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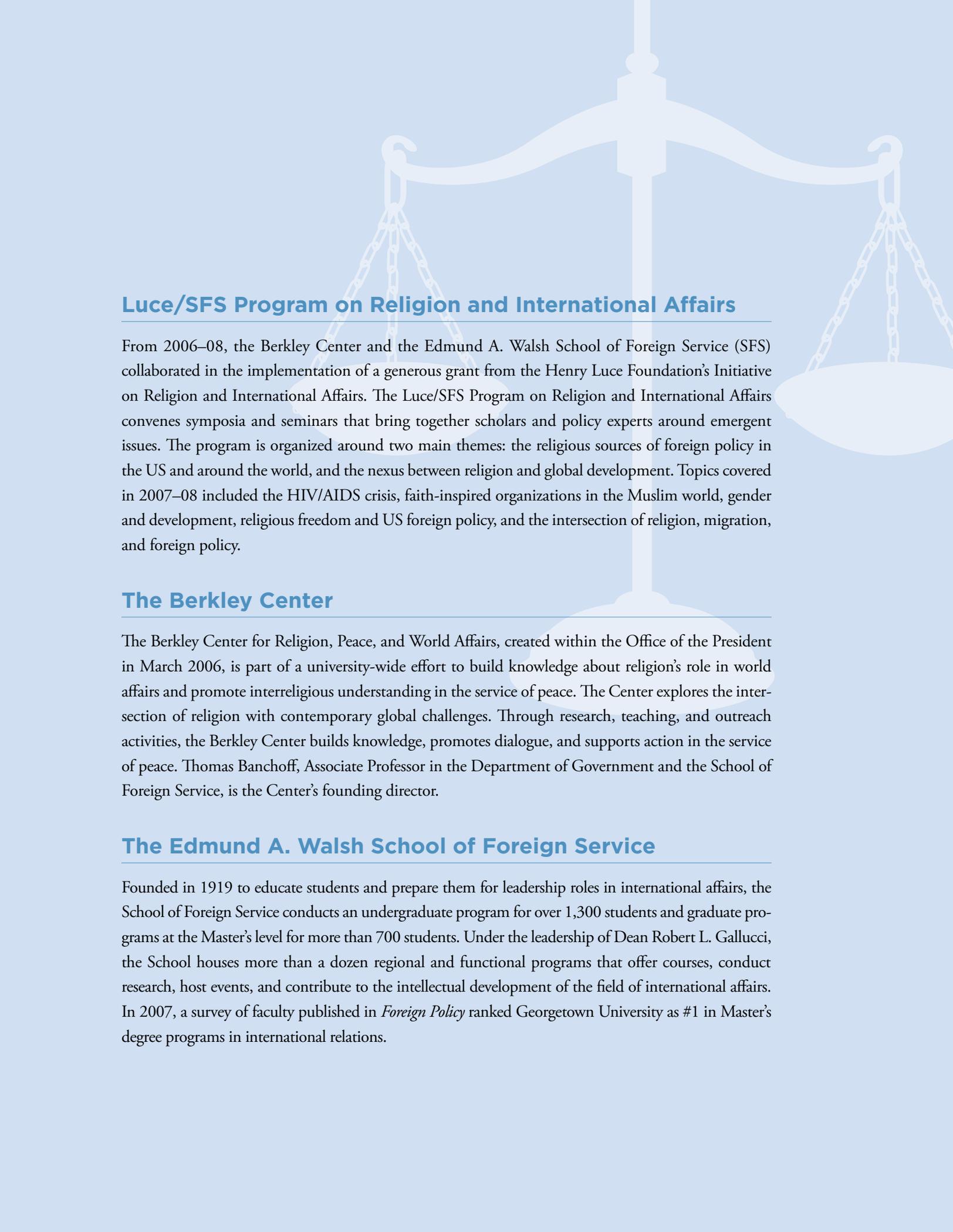


Faith and Good Governance: Towards Strengthening Global Coalitions

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Luce/SFS Program on Religion and International Affairs

