as greed, egocentricism, dishonesty, injustice, marginalisation and so forth. If these tools are well utilised, then the war against political and bureaucratic corruption can be won.

Understanding the scope of corruption

Corruption has perhaps had the most varied definitions. Obura (2012:202) defines 'corruption' as dishonest or illegal behaviour, especially of people in authority. A widely used

definition is that corruption is the misuse of position or money for personal gain at others' expense (Farmer 2012:58). Corruption may also include the rigging of decisions, nepotism and wealth or gender discrimination (Werner 2010:174). In a biblical context, the Greek word for 'corruption', *diaphthora*, connotes decay (Rm 8:21). Corruption is a state of spiritual decay and moral dishonesty, arising from the effects of sin, which expresses itself in disobedience towards God (Coetzee & Snell 2013). Corruption from Uganda's perspective involves dishonest behaviour on the part of officials in the public sector, whether politicians or civil servants, in which they unlawfully enrich themselves or those close to them by misuse of the public power entrusted to them (Obura 2012:204).

Evans (2012:6) categorises corruption under three headings. The first is incidental corruption. This is small scale. It involves junior public officials such as police officers, customs officers, civil servants and so on. Secondly, there is systematic corruption. This is corruption that affects government departments, businesses and non-business sectors. Thirdly, there is systemic corruption, called 'kleptocracy' or government by theft. Examples of systematic and systemic corruption are many and varied; they include political corruption (buying votes, jobs for supporters) and corruption of the legal process (bribing judges and police officers, and malicious prosecutions) and are typical of the political present and past of Uganda.

Corruption quandary in the opaque political history of Uganda

The Ugandan traditional system of chieftaincy, rulers or leaders had no stipend but survived on bestowing gifts and favours. Even women were given as gifts to chiefs for wives. This type of corruption of exchanging gifts is deeply rooted in the cultural practices and cannot be wished away in a single day. However, as the practices were not perceived to be corrupt, they were carried out openly. This attitude survives among Ugandans to date, except that today the practices are conducted rather confidentially (Kiddu 2014:5).

According to Mbabazi (2015:54), Uganda's obnoxious political past and current corruption dilemma emanated from the British colonial administrative system, which was based on using a segment of the local population to rule over the rest and consequently rewarded them for supporting their policies and interests. With the intentioned absence of democratic rule, institutions that could condemn and demand accountability from public officials never developed. Kiddu (2014:7) sees corrupt colonial policies through the lens of the oppressive political, economic and legal structures they instituted to exploit Ugandans. The colonial officials were never accountable to the natives; they only provided feedback to the distant colonial office and Parliament in London. The natives were not permitted to question the actions of their colonial chiefs. The populace was simply recruited to serve the interests of their masters, who rewarded them based on how well they supported their policies.

Hence, such opaque governance promoted corruptive abuse of power.

The resultant colonial socio-political structure was the ideal breeding ground for what Uganda harvested then and throughout the early post-colonial period (1962–1986). As colonial cadres, Milton Obote and Idi Amin (former presidents of Uganda) lacked the political will and capacity to radically reform the colonial state. In some instances, they even made matters most horrible; the abrogation of the 1962 constitution by Milton Obote, the killings by Idi Amin and the detentions without trial that occurred soon after were excessive and inhumane. President Idi Amin routinely murdered men for their wives and for their differing political opinions. State-inspired terror and impunity resurfaced unabated during the Obote II regime (Kiddu 2014:14). The systems of control, transparency, accountability and management broke down during Amin's period of dictatorship and chaotic rule. Instability and insecurity of job tenure resulting from the political upheavals of the time made employees feel insecure in their jobs and hence they grabbed whatever they could lay their hands on (Amundsen 2006:37).

After years of civil conflict and fierce regimes, President Yoweri Museveni, leader of the National Resistance Movement of Uganda, came to power in around 1986, where he remains to date. Between 1992 and 1995, his reforms aimed at reducing the size of the government but he quickly backtracked after 1996 as he entered a period of electoral politics. The president realised that to win over an ethnically diverse population, he needed to accommodate the interests of the powerful elites and at the same time provide at least a minimum level of public goods for the masses. Paradoxically, the interests of the powerful elites are in most cases inconsistent with those of their constituents. Whereas the general population is more concerned with good roads, hospitals, schools, electricity, safe water and so on, the elites are more interested in private goods such as positions of power, high-paying jobs and opportunities for corruption. Through these, the government has created a corrupt political machinery (Mbabazi 2015:57).

Fertile ground for corruption

To address corruption in Uganda its causes must be clearly identified. However, corruption is a result of a variety of factors: The primary factor is lack of competent political leadership and poor accountability: many politicians in Uganda who aspire to political offices bribe their way to power, and this produces leaders of questionable character. Ultimately, such leaders are not concerned with protecting the interests of the people they serve but rather care much more about offsetting the costs they incurred to get elected (Oluka & Ssenoga 2008:119). Corruption and limited accountability is evident at all levels of the political establishment, for example in matters of public procurement, misuse of funds, buying votes, forging academic papers and so on (Larok 2012:103).

The second factor is greed: corruption in Uganda is fuelled by the greed of those who occupy offices where they can steal. People who are well paid and even those who are already wealthy will, out of greed, embezzle public funds simply because they want more wealth. For some, the impetus is borne out of the need to sustain extravagant lifestyles (see Oluka & Ssenoga 2008:120). The third factor is public beliefs and attitudes: the public continues to admire those who accumulate wealth through corruption. People do not question the source of such wealth. In addition, a deeply ingrained attitude is the belief that corruption is an entitlement of political support, a serious barrier to building a corruption-free society (Larok 2012:104). The fourth factor is moral decay in public service. The view held by devious Ugandans is that 'no one has the moral authority to question the other because everyone is sucked into the vice of corruption'. This viewpoint is raised as a diversionary tactic by the corrupt against those trying to fight corruption. This notion is not fair to Ugandans who live a decent and honest life (see also Fisher 2012:148).

The fifth factor is low income. It has been argued that corruption is a result of the high cost of living in relation to the low income that employees in public service earn from their salaries. Low wages, increased standard of living and economic crisis compels officials to take callous steps to defraud their fellow citizens (cf. Fisher 2012:147). The sixth factor is that the anti-corruption agencies and the judicial system face problems of limited finances and human resources, which pose major challenges in tackling complex corruption cases, and the situation is made more difficult by the judicial system, where cases are delayed, prolonged and regularly postponed (Maira 2013:9; Okorach 2014).

