Pastor (Dr.) Otile Igbuzor delivers a ground breaking Sermon to mark the African Anti-Corruption Day 2023

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Rev Nelson Duna, PFN Chairman Taraba State leading a march Against Corruption on African Anti-corruption day on July 11 2023
New anti-corruption Ambassadors emerge after Shun Corruption Challenge

In commemoration of International Youth Day 2023, PPJ and FYCI launched the #ShunCorruption Challenge. The challenge called on young people (under the age of 30) to create a one-minute video using a creative art form to answer the following questions:

1. What is your vision of a corruption-free Nigeria?
2. How do you intend to contribute to your vision of a corruption-free Nigeria?

The challenge was aimed at:
- Elevating youth voices in the anti-corruption agenda.
- Increasing youth awareness of anti-corruption issues.
- Empowering young people to join the fight against corruption.

The challenge ran on social media for one week: from Monday, 14 August 2023 to Monday, 21 August 2023.

We received entries from 47 participants (28 female, 19 male), who spread the anti-corruption message through various creative art forms, including spoken word, drama, music, videography, dance, and digital art. Entries were assessed according to the following criteria:
- Effectiveness of the message: Entries should effectively convey anti-corruption messaging.
- Creativity and Innovation: Entries should be original and innovatively use the creative arts to pass the anti-corruption message.
- Commitment to Action: Entries should show how participants intend to contribute to their vision of a corruption-free world.

On Monday, 28 August 2023, we organized an award and inauguration ceremony to announce the winners of the competition. Five winners were chosen. They received a token prize of N30,000 each and were inaugurated as Shun Corruption Ambassadors.

Our five ambassadors are Tiino Iomo, Onyekwelu Nneka Catherine, Chigozie Jennifer Offiah, Sunday Joseph, and Anita Nwokoji. These persons will sign the Shun Corruption Ambassadors Pledge, and a platform will be created to continue engagement with them on WhatsApp. They will continue to work with PPJ and FYCI to champion anti-corruption messaging within their various spheres of influence.
Anita Nwokoji

Anita Nwokoji is a creative, spoken word artist, writer, social media manager, and voiceover artist who considers the art of poetry a means of self-expression. Her strong passion for mental health led her to find creative writing as a way to promote mental health awareness. Anita holds a BSc in Information Technology from the National Open University of Nigeria. Her experience working with NGOs, including Youth Leadership and Development Hub Africa and Astra Foundation, stirred up a new belief in her that the ugly narrative about Nigeria and the negative stigma associated with it can be changed if we as individuals decide to start the change from within ourselves to end corruption. Her motto is “Be the change you want to see.”

Disu Olayinka Babatunde (Tlino)

Disu Olayinka Babatunde (aka Tlino) is a rapper/singer from Lagos, Nigeria. He is currently studying English at the National Open University of Nigeria. He has released amazing singles available to download on all platforms and has a lot of inspiring freestyles with positive messages on Instagram. It has always been his dream and passion to spread positivity through his musical creativity. He seeks to pass the anti-corruption message across through music, creating awareness among his audience and motivating them to do what is right and shun corruption in their various activities.
Nneka Catherine Onyekwelu

Nneka Catherine Onyekwelu is a Psychology graduate from the University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. As a creative director, video editor, and creative writer, Nneka believes that her world of creative imagination can be brought to reality through writing. She has won several creative writing contests, such as the Whiplik Valentine story contest and the Young Afrikkan Community writing contest. She is the founder and partner of a spoken word duo called Wordsandaguitar, and she has performed on several stages. Nneka is passionate about the fight against corruption because she is aware of its menace to our country. She believes that corruption will leave our country stagnant with no room for growth.