From 2006–08, the Berkley Center and the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service (SFS) collaborated in the implementation of a generous grant from the Henry Luce Foundation’s Initiative on Religion and International Affairs. The Luce/SFS Program on Religion and International Affairs convenes symposia and seminars that bring together scholars and policy experts around emergent issues. The program is organized around two main themes: the religious sources of foreign policy in the US and around the world, and the nexus between religion and global development. Topics covered in 2007–08 included the HIV/AIDS crisis, faith-inspired organizations in the Muslim world, gender and development, religious freedom and US foreign policy, and the intersection of religion, migration, and foreign policy.

The Berkley Center

The Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, created within the Office of the President in March 2006, is part of a university-wide effort to build knowledge about religion’s role in world affairs and promote interreligious understanding in the service of peace. The Center explores the intersection of religion with contemporary global challenges. Through research, teaching, and outreach activities, the Berkley Center builds knowledge, promotes dialogue, and supports action in the service of peace. Thomas Banchoff, Associate Professor in the Department of Government and the School of Foreign Service, is the Center’s founding director.

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Founded in 1919 to educate students and prepare them for leadership roles in international affairs, the School of Foreign Service conducts an undergraduate program for over 1,300 students and graduate programs at the Master’s level for more than 700 students. Under the leadership of Dean Robert L. Gallucci, the School houses more than a dozen regional and functional programs that offer courses, conduct research, host events, and contribute to the intellectual development of the field of international affairs. In 2007, a survey of faculty published in *Foreign Policy* ranked Georgetown University as #1 in Master’s degree programs in international relations.



About this report

Faith and Good Governance: Towards Strengthening Global Coalitions is part of a series of reviews of development issues and their faith dimensions. A draft was discussed at a Berkley Center consultation on October 14, 2008.

The review forms part of a series of reports on development topics undertaken by the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University, and implemented jointly with the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. The project is supported by a generous grant from the Henry Luce Foundation's Initiative on Religion and International Affairs. The Luce/SFS Program on Religion and International Affairs convenes symposia and seminars that bring together scholars and policy experts around emergent issues. The program is organized around two main themes: the religious sources of foreign policy in the US and around the world, and the nexus between religion and global development. Topics covered in 2007–08 included the HIV/AIDS crisis, faith-inspired organizations in the Muslim world, gender and development, religious freedom and US foreign policy, and the intersection of religion, migration, and foreign policy. The Religion and Global Development program examines both the role of religious groups and ideas in donor and developing countries, and the prospects for greater religious-secular cooperation in the development field. Its components include graduate student research fellowships; a religion and development database; and the creation and dissemination of “religious literacy” materials for development professionals in government, NGOs, and international organizations. Through a series of meetings with stakeholders and background reports, the Luce/SFS Program on Religion and Global Development maps the role of faith-based organizations around the world and points to best practices and areas for collaboration.

Acknowledgements and About the Authors

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Abbreviations and Glossary

CAS Country Assistance Strategy (of the World Bank)
EITI Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
IACC International Anti-Corruption Conference
IDEA International Development Ethics Association
INT Institutional Integrity Vice Presidency (of the World Bank)
KKN Bahasa Indonesian acronym for corruption, collusion, and nepotism -korupsi, kolusi nepotism.

MDG Millennium Development Goals (agreed at UN Millennium Summit in 2000)
OECD Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
StAR Stolen Assets Recovery Initiative
TI Transparency International



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Introduction

Framing the Topic, Report Objectives

Governance, Omnipresence of Corruption

The term governance is widely used but conveys multiple meanings. Some relate to political systems and address both their legitimacy and effectiveness. Others focus on the realm of rights and how diverse human rights are applied in practice. In many settings, “governance” is essentially a code for corruption. These broad topics are not primarily the domain of faith leaders and communities, but these leaders and communities often engage with the issues on various levels. This report explores the various ways in which they could be more actively involved, with a focus on corruption as one facet of governance that has particular ethical and operational relevance.