The last factor is that the churches with their development projects and charities are also victims of corruption, like other sectors of societies in Uganda. Corruption in the church is orchestrated by managers and executives whose control is not democratic, who accumulate excessive power and develop genuine nepotism. Corruption in the church is exercised at several levels, for example improper use of church property and funds; kickbacks by members of the church to be elected as bishops, elders and leaders of hospitals, schools and colleges run by the church; appointment of church leaders because they are the founders of the church and not in consideration of their theological orientation or preparation (Bongo 2008:247). The 'prosperity gospel' is also a source of corruption in Uganda. The prosperity gospel teaches that believers cannot obtain financial blessings through prayer alone, but by 'reasonable' payments of their fair share of tithes and offerings. The challenge for these vendors' illusions remains the financial side, the socio-economic exploitation of the poorly informed 'faithful', which is ruinous (Walton 2012). These overarching issues have negative side effects that must be resolved through theological deliberation.

The cost of corruption

Corruption is a global concern that has caused wide-reaching damages and requires the attention of all stakeholders

because of its detrimental effects on economic development, social welfare and political prospects.

Firstly, corruption undermines democracy and good governance by subverting formal processes such as election and government policy (see USAID 1999:5). Secondly, it results in biased decision-making, as considerations of personal enrichment take precedence over the establishment of rights for all. Thirdly, corruption obstructs justice, as it becomes biased and unfair. In a system of corruption, judgments are not equal for equal cases; they are mostly false and not impartial (see also Grisman 2009:106). Fourthly, corruption creates inefficiencies in public expenditure by diverting resources and policy decisions to easily corruptible sectors. Fifthly, it slows economic development and reduces the quality of government services by creating sizeable distortions (World Bank 2013:375). Sixthly, corruption causes loss of government revenue as businesses go underground, and it also increases the tax burden. Seventhly, it infringes on fundamental human rights to fair treatment. All persons are entitled to be treated equally, and when one person bribes a public official he acquires a privileged status in relation to others. Hence, the latter will be hurt (World Bank 2013:386). Conclusively, corruption results in the loss of legitimacy and respect for the socio-legally constituted authority and maintenance of a just social order. Hence the need for legislation to curtail corruption is inevitable.

Legal framework and institutions for curbing corruption

When one scowls at tabloids or newspaper stories on corruption scandals around the globe, the red light is that corruption is not an impasse for a select few, but for all the countries around the world. Although it is more ubiquitous in developing countries, the phenomenon of corruption irrefutably consumes a good share of 'developed' countries' budgets as well. This has led several countries and international organisations such as Transparency International, the African Peer Review Mechanism, Freedom House and Global Integrity to spearhead, theorise and devise different kinds of anti-corruption legislation and institutions to curb this ever-mounting malady, and Uganda is no exception (Mbabazi 2015:54).

The three principal anti-corruption legislation and legal systems in Uganda comprise the 1995 constitution as the supreme law and the *Prevention of Corruption Act* Cap 121 and *Penal Code Act* Cap 120. The following section details offences and prime legislation aimed at combating corruption. The 1995 Constitution of Uganda is the supreme law of the land and has binding force over all authorities and persons throughout Uganda. The constitution contains provisions on the measures, concepts and institutions that are geared to preventing, monitoring and combating corruption. The constitution also makes those in positions of leadership answerable and accountable to the people of Uganda. On the other hand, the constitution enjoins the citizens of Uganda to

preserve and protect public property and combat corruption (Komuhangi 2005).

The *Prevention of Corruption Act* Cap 121, which commenced on 12 June 1970, is one of the major pieces of anti-corruption legislation in Uganda. Under this law, corruption is an offence involves the participation of a public official. The act prohibits soliciting, receiving or agreeing to receive on behalf of another, as well as giving, promising to give or offering to any individual for the benefit of another person any gratification as an inducement (Komuhangi 2005). Another piece of anti-corruption legislation is contained in the *Penal Code Act* Cap 120, and corruption-related offences in this act include *inter alia* embezzlement, causing financial loss, false accounting by public officials, fraudulent offences by directors and officers of corporations, and abuse of office. All felonies committed under these laws are punishable (Inspectorate of Government [IG] 2011).

Uganda's main anti-corruption institutions include the parliament or the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), Directorate of Public Prosecutions (DPP), IG and Directorate of Ethics and Integrity (DEI). The PAC, as one of the standing committees of the parliament, has the overall responsibility as a watchdog on matters of financial accountability. The PAC has the role of examining the reports of the auditor general tabled before parliament and reporting back to the parliament on remedial actions recommended and to be acted upon by the cabinet. The PAC has the power to summon any controlling officer or department head to give an explanation and be held accountable for breaches in financial accounts in the auditor general's reports. The scrutiny of annual accounts and audit reports by the PAC completes the circle of the various stages of controls for ensuring financial accountability. The PAC is also empowered to censure ministers accused of engaging in acts of abuse of office and misconduct (Komuhangi 2005).

In Uganda, Article 120 of the 1995 constitution established the DPP with a mandate over all criminal prosecutions, including acts of corruption. The DPP is independent in the sense that in the exercise of his or her functions, he or she is not subject to the direction or control of any person or authority. The major functions of the DPP include directing police to investigate any information of a criminal nature and instituting criminal proceedings against any person in any court with competent jurisdiction, other than a court martial. The DPP does not carry out investigations of cases; it is the exclusive role of the police and at times the office of the IG to deal with issues of corruption. The role of the DPP is to guide and advise police in the conduct of investigations. The cases are reported to police, who carry out investigations and refer them to the DPP for legal guidance and/or conducting the prosecution. Corruption offences are prosecuted in the magistrates' courts, although the DPP has the power to commit any case to the High Court for trial (Maira 2013:6).

The IG is a constitutional body mandated under Chapter 13 of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda to promote

good governance, fight corruption, instill a culture of accountability, transparency and integrity, and to enforce the Leadership Code of Conduct. The constitution requires the IG to submit a report of the performance of its functions to parliament at least once every 6 months. The IG has the power to investigate, cause investigation, arrest, cause arrest, prosecute or cause prosecution in respect to cases involving corruption (IG 2011).

The DEI, within the office of the presidency, is responsible for coordinating the government's efforts in the fight against corruption and for establishing an integrity system that promotes good governance across the administration (Maira 2013:15). The DEI was established in response to a public outcry that the presence of specific anti-corruption bodies had not been effective in efforts to control and combat corruption in public office and against a background where some of the anti-corruption agencies were in fact themselves corrupt. The DEI is therefore mandated to provide coordination policies and strategies towards effective anti-corruption efforts (Maira 2013:17).