Joseph Sunday

Joseph Sunday is a spoken word poet and writer from Kaduna State. Born and brought up in Jos, he graduated from Divine Comprehensive Secondary School, Jos in 2022. He developed a passion for poetry at age seven when he joined the church band. Watching other poets perform was a great motivation for him, and he loves art in all its forms—from music to written pieces and spoken word. He started performing in his church and later joined the Punchline Poetry Society. He is passionate about using his creativity to encourage youth to join the fight against corruption and make Nigeria a better place.
Chigozie Jennifer Offiah
Chigozie Jennifer Offiah is a cinematographer and video editor. As a graduate of Cinematography, she loves creativity and telling stories through her work. While she started her journey working in front of the camera as an actress and artist, it was behind the camera that she got her greatest career joy. As a cinematographer and video editor, she has had the opportunity to work with esteemed names, such as Pinkline Films and Clout Africa. These experiences have contributed to her personal and professional growth, for which she holds profound gratitude.

SHUN CORRUPTION AMBASSADORS PLEDGE

As a Shun Corruption Ambassador, I hereby pledge:

1. To champion anti-corruption messaging through the creative arts.
2. To shun, speak out, and stand up against corruption no matter the consequences.
3. To never engage in corrupt practices.
4. To display values of teamwork and collaboration in relation to other Anti-Corruption Ambassadors.
5. To seek counsel from Priests Peace and Justice Initiative (PPJ) and Frontline Youth Creativity Initiative (FYCI) when I require help.
6. To report back to PPJ and FYCI as required.
7. To hold myself personally accountable for my responsibilities as an ambassador. So help me God.

Full name

Signature

Date
The Behavioral insights Team (BIT) partners with PPA to begin user testing program

User testing involves gathering feedback directly from your users on specific, concrete elements of your program or service, to better understand their needs, challenges, and preferences. User testing is a key skill for creating behaviorally-informed programs and initiatives. By involving users in the testing process, you can refine your offerings and ensure they truly meet user expectations and your desired outcomes.

Examples of program components you can test with users:
- Design of a service or new initiative
- Communications and messages such as emails or videos
- Websites or online environments that participants will access

The user testing program will support PPA’s engagement with the Pentecostal community in Nigeria under the Shun Corruption project and our objective of promoting the establishment of the social arm of the church as an instrument for fighting corruption and adopting an accountability framework for Pentecostal churches and to enhance the capacity and capability of the Pentecostal Community in Nigeria to adopt social arm of the church and accountability framework within the church and champion the fight against corruption outside the Church.

This capacity-building opportunity will consist of two parts:

1. Preparatory Coaching Sessions (August - Sept): BIT-experienced mentors will guide PPA through creating research questions, writing a user testing guide, and preparing to conduct user testing in PPA.

2. Three-Day In-Person Workshop in Abuja (September 19-21): PPA will put our preparation into practice by first observing and then leading user testing sessions with real participants. Obtain feedback from users on our program, analyze that feedback to identify insights, and recommend changes.
Urgent press release
Abuja, Friday, July 7, 2023

Palace of Priests Assembly (PPA) Urges Pentecostals to renew their Determination to fight Corruption relentlessly on African Anti-corruption Day.

The Palace of Priests Assembly and its social arm, the Priests Peace & Justice Initiative (PPJ) joins the rest of the African community to mark the African Anti-corruption Day 2023 and calls on Pentecostals to renew their determination to fight corruption by setting up social arms as instruments in the fight against the menace.

The theme of this year’s African Anti-corruption Day 2023 is “Fight Corruption Now for the Africa we want”.

Corruption remains a significant challenge in many African countries, undermining socio-economic development, eroding public trust, and hindering progress. As an organization dedicated to the principles of transparency, integrity, and accountability, we strongly support efforts to combat corruption and promote ethical practices at all levels of society. At the heart of this covenant is a commitment to pursue justice with the people and righteousness with God. Corruption is also an injustice against the people. From a biblical perspective, the purpose of government is to promote the good. The ultimate good of human society is to ensure that people live in peace and prosperity so they will serve God acceptably. So, corrupt leaders that deprive the people of the resources which God has bestowed on them are a violation of the rights of the people. In secular scholarship, there is a growing understanding that corruption is a violation of human rights. It has moved from a leadership misdemeanor to a fundamental human rights violation.

On this African Anti-Corruption Day, we emphasize the importance of collaborative action and the need for a multi-stakeholder approach to address corruption effectively. It is crucial for the people of faith, governments, civil society organizations, private sector entities, and citizens to work together in building robust anti-corruption frameworks and implementing comprehensive measures to prevent, detect, and prosecute corrupt practices.