Corruption and concerns about its impact are never far away. Problems associated with corrupt practices have been common throughout history and continue to be the topic of daily press coverage. They affect many cultures and peoples, and are present in many institutions, contexts, and countries, regardless of socioeconomic factors. Corruption remains a fact of contemporary life. Faith communities are a group that can potentially be mobilized to bring issues to light, and to seek solutions.

Corruption and International Development Work

Anticorruption and governance strategies are increasingly prominent in discussions about international development. Placing corruption and governance at the front and center of the international agenda is a rather recent occurrence, and can be accounted for by important historical factors: notably the egregious examples of disappearing resources (Mobutu and Marcos), combined with mounting concerns that leakage of

funds represents an important obstacle to mobilizing resources for the cause of fighting poverty.

Any overly close association of international development with corruption is, of course, highly misleading and potentially a distortion of the facts. Corruption is *not* simply a problem in developing countries; it is a virtually universal phenomenon that affects people, institutions, and states across the globe. Those who work on anti-corruption efforts, and institutions like Transparency International (TI), are quick to stress that the perpetrators of corrupt practices are in the first instance those with resources, often in rich countries. Nonetheless, corruption has important development dimensions, some linked broadly to global phenomena (increasing ease of movement of money, financial sector weaknesses) and some more particular to the work involved in designing and implementing development programs and policies (especially capacity gaps). There is a strong correlation between high levels of corruption and the weaknesses that attend failing states. Where large sums of money are at stake, no matter how noble the cause, the temptation for personal enrichment is always present.

Debates about good governance and operational programs in this field have important and often complex ethical dimensions. Governance and corruption present a host of complex challenges, of policy and practice, relevant for all segments of society, at local, state, national, and transnational levels. These need to be dealt with by means of transnational legal and normative remedies, increased domestic policing, and by addressing societal norms and expectations of behavior. The topic needs strong advocates and defenders of justice in every community and society. Action involves leadership “from above” and community mobilization; it turns on effec-

tive definition and application of law as well societies' various ethical norms.

Today, a significant development is the joining together of faith and secular leaders and institutions to address poverty and development issues. In this context, we pose several questions: *Should religious leaders and institutions be more directly engaged in both national and global efforts to define and raise standards of public governance? To what extent are they already doing so? Can they participate effectively, and if so, how? What is needed to reinforce and expand alliances between and among faith and development institutions, and to reinforce a culture and practice of integrity, both so essential to fighting poverty?* These questions are pertinent to debates about how to fight corruption in development work, and about the relationships between the religious and the secular.

This report is part of a continuing process of reflection on ways to increase and enhance faith leaders' and institutions' engagement with issues of corruption and the broader challenge of improving governance for development. Its aims to encourage discussion and stimulate further reflection, building specifically on Katherine Marshall's 2008 article in the *Journal of Global Ethics*: "Ancient and Contemporary Wisdom and Practice on Governance as Religious Leaders Engage in International Development" (4:3, 217-229), and on discussions at the 2008 International Anti-Corruption Conference (described in the report) and continuing dialogue with Transparency International. Other institutions involved in the dialogue include the Institute of Advanced Catholic Studies, the University of Cambodia, the International Development Ethics Association (IDEA), and Global Ethics.

The report puts forward a series of hypotheses and suggestions on areas with potential for future action and dialogue. The website for the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs (<http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu>) will provide a framework for updating information on dialogue and action on the topic.

Part I

Defining the Problem

Why Focus on Faith Leaders and Good Governance?

While religious leaders are playing increasingly active roles across much of the development agenda on issues like health and education, this trend has been less evident in the growing body of work on governance and anti-corruption efforts. There is great, but as yet untapped, potential for leaders to address issues more forthrightly, explore complex ethical dimensions, and work for better results.

The growing attention that is being devoted to ensuring high standards of governance everywhere provides an opportunity for faith leaders and institutions to go beyond their traditional focus on personal and community values, and to play more active roles in forming alliances against corrupt behavior, be it at a community-wide, national, or global level.