It is also worth noting that Uganda is a signatory to numerous international anti-corruption organisations and conventions in an attempt to fight corruption globally, including Transparency International – Uganda (TIU), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), Afro-barometer, Freedom House and Global Integrity. Transparency International – Uganda is the national chapter of the global anti-corruption movement Transparency International. Transparency International – Uganda is an active contributor to the Transparency International strategic goals, namely promotion of national anti-corruption reform through concrete research and action, increasing the understanding of the link between corruption and poverty, empowering communities to demand accountable governance and promoting continual institutional development (Transparency International 2015).

The APRM, which is turning out to be the most innovative aspect of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, is an instrument voluntarily acceded to by member states of the African Union as a self-monitoring initiative for good governance, showcase of corruption and poverty. The African Peer Review process entails periodic reviews of the policies and practices of participating states to ascertain whether progress is being made towards achieving mutually agreed goals and compliance with agreed political, economic and corporate governance values, codes and standards as outlined in the Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance (APR Secretariat 2009).

Afro-barometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network organisation that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, corruption and related issues across more than 30 countries in Africa. The Afro-barometer team in Uganda, led by Hatchile Consult, interviewed 2400 adult Ugandans in May 2015, countrywide. More than two-thirds (69%) of Ugandans said that the level of corruption in the country increased during the 12 months

preceding the survey, including 51% who said it increased 'a lot'. The proportion of citizens who perceive corruption as one of the most important problems facing the country is growing slowly but steadily (Transparency International 2015).

Freedom House, which was founded in October 1941, is a US-based government-funded non-governmental organisation (NGO) that conducts research and advocacy on democracy, political freedom and corruption. It describes itself as a 'clear voice for democracy and global freedom'. The organisation's annual *Freedom in the World* report, which assesses each country's degree of political freedoms and civil liberties, is frequently cited by political scientists, journalists and policymakers. *Freedom of the Press*, which monitors censorship, intimidation and violence against journalists and the public's access to information, is among its other signature reports (Freedom House 2016).

Global Integrity, an independent non-profit NGO established in 1999, located in Washington, DC, US, is intended to track good governance and corruption trends around the world, as well as Uganda. The *Global Integrity Report* is an essential guide to anti-corruption institutions and mechanisms around the globe, intended to help policymakers, advocates, journalists and citizens identify and anticipate the areas where corruption is more likely to occur within the public sector. The report evaluates both anti-corruption legal frameworks and the practical implementation and enforcement of those frameworks; it takes a close look at whether citizens can effectively access and use anti-corruption safeguards (Global Integrity 2012).

Though the United Nations and Africa Union conventions have not been domesticated into Uganda's laws, provisions are being considered in amendments, with a view to domesticating international laws regarding corruption. The proposals for the amendment of Uganda's *Prevention of Corruption Act* embrace a number of the provisions of the UN convention that are not yet part of Uganda's current law. The provisions in the UN convention that relate to money laundering and bank secrecy are being handled in the money laundering bill (Komuhangi 2005).

As described above, there has been an increase in anti-corruption institutions locally and globally. In spite of the intensity of their activities, corruption is still an ongoing occurrence. If nothing sufficient is done, then the fight against corruption is more of a lost battle (Uneke 2010:115).

Manifestation of political and bureaucratic corruption

Corruption arises in both political and bureaucratic offices and can be petty or grand, organised or unorganised (USAID 1999:5). During the political (electoral and procurement) process, the securing of private commercial and pecuniary interests and political power are incentives present in the

political economy (Amundsen 2006:11). The economic theory on bureaucratic corruption argues that bureaucratic corruption, just like rent seeking, is a result of poorly channelled self-interest of civil servants who seek to maximise profit at the public expense (Werner 2010:167). Hence, bureaucratic corruption can be weakened through auditing and legislation. The degenerative effects of political corruption cannot be diminished by an administrative approach alone, but also call for radical political reforms (Amundsen 2006:28).

Political explanation of corruption

The term 'political corruption' is conceptualised in various ways. In some instances, it is used synonymously with 'grand' or high-level corruption and refers to the misuse of entrusted power by political leadership. In other cases, it refers specifically to corruption within the electoral process. In both cases, political corruption not only leads to the misallocation of resources but also perverts the manner in which decisions are made (Werner 2010:158). Political corruption can reveal itself in a variety of forms such as influence peddling, clientelism, nepotism, anomalous government size and the abuse of decentralisation (Amundsen 2006:34).

Political corruption is one of the main factors undermining further reforms in Uganda. Allegedly, the ruling party has consistently sabotaged and suffocated the opposition parties and made use of its position to remain in power by extending its patronage networks, amassing resources, buying political support and using the state apparatus for electoral campaigns (Mbabazi 2015:57).

Political corruption during the electoral process

Political party financing in Uganda prior to and/or during elections is corruptive when discussing state capture of power. The process of party funding lacks precision or transparency; it involves the creation of hidden networks and interests. As Mwenda and Tangri (2005) contend:

Political corruption during election in Uganda related to campaign financing is often unscrupulous and involves (i) the misuse of state resources by political parties and their candidates, (ii) vote-buying and bribery of election officials and citizens, (iii) quid pro quo donations, where the contributors to political parties and candidate expect something in return for their donations. (p. 453)

In other words, people support financially relevant political parties, which when in power will in return protect economic markets, fix tenders and auctions, and pass favourable legislation for these businesses.

In situations where business contributions are small, many political parties in Uganda generate wealth through fraud and tender procedures (Oluka & Ssenoga 2008:121). They have no obligation to report any private donations. Hence, an undisclosed source of funding creates opportunity for political parties and businesses to interact in an extra-legal zone marked by practices of favouritism. In all these

situations, the biggest cost is borne by the average citizens. The body in charge of dealing with this thematic area has no power to investigate the political party financial declarations (see Uneke 2010:116).

Political parties also put pressure on companies to finance their campaigns, and bribes are used to secure the support of certain political parties and politicians. Judges and other employees of government control agencies have often fallen victim to bribery: 19% of respondents to the 2012 Afro-barometer survey reported having being offered money or a gift in return for their vote during the 2011 elections in Uganda (Maira 2013:3).

The push for money in party and parliamentary politics is well known. The Uganda MPs are to a large degree in debt because of the costs of running the campaigns, convincing electorates and building alliances during election, and they expect to get the opportunity to reclaim this money and more after election, through corruptive means (see also Uneke 2010:117).

Political corruption during the procurement process

In Uganda as in other countries, procurement is one of the government sectors most vulnerable to corruption. In political terms, corruption during procurement generally takes place at high levels of the political system and it involves political decision-makers (Amundsen 2006:11). Politicians and state agents in Uganda who make and enforce laws in the name of the people use their political power with the principle objective of sustaining power, status and wealth (Mwenda & Tangri 2005:455).