In a press statement issued in Abuja by Dr. Agbaji Orinya, the Program Manager of Priests Peace & Justice Initiative, an arm of the Palace of Priests Assembly, he stated that Christians have a responsibility to stand against corruption because corruption is a sinful social order that militates against the purpose and plan of God for the governance of human society. While recognizing the efforts made by governments and institutions across the continent to strengthen anti-corruption mechanisms and enact legislation that promotes transparency and accountability, Dr. Orinya noted that there is still much work to be done and it is imperative that these commitments translate into concrete actions, leading to tangible results in the fight against corruption and called upon governments to prioritize anti-corruption efforts and allocate adequate resources to strengthen institutions responsible for combating Corruption. While urging individuals, businesses, and organizations to embrace ethical practices, reject corrupt behaviors, and contribute to a transparent and accountable society, he enjoined the Pentecostal Christians, and the entire community of protestant Christianity to examine the biblical warrant for asking Christians to commit to the fight against corruption and stand out clearly in the anti-corruption campaign and advocacy because God is a sovereign God who has identified himself with justice and compassion and has called His people and whoever will work together with Him to fight for justice.

Dr. Orinya urged all Nigerians, especially Pentecostals to support this year’s theme “Fight corruption Now for the Africa we want” and return to the dual mandate of the church, to support, establish and institutionalize social arms for the Church as an instrument to fight corruption and social injustice. He urged all PPA beneficiaries especially those in the 26 states where PPA has a presence to mark the day by taking different actions in line with the ongoing leader’s month of action by preaching anti-corruption messages in their sermons, organizing rallies, and holding pep talks using different touchpoints to create awareness of the costs and consequences of corruption.
**TOPIC:** Do the Right Thing  
**JAMES 4: 17**  
**PASTOR OTIVE IGBUZOR**

**Introduction**

This year 2023, on the 11th July, Africa will be marking the seventh anti-corruption day. 11th July, 2003 was the date that the African Union adopted the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption. Seven years ago, the African Union adopted the 11th July every year as African Anti-corruption day. The day provides an opportunity to reflect on the challenges of corruption on the African continent and share good lessons and practices on how to deal with the evil of corruption.

Last year the Palace of Priests Assembly (PPA)/Priests Peace and Justice Initiative (PPJ) and partners implementing the SHUN CORRUPTION project adopted the Sunday before 11th July every year as our Anti-Corruption Sunday.

**The Problem of Corruption**

Corruption is a global problem. Over the years, several scholars, development workers, activists, politicians, international organizations, public affairs commentators and the general public have given attention to the problem of corruption and its attendant effects on society. The problem is not new to humankind even though it has reached unprecedented proportions in recent years.

Africa has a corruption problem. It has been documented that Africa loses more than $50 billion annually through illicit financial outflows.

Nigeria has a corruption problem. Corruption is deep, systemic, and widespread in Nigeria. The country has been consistently rated by Transparency International (TI) to be among the most corrupt countries in the world in its Corruption Perception Index. Several probes by the National Assembly indicate that there is a high level of corruption in the country. Anti-Corruption agencies such as ICPC and EFCC are handling several corruption cases. Several governments in Nigeria have launched anti-corruption programme since 1966 when corruption was mentioned as one of the reasons for the military to overthrow the civilian government. Despite the plethora of legislations and agencies fighting corruption in Nigeria, corruption has remained widespread and pervasive partly because the norms and behaviour of citizens have remained unchanged.

**The Church and Anti-Corruption**

The Bible is an anti-corruption manual, and the Church should show the light and the way in the fight against corruption.

Church leaders have great influence on the norms and behaviour of congregants. The behaviour of church members is greatly influenced by church leaders e.g. if Church leader permits men to perm hair, majority of members will perm hair. If church leaders speak against watching of TV, majority of members will obey.

Our research revealed that there are at least 115 bible verses against corruption. Examples include:

Ex 20:15- Thou shalt not steal. (KJV)
Ex 20:17- hou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maid servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's. (KJV)
1 Thess 4: 6 That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. (KJV)
1 Thess 5: 22- Abstain from all appearance of evil. (KJV)

Despite the position that God has placed the church and Christians to show example against corruption, our research has revealed drivers of corruption within and outside the church.