What is Corruption?

Corruption takes many forms, regardless of a country's general economic conditions. Bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, and racketeering decrease bureaucratic efficacy, enrich small numbers of people, prolong (and often deepen) poverty, and hinder development work. While many richer states have increasingly efficient processes for rooting out and punishing corruption, poorer countries often lack the capacity to fight corruption, which becomes entrenched in bureaucracies and can feel endemic to the culture of some developing states and sectors. In both industrial and less developed countries, corruption worsens the plight of poor people, denying them access to critical services.

A lesson of the recent past is that much can be done to combat corruption. Obvious avenues include legal

remedies and normative strategies to root out corruption. Strong leadership can achieve results: classic success stories include Singapore and Hong Kong. Further, there is considerable scope for support for weaker states from countries and institutions which have travelled the path of reform, and such support is also available through international institutions. There are also significant avenues for action by richer countries, by policing the activities of their citizens and private sector actors, both in their own countries and as they cross state borders to do business.

What exactly does the term “corruption” encompass? Definitions of corruption differ markedly and can spark active debate. International legal scholar on corruption issues Susan Rose-Ackerman writes, “‘Corruption’ is a term whose meaning shifts with the speaker.”¹ The term can encompass a variety of reprehensible activities, as defined by the person using the term. A common focus is on the abuse of public trust, particularly the abuse of resources.

As one country-specific example, Box 1 sets out a series of practically-derived definitions of corruption as framed on a government website (Namibia). One pithy definition was the rallying cry of Indonesian militants opposing the Suharto regime in 1998: KKN, the Bahasa Indonesian acronym for corruption, collusion, and nepotism (*korupsi, kolusi, and nepotism*).

The World Bank definition of corruption represents a long debated and carefully articulated approach:

The abuse of public office for private gain; public office is abused when an official accepts, solicits, or extorts a bribe. It is also abused when private agents give or offer bribes to circumvent public policies and processes for competitive advantage and profit. Public office can also be abused

for personal benefit even if no bribery occurs, through patronage and nepotism, the theft of state assets, or the diversion of state revenues. Corruption can also take place among private sector parties, yet interface with and affect public sector performance: for example, collusion among bidders to a public procurement with the intent to defraud the state can seriously distort procurement outcomes.³

Rose-Ackerman highlights the important policy debate that turns on the legal line of corruption, and the extent to which states can regulate “corruption” when it becomes less clear-cut.

[The] policy debate turns on where to draw the legal line and how to control borderline phenomena, such as conflicts of interest, which many political systems fail to regulate...one of the most important debates turns on the issue of “state capture” or the problem of creating open democratic/market societies in states where a narrow elite has a disproportionate influence on state policy. In those countries outright bribery may be low, but

the system is riddled with special interest deals that favor the few over the many.⁴

Both the clear-cut and less clear-cut definitions of corruption are relevant to the present discussion. The idea that a culture of corruption creates a permissive environment where dishonesty, rule-breaking, and petty corruption become the norm has special relevance because of close associations between culture and religion. In this kind of environment, it can be difficult to determine what requires a legal remedy and what needs to be dealt with through non-legal strategies in order to promote honesty and good governance.

Approaches to fighting corruption thus take several avenues, notably legal remedies and normative strategies to root out corruption. As far as the development agenda is concerned, responsibilities fall clearly on both rich and poor nations. Appreciation of the essential partnerships involved is reflected in the eighth Millennium Development Goal (MDG), which posits a “covenant” where ensuring honest use of resources, directed to priority human needs, is recognized as a common challenge. Wealthy nations need to police the activities of

BOX 1

Defining Corruption

Defining corruption is a good starting place. Definitions range from strictly delineated infringements of law to behavior considered (in some sense) immoral. The following set of definitions comes from a Namibia anti-corruption website:²

Corruption

- literally means to destroy (from the Latin *corruptus*)
- is not a rare phenomenon
- takes many forms with different types of participants, settings, stakes, techniques and different degrees of cultural legitimacy
- is not only about stealing: it can also relate to the abuse of power in decision-making processes. It is a form of behavior that deviates from ethics, morality, tradition, law and civic virtue.