In terms of economic incentives, the private businesses of the ruling elite of Uganda are well taken care of. Political heavyweights and their families and friends are usually the owners of businesses that get government contracts and guarantees. As Geoffrey Mbabazi (2015) notes:

Political elites use state enterprises to award themselves and their close friends with noble positions, remuneration and fringe benefits as directors and managers of these companies in blatant disregard of conflict of interest principles. Another basic form of political corruption in economic spans is the use of money and favors to access resources within the political-business nexus. (p. 57)

Businesses are 'buying monopoly situations' by bribing high-level public officials to inflate commodity prices' (the supply side problem), and vice versa where the ministers and senior politicians are using their political power and influence to enter into (private) business relations (the demand side of the problem; Badru 2013:160).

Although there are rules in place, findings from 'value for money' audits conducted by the auditor general have shown that procurement processes in Uganda have many flaws. For instance, the Director of Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority says in 2014 up to 118 procurement audits were conducted in 118 entities and found that contracts

worth UGX 3.1 billion (approximately over \$1 million) were corruptibly awarded to predetermined bidders (Mwenda & Tangri 2005:458). Human Rights Watch recently condemned Uganda's government officials in a blistering report outlining extraordinary embezzlement of public funds (Uneke 2010:116). Massive theft of state funds has rocked Uganda recently in the form of corruption scandals involving high-profile government officials. Despite compelling evidence presented against some ministers and ruling party officials, justice has not been served because of political interference from the highest office. In contrast, activists fighting corruption face intimidation, arrest and criminal charges while NGOs that speak out are threatened with de-registration or closure. Yet the government of Uganda has repeatedly promised to stamp out corruption in the political and bureaucratic scene (Mwenda & Tangri 2005:458, Okorach 2014).

Bureaucratic corruption narrative

Political corruption can be distinguished from bureaucratic corruption, which happens at the implementation end of politics. Whereas political corruption occurs at the highest levels of politics, bureaucratic corruption takes place among public officials, especially in service delivery and rule enforcement (Werner 2010:162). Bureaucratic corruption has two sides; demand-induced and supply-induced. Demand-induced corruption may take place because beneficiaries would like to be rewarded privately. Alternatively, supply-induced corruption may arise because an agent offers a bribe to another, likely a public official. The giver and the receiver may deal with each other either directly or possibly through intermediaries (Grisman 2009:8).

Bureaucratic corruption manifests itself in the form of bribery, embezzlement, false accounting, favouritism, fraud, theft of public funds and assets. It affects a wide range of sectors and government institutions including the police; the defence, education and health sectors; the judiciary; procurement; tax services; permits and registries; and customs (Berkman 2013:28). The most visible signs are poor quality services, crumbling infrastructure and inadequate facilities despite investment. Bureaucratic corruption is pervasive in Uganda's administration, with the practices of bribery (66%), nepotism and favouritism (15%; Berkman 2013:18). Bureaucratic corruption in public service not only fatally hampers the ability of the state to provide services but also burdens citizens with extra taxes in the process of accessing services (Badru 2013:160).

Bureaucratic corruption can be characterised into three major types: petty kickbacks, grand corruption and quiet corruption. Petty kickbacks, which affect citizens and companies in their daily interactions with public officials while attempting to access public services, are an enormous problem in Uganda. According to the IG (2011), such illegal payments are so widespread that they often happen in full view, with public officials openly asking for bribes in exchange for services and citizens and companies openly paying without complaining.

According to Transparency International (2013), nearly 90% of respondents reported having paid kickbacks to at least one of the nine institutions stated above.

There is profuse evidence of grand embezzlement of public funds in Uganda. Approximately 20% of public officials surveyed in the 2008 National Integrity Survey reported embezzlement of public money within their institution as a common practice, while 17% indicated the diversion of the funds to be a common form of corruption affecting the public institutions (IG 2011). There is also evidence of the existence of organised syndicates composed of public officials strategically placed within different government institutions who conspire to embezzle public funds, while remaining unpunished (Maira 2013:3).

For instance, in late 2012 government audits revealed that an estimated 7600 ghost workers existed across public administration. These individuals never worked for any public institutions but were included on the government payroll, costing billions of shillings. The audit uncovered that the scheme was made possible by a collusive agreement between officials within the Ministry of Public Service, supported by the Ministry of Finance (IG 2011).

Quiet corruption is a common occurrence in the national and provincial government administrative systems in Uganda. It is the failure of public servants to deliver goods or services of the government. It also includes absenteeism (Badru 2013:162). A recent World Bank (2013:388) report states that quiet corruption is just as corrosive as other forms of corruption and has a long-term effect on development.

The Ugandan government channels resources to the grassroots or the local government level through a decentralisation process. Unfortunately, the local governments in Uganda, the highest being the district, simply provide another layer of bureaucracy for misuse and capture of public funds by local government politicians and bureaucrats, what Mbabazi (2015:64) calls 'decentralization of corruption' – paying for goods or services not delivered ('air supply'). Despite the efforts to curb corruption by the government and its development partners, it has persisted in the national and local government (Oluka & Ssenoga 2008:111).

A biblical standpoint concerning corruption

The word of God should serve as the point of departure for the church about corruption and possible response to it. Both the Old Testament and New Testament pay special attention to the concept of corruption with accompanying examples of people from whom the church can learn a great deal when confronted with difficult situations (Lotter & Theron 2012:104).

In the Old Testament, the word 'bribery' is regularly used to refer to corruption (see the definition of 'corruption' in the

section 'Understanding the scope of corruption'). The word 'bribery' is found more than 25 times in the Old Testament but not once in the New Testament, even though there are allusions to bribery in the New Testament (Brown 2003:38). Primarily, the Hebrew *shochad* is translated as 'bribe' (Ex 23:8a; Dt 16:19) but it also means 'gift' (1 Kgs 15:19). Likewise the Hebrew word *mattanah* can mean 'bribe' though its primary meaning is 'gift', except in Proverbs 15:27, where the context indicates reference to a bribe. Therefore, in all of the above passages mentioned, the idea of bribery or corruption is inevitable (Evans 2012:24). However, corruption is not merely about the temptation to give gifts and accept bribes but also involves our very mindsets and deep-seated behaviours. Our minds are prone to sinful or corrupt thoughts and greed (Ti 1:15–16); corrupt thoughts give rise to corrupt speech (Ja 3:6) and corrupt actions (Batchelor 2010:3). Therefore, in observation of related texts in the next section, we now take into consideration a few scriptural pericopes in both the Old and New Testaments to see what they say with regard to the issue of corruption or bribery.