**Drivers of corruption within the church include:**
Do the Right Thing  
JAMES 4: 17

PASTOR OTIVE IGBUZOR

Greed and indiscipline
Pressure to meet societal expectations.
Emphasis on material possessions and prosperity instead of putting priority on the spirit as the bible commands.
Inordinate competition among leaders and the laity
Using physical signs such as the sizes of the auditorium, the make of cars, shoes, chains, and wristwatches as signs of success in ministry.
Blind followership by congregants even when they see signs of error and deviation from the scriptures.
Lack of accountability mechanism within the church
Lack of income generation activities for some pastors

Drivers of Corruption outside the church include:
i. Normalization of corruption in society
ii. Pressure to meet societal expectations within the context of poor reward system.
iii. Erosion of noble social norms of integrity and probity.
iv. Greed and indiscipline.

Do the Right Thing
The exhortation to you this morning as a Christian is to do the right thing.
James 4: 17 -Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. (KJV)
For us, this is the definition of corruption for a Christian. For any Christian holding a position of authority, knowing what is good to do and refusing to do it is corruption.

The right thing for a Christian to do with regard to corruption is to: shun, speak and take action against corruption.
There are Christian ethics based on the word of God (the Bible) which should guide the behaviour of Christian adherents. The ethics include holiness, faithfulness, worship, humanitarian spirit, liberality, self-discipline, defense of the poor and oppressed, opposition to cruelty, deceit, luxury and selfishness (Ex 20:3-17; Deut 6:5; Luke 3:10-14; Matt 22: 35-40; Colossians; I Peter; John 13:34; John 15: 20; John 13:14-15; Ps 14:6; Is 25:4; Ps 140:12).
The ethical standard of a Christian is higher than the average person.
We should take lessons from Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. He was always doing the right thing at the right time. He began his earthly ministry at the age of 30. Within three and a half years, he completed everything he came to do- to preach the kingdom of God, train his disciples and died on the cross. He was focused on doing the will of the Father.
He spoke against corrupt officials.
Matt 12: 34 -O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. (KJV)
He took action against corrupt people in the temple.
Matt 21: 12-13 -And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, 13 And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves. (KJV)
How can you do the right thing?
Surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ: You cannot do it by power but by His grace. Luke 22: 42- Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. (KJV)
Do the Right Thing  

JAMES 4: 17

PASTOR OTIVE IGBUZOR

Trust in God and follow a directed path: God has created a path for everyone. Ask God to direct your path. Prov 3: 5-6- Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. (KJV).

Pray for wisdom: Wisdom is the application of knowledge. It is not enough to know what the scripture says. Apply it in life. James 1: 5-6- If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. (KJV)

Prioritize the spirit: If you prioritize the spirit, the soul and body will be aligned. Matt 6: 33- But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. (KJV)

Be sensitive to your environment: The environment is corrupt. Any time you receive a proposal to make money with little or no effort, check it properly. God will open doors for you but not corrupted doors. Rev 3:8- I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. (KJV)

Take action: Always follow the guide: God said it. I believe it. That settles it. I will now do it. (Take Action). When you see corruption, shun it, speak against it and take action.

Challenge

Are you a child of God? Do you see the problem that corruption has caused within and outside the church? Are you following the example of Jesus? Have you surrendered fully to Jesus? Do you trust God? Are you following a directed path? Are you praying for wisdom consistently? Do you prioritize the spirit? Are you sensitive to the spirit and your environment? Are you taking action?

Conclusion

As a child of God, you have been called from darkness into His marvelous light. You are a light to the World. The bible is the tour guide of all Christians, and it is an anti-corruption manual. Jesus Christ showed us the example. He shunned corruption, spoke against it and took action. Follow the example of Jesus. Shun, speak and take action against corruption.