Corruption may be defined as any conduct which amounts to influencing the decision-making process of a public officer or authority, or influence peddling; dishonesty or breach of trust, by a public officer, in the exercise of his duty; insider dealing/conflicts of interests; [and] influence peddling by the use of fraudulent means such as bribery and blackmail, which includes the use of election fraud.

Any person who directly or indirectly accepts, agrees or offers to accept any gratification from any other person to benefit him or herself or any other person is guilty of the crime of corruption. The person who makes the offer or inducement to another to commit a corrupt practice is also guilty of the crime of corruption. Although there is an active and a passive side to the crime, both parties are equally guilty.

their citizens and private sector actors, both in their own countries and as they cross state borders to do business, while poorer countries need to see fighting corruption as a core objective of their development strategy.

Many faith leaders are engaged in answering the difficult question of how far corruption can and should be defined in legalistic terms, and how far, when, and where normative issues and social values come into play. It is significant that the 2008 biannual International Anti-Corruption Conference, the 13th in the series, had the links between corruption and human rights as a central theme. The discussion raised a complex web of

issues, ranging from protecting the rights of the accused to instances where core human rights are seen to override the law. Box 2 presents a reflection on the topic that challenges overly narrow definitions.

Definition issues have direct operational relevance as they affect thinking, popular mobilization, and action: where are the acceptable boundaries? What constitutes extenuating circumstances? What is the relation between what is illegal (transgressing hiring rules, accepting illegal payments) and what is immoral (hiring within “comfort zones” of similar background)? They also translate into practical policy choices; one clas-

BOX 2

The Common Good

Paul Caron, Institute of Advanced Catholic Studies

Mainstream approaches to addressing corruption focus primarily on law and a series of social interventions centered on legal frameworks. This could be termed the “secular” view of the possible solutions to corruption. It is an “outside to inside” approach, characteristic of social engineering. Such approaches carry certain assumptions, both implicit and explicit. An example is a Harvard economist who, in an excellent, technical study on the impact of religion on economic development, used as the defining marker of religion (or people who are religious) people’s belief in heaven and hell.

Our *True Wealth of Nations* highlighted how much conventional macroeconomic thinking has consciously eliminated any value system or normative system influence in analysis. We argue that that is academically wrong, since the intentionality factor must include a definition of man as a being whose complete self includes a soul and the ability to make conscious and moral decisions; many great secular economists, such as Amartya Sen, agree.

Real progress against corruption will come with the development of a concept of “common good.” Admittedly, the concept will be slightly vague and filled with trade-offs, but it can develop from the faith community. Once we have central piece, then corruption can be seen as dysfunctional actions against the common

good. This means bringing faith, with its beliefs and values, into the real world, and using them.

Many people who hold firmly to their values realize that the secular approach, now becoming more aggressive in the public square, is a danger to them. This might be why the question was raised as to why religious groups have not participated as much as anticipated.

Working from without to cause change is more difficult than working from within. How that idea is framed and put into action is the question to be answered. Conceptual structures have their place, but we hope that we are seeing a major shift from that approach to the recognition that there is a deeper and perhaps more powerful weapon.

I am reminded of Hillary Putnam, a philosopher at Harvard, who moved from analytical philosophy and conceptual forms of metaphysics to a personal, value-centered sense of reality. Martin Buber has suddenly been thought of as carrying the torch.

Whether it is possible for many faith organizations to agree on a common denominator of belief concerning corruption, and thus develop action plans that do not collide but perhaps coordinate (together with the NGOs of interest) might be the real nexus of causing leverage for change.

sis choice is whether to focus on “grand” corruption, “petty” corruption, or all forms. The argument for dealing with bigger fish is that more money is involved and corruption by the favored few is more reprehensible, while for petty corruption (police, teachers, registrars of births) the financial need is clearer and the infraction more understandable. The counter-argument is that petty corruption directly affects countless numbers of poor people and erodes trust.