Exposition of pertinent texts

In Genesis 6:11–12, the wickedness of that generation is spoken of either as a character foil to Noah's piety (he was just and perfect, when all the Earth was corrupt) or as a further justification of God's resolution to destroy the world, which he was now about to communicate to his servant Noah (Matthew 1998:247). All kinds of corruption were found among the inhabitants of the Earth. They were corrupt both in principle and practice. Some of those sins were uncleanness and idolatry; they worshipped the creature more than or besides the Creator. They were also corrupt in their manners and behaviour; being found guilty of fornication, adultery and other enormous crimes such as theft, bribery, extortion and embezzlement. They committed these sins openly, without any dread of God's wrath (Arthur 2005:129). The Earth, too, was filled with violence and injustice. There was neither order nor regular government; no man was safe in the possession of that which he had the most-clear and incontestable right to, not the most innocent life. There was nothing but murders, rapes and rapines (seizure of property by force). Wickedness in such a state is not only a disgrace to human nature but also ruin to human society (Barker 1995:183).

The pericope in Psalms 14:1–3 depicts atheism and moral corruption. The existence of God is not only denied but denied in the very depths of man's heart. He has contrived to convince himself of what he so much wishes. Here, atheism is accompanied by deep moral corruption. Instead of praising God, he extols his own greed and its success (Ps 10:3, 4), without bothering himself about God. There were not any of a better spirit, possessed of understanding and willing to seek after God. All of them turned aside, like the Israelites at Sinai (Ex 32:8), who had quitted the ways of righteousness and turned to a wicked course (Bergen 1996:847).

In the book of 2 Kings 16:8, it is clear that corruption too was an instrument of foreign policy (Farmer 2012:64). The military of Judah under a wicked king, Ahaz, 'bribed' their allies (the Assyrian monarch) to conduct military operations against Rezin, the king of Damascus, which fell in perfectly with the schemes of the great king of Assyria (Arthur 2005:1482). In spite of the assurance given him by Isaiah by two signs, the one immediate, the other remote (Is 7:14; 8:4), that the confederate kings would not prevail against him, Ahaz did not spare the temple of God from being plundered to gain help from men and would not once lift his heart to God to desire his help or hear his prophet's counsel. The king of Judah was petrified that the only conditions under which protection would be vouchsafed were acceptance of Assyrian suzerainty with the payment of a huge 'present' (Matthew 1998:1538). The word 'present' in verse 8 does not literally signify a 'blessing'; rather it has connotation of a bribe. In Deuteronomy 27:25, it is the 'reward' taken for slaying the innocent. In Ezekiel 22:12 it is a 'gift' taken for shedding blood. In Exodus 23:8, it is the 'gift' that 'blindeth the wise' and that denies justice for the innocent. In 1 Samuel 8:3, it is a 'bribe'. And so, the 'present' of Ahaz is not of a noble character. It has evil intent (Johannes 1985:273).

Nevertheless, in 2 Kings 22:7, there were officials who were so faithful (cf. Dn 6:4, 1 Sm 12:3, 4) with the money entrusted to them that no accounting was necessary (Lotter & Theron 2012:105). The word translated as 'faithful' in Hebrew is *aman*. It denotes 'trustworthy, loyal, dedicated and dependable' (Wylie 2007:381). In other words, no account was kept between the high priest and the king's scribe who delivered the money and the overseers of the workmen who received it because the latter were trustworthy: they were persons of such known honour and integrity that their fidelity was not called into question, but they were trusted without examining their accounts (see 2 Kgs 12:15). They worked not because of remuneration but out of love of what they were doing and so laid out all money to the best advantage, and often supplemented with their own, what was put into their hands. Hence, to ask for an account from such overseers would be an insult (Bergen 1996:453).

In Exodus 23:8, to protect Israel's legal system against abuse, the judges are cautioned to provide equal justice to all by not taking bribes (v. 8a). As Barker (1995) affirms:

The person whose cause is to be tried in a court of judicature; neither before trial nor after, a bribe was not to be taken or given on any consideration whatever. (p. 102)

Corruption had always been rife in the East, and pure administration of justice was almost unknown there. Signal punishments by wise rulers sometimes checked the inveterate evil, but it recurred again and again. Jewish law chastised judges who took a bribe with death, but the Hebrew judges seem to but the Hebrew judges seem to care less about God's wrath and continued to linger in corrupt trends (see 1 Sm 8:3; Ps 26:10 Pr 17:23; Is 1:23; 5:23; Mi 3:9–11; Batchelor 2010:87).

According to Farmer (2012:82), taking bribes is strictly forbidden by Old Testament laws. First, there can never be true justice when bribery is involved, because it corrupts the mind (Ec 7:7) and closes the eyes to the truth (Ex 23:8b; Dt 16:19). The result is blind justice. Secondly, God forbids bribery because taking bribes is not in keeping with God's character of impartiality (Dt 10:7); to take a bribe would contradict his impartiality. God's people are to be impartial (1 Tm 5:21). Bongo (2008:25) asserts that corruption or sin results in personal downfall (Pr 28:21) and national ruin (Pr 29:4). Therefore, the corrupt administration of justice was one of the crying evils that provoked God's judgments against his own people and that led to the Babylonian captivity and Roman conquest, respectively.

There are a number of cases of corruption and bribery being applied to advance disreputable political and personal ends in the New Testament. Note the following examples: In Matthew 4:1–10, at the onset of his ministry Jesus proved his integrity and the ability to withstand corruption; neither of the bribes he was offered by Satan, whether bread or power, could tempt him (Farmer 2012:49). First, Satan tried (the Greek word *peirazein* simply means 'to try') to corrupt the Lord Jesus to despair of his Father's provision (v. 3). Christ answered all the insinuations of Satan with '[i]t is written'; he appealed to what was written in the scriptures (v. 4). Secondly, Satan attempted to corrupt the Lord Jesus to challenge his Father's protection, to a point of safety. Satan has no objection to the holy place as the scene of his assault. The holy city was and still is the place where he corrupts men to presumption and pride, and where he shoots his fiery arrows. He is well versed in scriptures, ready to misquote them, and he is full of animosity towards God and to all goodness (v. 5–6). Thirdly, Satan further endeavoured to corrupt Christ with power with the offer of the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. Christ was tempted to worship Satan. He rejected the proposal with abhorrence. 'Get thee hence, Satan!' Bribes are openly wicked, and they are not merely to be opposed but rejected at once. It is good to be quick and firm in resisting corruption. If we resist the devil he will flee from us. However, the soul who deliberates is almost overcome (Matthew 1998:2386).

Christ has conclusively set a very noble example for his devotees. They must take this method when they are tempted to sin. They must learn not to take the wrong course for power, protection and provision, even if their wants are pressing: God himself will provide and promote, not Satan (Matthew 1998:2387).