Prayer Point

Father, empower me to shun, speak and take action against corruption.
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Ecclesiastical Gospel Centre (EGC)
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Photo Speaks

The Heroes of Faith Academy, Delta State Experience
Photo Speaks
The Niger State Experience
Revival Group Christian Mission.
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The Cross River State Experience
THE INHERITANCE COMMONWEALTH MINISTERIES (TICO)
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Photo Speaks
The Lagos State Experience
PPA Holds STUDENTS’/YOUTH SEMINAR

The objectives of the seminar include:
1. Enable participants to do a self-appraisal to identify their growth level and plan their growth/development in the next 10 years.
2. Sensitise students and other participants to embrace the power of focus, prioritization in order to fulfill destiny (including graduating with a good grade).
3. Help participants build new streams of income and embrace investment, towards conquering poverty.

The program had 159 participants in attendance. Participants include students of the university of Abuja, members of the National Youth Service Corp (NYSC), and members of the Pentecostal community in Abuja. Speakers at the seminar include Pastor Otive Igbuzor, Pastor Ejiro Otive-Igbuzor, Dr Sunday Ejeh and Dr. Agbajli Orinya. Their presentations focused on Visioning timeline, Personal Growth Assessment, Navigating University Education in a Rewarding Manner (Experience Sharing and Presentation) fulfilling destiny through focus, Graduating with a Good Grade, how to Calculate GPA, Self-Leadership and Time Management, and how students can develop different streams of income to Make Money While Studying.

PPA is Set to Add Value

At the end of the seminar, the assistant General overseer of PPA, Pastor (Dr) Ejiro Otive-Igbuzor announced the reopening of the PPA Resource Centre which has been closed since the Covid-19 pandemic. The resource center will begin - Training on Musical Instruments - Training on IT and Video Editing - Vocational Skills Training - Financial literacy, Savings and Investment - Mentoring
Dr Ejiro called on participants who are interested in any of the available training to register and make themselves available every Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8am to 5:00 pm.
A program for the unemployed and job seekers was held on 17 August 2023.

To mark the 2023 International Youth Day, Mountains of Hope Foundation collaborated with Priests Peace & Justice Initiative and the National Directorate for Employment (NDE) and organized a day seminar for young unemployed graduates in Jos, Plateau State. Unemployment among youth in Nigeria is a significant and complex issue that has far-reaching social, economic, and political implications. Several challenges contribute to the high levels of youth unemployment in the country. One of the primary challenges is the scarcity of formal job opportunities, especially in the public sector. The Nigerian job market cannot absorb the large number of graduates and school leavers each year. Many unemployed youth lack the skills and qualifications required by the job market. The education system often fails to align with the demands of the labor market, leading to a significant skills gap. Even when youth find work, they are often underemployed, meaning they are working in jobs that do not fully utilize their skills and qualifications. This can lead to frustration and lower income levels.

Corruption is a pervasive issue in Nigeria, and it can affect job opportunities, particularly for those without connections or the ability to pay bribes and Nigeria lacks robust social safety nets to support the unemployed and vulnerable populations. This lack of a safety net can exacerbate poverty and social unrest, lead to frustration and disillusionment among young people. This frustration may manifest in social unrest, crime, or even radicalization.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach, including investments in education and vocational training, infrastructure development, policies to promote entrepreneurship, efforts to combat corruption, and initiatives to improve security and stability in the country. Additionally, creating an environment conducive to private sector growth and job creation is essential for tackling youth unemployment in Nigeria.
The #shuncorruption CHALLENGE

How to Enter

Create a video (max. 1 minute) using a creative art form to answer the following questions:

a. What is your vision of a corruption-free Nigeria?
b. How do you intend to contribute to your vision of a corruption-free Nigeria?

Upload the video on Instagram. Ensure that you tag @fycinitiative and @priestspeaceandjustice and use the hashtags #ShunCorruption and #ShunCorruptionChallenge.

Register by filling in the application form on bit.ly/shuncorruptionchallenge.

Prizes

✓ Winners will receive a token prize of N30,000 each.
✓ They will also be inaugurated as Shun Corruption Ambassadors, who will continue to work with PPJ and FYCI after the challenge to champion anti-corruption messaging within their various spheres of influence.

Note: Young people under the age of 30 are eligible to participate in this challenge
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