Hypothesis and topic for continuing dialogue: Defining corruption in strictly legal terms is necessary (if legal and justice systems are to be employed to combat it, as is almost always the case). However, much that is considered corrupt falls in grey areas outside strictly legal definitions. Some faith leaders articulate their discomfort with contemporary approaches to fighting corruption that, in some views, focus excessively on overly narrow, legalistic methods; this perspective sees too little focus on underlying causes and particularly perceived inequity of treatment between rich and poor, wealthy and poor nations. Such perceptions of global inequities implicitly or even explicitly can, for some, excuse even blatantly illegal practices. At best, different approaches can impair action and dialogue; at worst, they can impede action. How can these disparate approaches be addressed, named, defined, and explored?

Where is Corruption Found? Where is it Focused?

A better question might be: *where isn't corruption?* Lest we forget that corruption seems to be a human problem, not defined or confined by borders and boundaries, the modern age of Google reminds us. Googling “corruption” yields thousands of stories on the subject from all over the world, from every sector, and covering varying amounts of money and levels of power (with 48 million hits).

A more complex and problematic issue than discrete acts of illegal activity and corruption is that of “corrupt cultures,” permissive cultural contexts, both geographic and institutional, where petty corruption and dishonesty are ingrained. Petty bribery of police and public officials may be an everyday occurrence; or institutions may also very commonly, and with impunity, hire on the basis of personal connection and relationship, not merit. Leaders may be expected (perhaps with ethical rationales) to favor family members, and money may

be traded for power or favors. Such cultural contexts, anecdotally, are sadly familiar, found in all parts of the world, and in all contexts. While some argue that this kind of corruption may be determined by historical and cultural characteristics (including religion), there is overwhelming evidence to suggest otherwise. Favoritism is not particular to a region, but is part of the human condition. Endemic, often socially-sanctioned, petty corruption is not directly linked to gross corruption, where leaders siphon money that should go to building roads or health clinics. However, environments that turn blind eyes to corruption do facilitate dishonesty, lack of transparency, and cutting corners on integrity, and create a world where it is difficult for any entity to deal purely neutrally with corruption.

A practical dimension of this debate grows from questions about whether there are culturally relative dimensions to corruption, and how far they extend: is it reasonable to look to common standards and approaches? Is it reasonable to judge a policeman, teacher, or nurse taking small bribes when the official has not been paid for months or is paid a pittance, or to reject favors to one's home community when that is perceived as the norm in the society concerned? Is it immoral for an ethically-driven faith organization to pay bribes in order to secure the release of needed supplies from the port or customs shed? These issues are the subject of continuing debates.

Cultural sensitivity is as important in addressing corruption as it is in any other context. However, mounting evidence from surveys and practical experience contests most hypotheses about the cultural relativity on standards of corruption. Most citizens everywhere want honest public services, want to know how their taxes are used, and want to see results. They want to see transgressors brought to justice. Integrity in public servants, and specifically in international development work, is the common hope and objective.

One response to the related debates about absolute versus relative interpretations of integrity standards is work to define a global ethic. A leader of this effort has been Swiss theologian Hans Küng.⁵ Much debate about the “global ethic” has centered in interfaith settings, notably the meetings of the Parliament of the World Religions. Box 3 summarizes this approach and work.

The Global Ethic⁶

A century ago, discussions of public integrity and standards of behavior in most societies were permeated with religious language and led by theologians and religious leaders. Today, religious language and leadership are the exception. Deliberate efforts to separate religion from public discourse about public ethics are one explanation for this shift. Another is squeamishness about the religious rhetoric of morality. Some are concerned that injecting religious arguments into debates about public ethics can be divisive in today's increasingly pluralistic societies.