In Matthew 26:14–16, there were but 12 called apostles of Jesus, and one of them (Judas) was nefarious: Christ's own disciple, who knew so well his doctrine and manner of his life, was dishonest to him. What did Judas want? It was not the lack of money, but the love of it, that was 'the root of evil' (1 Tm 6:10). The chief priests never asked him to bribe them; he was actually the first to bring the motion forward (v. 15a), to deliver his Lord and master, with whom he had familiarly conversed and from whom he had received so many favours,

into the hands of those that hated Jesus – shocking and ferocious (Wiseman 1993:144). Judas was not concerned with what they would do to Jesus or what would become of him; his sole concern was what they would 'give' him for doing it, with no disguise in his vile question (Arthur 2005:2649). They covenanted with him for 30 pieces of silver, the price of a slave (Ex 21:32; cf. Zch 11:12), a small bribe for such a serious crime, which the high priests thought was a very sufficient one, and the greedy Judas was contented. Therefore, we must never expect any society to be quite pure on this side of heaven. The greater professional men make of religion, the greater opportunity they have of doing mischief, if their hearts are not right with God (Barker 1995:1273).

In Acts 24:26, Felix hoped that Paul would bribe him to expedite his release from prison, a disgrace to a procurator's conduct (Brown 2003:43). The greed of gain in the very act of administering justice was the root evil of the weak and wicked character of the Roman governor. The governor had heard that the apostle had not just come to visit Jerusalem but was also loaded with 'cash he had raised for the poor' (Ac 24:17). His thought would naturally be that if Paul could raise money for the needs of others, he could do so for his own release. Similarly, he had perceived that the apostle had wealthy friends who would not allow the man of God to rot in jail (Bergen 1996:1582).

There are two reasons why Felix 'communed' with Apostle Paul: firstly, to pretend to hear about faith in Christ Jesus; secondly, and most awkwardly, to give the apostle a chance to offer him a bribe. In this way the proposal for any terms of release would have been made easy because 'money would have exchanged hands' (Bergen 1996:1583). It is not difficult to indicate the character of this interview: the half-promises and half-threats of the procurator; the steadfast refusal by the prisoner to naturally demand the freedom that he claimed as a right; and Paul's fruitless attempts to bring about a change for the better in his judge's character. This portrays how the wicked governor allowed money to transgress the laws of God, and Roman laws, too. However, the apostle resolved to remain in prison rather than to stoop to evil and extortion. A number of government and non-government officials globally are commonly rapacious and avaricious just like Felix. They usually take the office for its pecuniary advantage, and they habitually disregard justice and make the procuring of money their leading objective, which must be disdained in the highest terms, as did Apostle Paul (Brown 2003:57).

Lastly, the pericope in Acts 8:18–24 illustrates the most dangerous form of corruption that may affect the faith, as evidenced by the story of Simon Magus (Walton 2012). He tries to bribe the apostles Peter and John with money to give him the ability to invoke the Holy Spirit when laying hands on people (v.18), that it might be turned into vast amounts of cash for him (Bongo 2008:275). Simon valued outward gifts more than the inward spiritual gifts of God. As Walter (1990) substantiates:

Simon Magus was ambitious to have the honour of an apostle, but cared not at all to have the spirit and character of a Christian. He was more desirous to gain honour to himself than to do good to others. (p. 568)

Additionally, he had purchased many such secrets (Ac 19:19) from previous masters in the magic art and thought that this might be obtained in the same way; he greatly affronted the apostles, as if they were greedy men who would do anything for money. However, the moral of this episode is that it is a gift of the Lord and cannot be bought with money (v. 20). Today, there are people in the church who commonly employ the tricks of legerdemain for the purpose of making money, and it seems probable that such had been the design of Simon. Apostle Peter shows him his crime, condemned his error and admonished him to repent and change his ways. A greedy and covetous heart cannot be right with God. See what a perishing thing money is, when tempted with it to do evil! Corrupt affections and wicked projects must be repented with sincerity of heart, and it shall be forgiven, upon penance (Walton 2012).

In summary, both the Old Testament and the New Testament pay special attention to the concept of corruption with associated examples of corrupt and non-corrupt people from whom the church can learn a great deal when confronted with the issues of corruption. There were two conflicting characters in reaction to God's decree. There were those who heeded the call of God to shun corruption, who kept a clean sheet (2 Kgs 22:7; Dn 6:4; Mt 4:10; Ac 8:20), and there were others who had their ears closed and annulled God's charge (Ps 82:2-4; 2 Kgs 16:8; Mt 26:15; Ac 24:26). God had instructed his people to avoid corruption or taking bribes because bribery blinds those who see and twists the word of the righteous (Ex 23:8), and taking bribes is not in keeping with God's character of impartiality (Dt 10:7); to take a bribe would contradict his impartiality. God's people are to be impartial (1 Tm 5:21). However, for the church leadership to fight corruption adequately they must peruse the scriptures, 'borrow a leaf' from the word of God and learn a lesson from the faithful servants of the Lord. In other words, men of God should 'practice what they preach' (Mt 23:3): justice and integrity. Christians should also guard against the temptation to engage in corruption and must live exemplary lives if corruption is to be made history in Uganda, Africa and globally.

A panacea for combating political and bureaucratic corruption

Preventing corruption is a crucial issue in societal, religious and political discourse in Africa, as evidenced not only by the recent cases of corruption but also by increased awareness of the problem (Badru 2013:158). As already discussed in previous sections, corruption in Uganda has many causes and has led to serious socio-economic and political impairments, interfered with fair competition and destroyed confidence in the integrity and functioning of the public administration (Uneke 2010:123). In order to fight corruption

effectively at all levels of the administration and political domain of Uganda, it is imperative to strengthen vigilance towards corruption-related activities and concentrate wholly on preventing such action. Preventive measures, including effective accountability, sound anti-corruption legislation and institutions, transparency, good governance, legal and institutional reforms, control mechanisms, citizen participation and the word of God, are the necessary tools to counteract in advance factors contributing to corruption. These stratagems for combating corruption are implemented with the aim of working collaboratively with the government and all stakeholders (the church and civil society groups) to diminish corruption at a critical time in the development of Africa, and the individuals involved bear a special responsibility in this respect (Werner 2010:171).

The church

The first preventive measure the church should take against corruption in Uganda is teaching the word of God. Corruption is a persistent challenge in Africa. It is becoming more pandemic on the political and bureaucratic horizons; it has also gained entry into the religious circle. Corruption is a moral, ethical and attitudinal failure, and above all a spiritual perplexity, specifically the error of the inner person because of his or her inherited sinful nature (Gn 3:1-6). Sin rules the human heart. The Bible says that the human heart is 'deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?' (Jr 17:9). This is a bold statement by God. His evaluation of mankind's corrupt inner spirit is correct. Not only do we observe such outward and obvious acts of wickedness – theft, bribes, fraud, political corruption and other crimes – but we also know too well the inner subtle perversions of the human heart: jealousy, greed, gluttony, selfishness, lust and pride, to name but a few. We need to face the fact that corruption and sin are a worldwide problem affecting every culture, every nation and every human that has ever been born, and the problem is not going away (Theron 2013). Meanwhile God has provided the remedy to sin for his people: he commands them to be holy because he is holy (Lv 11:44; 1 Pt 1:15). The Lord expects his people to live godly lives (Ti 2:12) and to repent and stop sinning. Jesus Christ told the woman caught in adultery, 'Go and sin no more' (Jn 8:11). In fact, 1 John 3:9 reads: 'No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God'. In other words, those who have been born again are supposed to gain victory over sin and corruption (Erickson 2003:314).

The church is an important and influential institution in our society that provides the moral and ethical standards in relation to corruption. For the church to fight corruption adequately, it must firmly strengthen itself through the scriptures. In the book of Exodus, Moses gives the following instruction: 'Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds those who see and twists the words of the righteous' (Ex 23:8). There can never be true justice when corruption or bribery is involved because the eyes are closed to the truth. Taking a bribe is obviously an offence against God and the weak.

Solomon puts it more graphically when he says, 'a wicked man accepts a bribe in secret to pervert the course of justice' (Pr 17:23; Spence 2008).

Nevertheless, Daniel was a model of integrity. Though he was falsely accused, no corruption was found in him, because he was trustworthy (Dn 6:4). Contrarily, in Isaiah 5:23 'the officials took bribes to let the wicked go free and the innocent received the punishment'. This verse and many others (Ez 22:12) show us the negative effects of corruption and perversion of justice. Greed is the root cause of corruption, but Solomon counters the attitude: 'Better a little with righteousness than much with injustice' (Pr 16:5). Contentment is a good virtue and a good attribute to be cultivated (Lk 3:14; 1 Tm 6:6; Walton 2012).

According to Farmer (2012:105), the pulpit must be used to teach and preach righteous and honest living. While nobody wants the church to preach poverty, the message of prosperity must be preached with caution and moderation. To preach that one can acquire wealth without labour is not only deceitful, it is a call to corruption. It is false preaching. Therefore, the power of faith and hard work must be advanced as instruments of socio-economic change. Christians should also be at the centre of efforts to contest corruption. They should hold to a robust framework of moral absolutes. Some biblical principles that they ought to bear in mind to constrict corruption include justice (Mi 3:1-3) and integrity (Ja 1:25; Batchelor 2010:24).

Secondly, the church leadership must also 'lead by example'. It must be a case of 'do as I do', not 'do as I say'. While they shun questionable characters and offerings, church administrative leadership must also be open and transparent. Accountability must be their watchword (Batchelor 2010:33). The church is the light of the world. In their conduct and activities, they must let their light show forth in its full brightness for all to see and emulate. As Erickson (2003) observes:

Church leaders are God's agents in the society and God expects them to represent him on issues of corruption, bringing his values to bear on the society. This should be done both by modelling and guiding the people as well as speaking out whenever they are trampled. It is thus appropriate that the church leadership takes its position, since a large portion of our society today is upset with many politicians and they look up to religious leadership on the moral front. (p. 329)

Last but not least, the church should keep watchful eyes on the people in power. Corruption among politicians and bureaucrats at different levels in Africa is ubiquitous (Bongo 2008:17). Political and bureaucratic leadership in Africa is generally characterised by greed for power, self-aggrandisement, ethnic segregation, favouritism, arrogance, intolerance, violence and personal security. These vices encourage corruption, and many of our leaders are not exempt from it (Uneke 2010:115). The church actually considers corruption to be a very serious fact that distorts the political system. The collection of socio-economic policy

of the church in Africa offers a very negative judgement (Nyanzi 2008):

Corruption radically distorts the role of representative institutions, because they are used as arena for political bartering between clients' requests and governmental services. In this way political choices favor the narrow objectives of those who possess the means to influence these choices and are obstacles to bringing about the common good of all citizens. (p. 57)

The church in this regard lists corruption among the causes that greatly contribute to underdevelopment and poverty in Africa (Nyanzi 2008:57).

The church has to intervene in the emergence of political and bureaucratic leadership. This reflects a need for greater moral formation in the society, especially among leaders who are Christians. As Farmer (2012) contends:

Beyond political parties' leadership nomination, the church should ensure that only godly men and women emerge as leaders. This could be done by properly enlightening their members on the credentials of aspirants to positions of trust and persuade them (church members) to exercise their franchise intelligently. (p. 117)

If politics is left to unscrupulous people, we will have bad politics and corrupt government. Furthermore, preaching against corruption should be on an 'equal footing' with advocacy. In other words, the church as a microcosm of society should publicly condemn leadership that cheats society and the marginalised, who are vulnerable to exploitation (Farmer 2012:118).

In conclusion, we have seen that humanity brought corruption to the world created by God. Humankind alone cannot get rid of corruption from the world; it now needs the assistance of God. Here society and the church must come together with the spirit of God to work to undo the harm that humanity has caused and continues to do to the perfect work of God, the Earth. However, the church has a cardinal role to play (Walton 2012).

Civil society groups

Fighting corruption and institutional reform cannot be achieved in a sustainable way by the church or government alone (Transparency International 2013). Civil society organisations have vital roles to play (Amnesty International 2010). Thankfully, there are many civil society organisations operating in Uganda in a wide range of sectors and corruption-related issues. The most active organisations working on anti-corruption are the Anti-Corruption Coalition and its counterparts, such as Transparency International – Uganda, Civil Society Today, Uganda Debt Network and NGO Forum (Transparency International 2013). Since its promulgation, civil society organisations, including the church, have been playing indispensable roles in shaping public policy in Uganda, not only through processes such as the Poverty Eradication Action Plan but also through public expenditure reviews. That is to say, they have the task of

fighting corruption – from monitoring public services like elections, procurement and legal reforms, demanding accountability and denouncing bribery, to raising awareness of all socio-economic and political actors. Through conferences, seminars and workshops, churches and NGOs have not only influenced existing legislation but have also lobbied for new institutional devices to prevent or penalise corruption (Larok 2012:127). In response to recent corruption scandals in Uganda, civil society groups formed a coalition named Black Monday Movement, against the theft of public resources and impunity. The coalition organises events every first Monday of the month to raise awareness of corruption and mobilise citizens to take action (Maira 2013:9).