Most transnational and national 'integrity alliances' thus articulate their vision and motives in terms emphasizing that the values underlying good governance are common to all cultures, and are grounded in a common global ethic. This trend towards neutral, often rather legalistic or technocratic, language has several explanations. To focus on universal standards and principles is seen as countering arguments that arise in widely different settings that cultures and religions have different approaches to issues such as public service standards, gifts, and sharing of benefits. Avoiding normative language, or invoking moral teachings of individual faith traditions, may be accounted for by concerns that that such language and images could be divisive in societies with multiple religious and secular communities. There is healthy skepticism as to whether all faith leaders and institutions truly live up to their own moral teachings.

Most efforts to define common integrity and good governance standards therefore focus on principles that cut across, and thus unite, different social and legal traditions, even if their religious roots are recognized. An example is the framing of the final declaration of the 2006 International Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC), entitled 'Common Values, Different Cultures', which highlighted strong common values around integrity:

"Convinced that corruption should be condemned and eradicated for the sake of the universally held value of integrity, participants declare that cultural and historical particularity should not be used as a pretext for justifying corruption, or conversely, for labeling certain

societies as corrupt. At the same time, anti-corruption measures tailored to the specific circumstances of a particular society should be devised in order to effectively deliver practical solutions."⁷

Many basic values underlying principles of civic integrity do indeed stem from deep roots that come close to being universal teachings, and reflect an important common consensus. It is useful to acknowledge that these 'common' values are tied to the teachings of various religions. As an example, a directive along the lines that theft is a serious offence appears in some form in most faith traditions, as do admonitions to be honest and, more broadly, to serve the common good. Stories and parables can reinforce the messages. On the other hand, divorcing the global ethic from religious teachings can have significant downsides, if it strips the ethic of its theological roots and imagery and discourages the engagement of both faith leaders and communities in seeking to apply the relevant concepts.

Hans Küng and his colleagues have worked extensively to trace and articulate public policy principles that draw on core teachings of the world's major religions. Küng links ethical principles to core principles in all the world's major religious traditions: for example, in their teachings on the critical topics of honesty ('thou shalt not bear false witness') and respect for property ('thou shalt not steal'). The basic message is that there is indeed a powerful common core of shared principles that constitutes a Global Ethic.⁸ This work was the focus of the 1993 World Parliament of Religions meeting in Chicago⁹ and its successor parliaments, and of successive discussions by the InterAction Council, an assembly of former heads of state. Innumerable conferences and discussions, including those of the International Monetary Fund and the World Economic Forum, have also considered the concepts and specifics involved in the issue. The Global Ethic features prominently in university ethics curricula.

The last ten years has brought an increased focus on corruption at the international level through the efforts of many institutions, public and private, notably civil society activists and official institutions, including the World Bank and the OECD. Nonetheless, corruption remains a formidable challenge. Worldwide, one World Bank estimate put the total amount paid in bribery at US\$1 trillion a year, or over 3 percent of world income in 2004.¹⁰ While only a rough figure, this gives a good general indication of the problem's vast dimensions. Transparency International (TI), a civil society group leading the fight against corruption by bringing together governments, the private sector, and civil society entities around issues of transparency and accountability, has tracked public opinion on global corruption since 2003. The 2007 TI report signals progress, but shows signs of marked pessimism. "Worldwide, the general consensus is that government efforts to stop corruption are not effective and that corruption will increase in the near future."¹¹ The report urges governments to work hard to prove to their people that they are seriously intent on fighting corruption. Likewise, the private sector and civil society have major responsibilities and "must redouble efforts to make progress and demonstrate results in the struggle against malfeasance and graft."¹² TI's work and its reports set a good course forward.

The TI tracking, notably, found that citizens were most skeptical of political parties and the legislative branch, and that the police were particularly likely to be perceived as corruptible. One in four citizens who had contact with the police around the world reported that they were asked to pay a bribe. In addition, "in the case of institutions with which the public has direct contact, perceptions of endemic corruption create the expectation that graft is necessary to obtain services. Corruption in the system then becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, as people pay where they assume it is necessary."¹³ This kind of system can become self-perpetuating, encourages impunity, and renders targeted interventions difficult.