There are approximately 20 national and local newspapers, more than 200 licensed radio stations and some 40 television stations in Uganda. Radio stations, in particular, play an important role in informing the population (Transparency International 2011; cf. Freedom House 2012). The media in Uganda has in many cases held the government accountable and demanded access to information held by government institutions. They are instrumental in exposing cases of corruption at the local and national levels. Without free media, civil society is crippled, both by a lack of information and inability to engender public debate (Gawaya 2011:46). So far so good, work done; however civil society organisations (NGOs), the church and the media can do more. They must continue to 'name and shame' the fraudulent as well as pressurise the government into taking action. If the government itself is the promoter of corruption, then these groups should speak out against governmental abuse of power or position. They should form a popular alliance in order to make use of their potential leverage (Evans 2012:21). As the church and civil society organisations (NGOs) are monitoring the government activities and businesses, the government is also busy at work, scrutinising the former. In 2012, with regard to the legal framework regulating the NGOs and mushrooming churches in the country, the government launched its national NGO and church policy, which is intended to 'guide and regulate the operations of the civil society organisations and churches'. The policy also aims at enabling the government to effectively monitor the integrity, accountability, transparency and operations of all NGOs and churches (Maira 2013:10).

Government

The government, which is entrusted with guarding public resources and executing decisions on behalf of citizens, plays an indispensable role not only in the development and governance of the nation but also in addressing corruption within political and bureaucratic purview, a matter of the highest priority for the government of Uganda (IG 2011).

In recent years, the church, civil society groups and the government of Uganda have been vocal about fighting corruption in the country. A series of laws and policies aimed at reducing corruption and its pervasive effects have been established by the above players (Amnesty

International 2010). A new National Anti-Corruption Strategy was launched in 2008 by the government alongside the existing laws. This strategy is a 'five-year plan designed not only to improve accountability, transparency and rebuild a culture of integrity but also to downgrade corruption levels in Uganda' (Maira 2013:27). Other measures taken by the government include a 2007 declaration signed by the anti-corruption authorities of Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania to deny safe haven to corrupt persons. On the contrary, lack of implementation of these rules and policies have raised doubts about the political will to change the situation in the country (World Bank 2013:83). Therefore, in a joint effort the government, the civil society groups and the church should focus on enforcement. There is huge gap between the anti-corruption laws on paper and actual enforcement of those same laws in Uganda. Implementation efforts should be redoubled. To tackle challenges faced by anti-corruption enforcement, the government of Uganda should consider the adoption and implementation of good enforcement practices similar to those of other countries that have made mammoth strides in this area like Singapore, Ghana and Bangladesh (IG 2011). Mwenda and Tangri (2005:465) argue that what is most needed in Uganda is not a new constitution or treaty but strong political leadership will, a critical ingredient for combating corruption. The leadership of the government must not be fatalistic but proactive about corruption elimination. The existing independent anti-corruption agencies ought to be availed with sufficient personnel, resources and political support to uproot corruption among public officials and politicians, including potential party members. With well-focused and determined efforts, corruption can be reduced, though not to zero.

Uganda has been implementing public financial management reforms since the beginning of the 1990s. The country scored 65 out of 100 in the 2012 Open Budget Index, a significant improvement from 2010, when it scored 55. This score indicates that the government provides substantial information to the public on budget processes, and while recent assessments show impressive improvements in many areas, there are still many challenges, particularly concerning the effectiveness and efficiency of government spending and the quality of the services delivered with these resources (IG 2011). The lack of transparency and accountability regarding how the money is spent, combined with the government's failure to investigate and punish high-profile corruption cases, has raised doubts among citizens and donors as to whether direct budget support can generate the reforms the country desperately needs (Amundsen 2006:273).

Therefore, the government can still do more to enhance budget transparency, such as increasing the comprehensiveness of different reports produced during the budget process (executive budget proposal; in-year reports; audit reports), specifically by focusing on providing information on expenditures, outstanding debts, macroeconomic forecasts, financial assets, future liabilities, earmarked revenues and tax expenditures (Maira 2013:24). Accountability in the budget process could also be enhanced in the country if the

government encouraged public participation throughout the budget process. Public engagement in budgeting is fairly weak in Uganda. While there is limited room for public participation during the consultation process (like public hearings and budget planning meetings), public participation prior to the consultation phase and after the consultation process is non-existent (World Bank 2013:314). In addition, the country could benefit from more transparency and accountability in the implementation of the budget, allowing civil society organisations, donors, the church and citizens in general to monitor how public money is spent. Uganda has to ensure that these new revenues are dealt with in a transparent manner, so that the whole society can enjoy its benefits (Larok 2012:168).

Finally, yet importantly, the government, all civil society groups and the church need to be above reproach and exemplary in their behaviour on a daily basis. They should have active roles in fighting corruption, including within their own organisations, and be open to external scrutiny. Failure as role models of integrity, justice, transparency and good governance can endanger their roles as watchdogs and discredit their actions not only to the authorities or donors but most notably to the general public (Larok 2012:172).

Conclusion

This article has revealed that corruption is a global cancer. It is not foreign to the scriptures (Gn 3:2–12; 6:11–12; Ps 14:1–3). Biblically, corruption is ingrained in original sin and the selfish aspirations of human nature. Corruption in Uganda is perceived to be pervasive because of the prejudicial colonial legacy, inhumane cultural practices, callous political shenanigans and merciless religious appetites rooted in greed and injustice. Political and bureaucratic corruption in Uganda is a leading setback to the church and society in terms of honesty and integrity, as reflected by the national and international records of accomplishment. It manifests itself in forms of bribery, financial leakage, conflicts of interest, embezzlement, false accounting, fraud, influence peddling, nepotism, theft of public funds and assets. Corruption, either political or bureaucratic, affects a wide range of governmental and non-governmental institutions, including the procurement, police, defence, education and health sectors; the judiciary; the church and so forth. The most visible signs are poor quality services, collapsing roads, crumbling infrastructure and inadequate facilities despite investment. The established institutions of checks and balances in Uganda have tenaciously continued to have limited bearing on corruption. Neither coherent anti-corruption norms nor severe formal sanctions are able to deter certain politicians and civil servants in Uganda from structural corruption. Political and bureaucratic corruption prevention in Uganda requires juxtaposition of effective accountability, transparency, sound anti-corruption structures, legal and institutional reforms, good governance, control mechanisms, citizen participation and the sufficient exposition of God's word concerning justice, integrity and contentment to restrain seepage and compress entrenched

motives such as greed, egocentricism, dishonesty, injustice and marginalisation. In addition, if need be, the whole 'government or administrative system' must fall, be removed or voted out by the citizens because treacherous people cannot be allowed to control public offices.

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