Hypotheses and topics for dialogue: Continuing debates about how different cultures and, by implication, religious traditions address corruption are often implicit in the backdrop of corruption debates. They need to be brought, thoughtfully, more into the open. The cultural relativity arguments can be an obstacle to dialogue and action on

corruption. They have practical implications for some common strategic discussions: for example, whether to give priority to grand versus petty corruption; to go after "big fish" or systemic lapses in integrity. Both international and national approaches are needed in thrashing out these questions. Engaging faith institutions and leaders more purposefully on these questions could help to clarify and deepen discussions on complex and often contentious issues.

Why Focus on Public Corruption? Critical Links to Poverty and Inequity

Poverty is both a "cause and consequence" of corruption.¹⁴ Public corruption disproportionately affects the poor—both poor people and poor countries—and thus is a critical issue for development. A key finding of TI's 2007 Global Barometer report is that "the poor, whether in developing or highly industrialised countries, are the most penalised by corruption. They are also more pessimistic about the prospects for less corruption in the future."¹⁵ Poor citizens, regardless of nationality, are more likely to have to pay bribes. Public corruption also has more systemic implications, slowing growth and reducing investment in many developing countries.¹⁶

In an increasingly globalized and interconnected world, what matters for poor people and poor countries ultimately matters for the rest of us, as poverty can contribute to widespread instability and blight. As Susan Rose-Ackerman observes, corruption is not confined to the powerful. While higher levels of human development are generally associated with lower levels of corruption, high levels of corruption are also associated with a range of middle to low levels of human development. Corruption is a both a global and local problem, but its greatest impact is on poor countries and citizens.

Hypothesis and areas for continuing dialogue: Mining the increasing evidence on common citizen perceptions about corruption could help, as could robust discussion about both the links between poverty and corruption, and about the need for concerted action to combat it.

Part II

Fighting Corruption: What Works?

What Mechanisms are in Place to Fight Corruption?

While corruption is an age-old problem, comprehensive official responses are relatively recent. It is worth emphasizing that, very recently, companies quite legally took tax deductions for bribe payments in many countries, Germany and Australia among them. Bribery was commonly accepted as a part of doing business—even as a positive way to grease the wheels and get things done. Significant changes have now occurred, and the intellectual and practical landscapes are changing.

The United States Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, passed in 1977, marked an important watershed. It prohibits U.S. persons and businesses from “using the mails or any other means of interstate commerce to pay or promise to pay a foreign official for the purposes of influencing any act or decision of such foreign official in his or her official capacity.”¹⁷ A growing and dynamic global civil society movement contesting corruption has emerged, marked by the 1993 founding of Transparency International, which has taken form as a global network bringing together government, civil society, business and the media. International institutions have sharply increased their focus on systemic corruption issues. Sharp and widespread protests in several countries that focused on bribery and corruption (Indonesia, Philippines among them) brought down governments and thrust corruption into the limelight. The 1997 approval by the World Bank of its first anti-corruption strategy was another turning point; in 1999, the OECD followed suit with the OECD Convention against Bribery.

While these efforts bring some hope, corruption remains difficult to discuss and act on effectively. The

challenge is to examine the ways in which states, private sector entities, civil society, and the international community can address corruption in their midst, and to find bolder, better, and more practical responses. Avenues to engage faith leaders and communities are an integral part of this challenge.

State Responses to Corruption

The United States has been in a leader in terms of developing legal regimes to fight corruption, though there is clearly more work to be done. The U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act addresses global behavior by prohibiting U.S. companies and persons from bribing foreign officials. Two sections of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act are particularly relevant: 15 U.S.C. 78dd-1, which applies to the conduct of publicly-held companies regulated by the Securities and Exchange Commission; and 15 U.S.C. 78dd-2, which applies to individuals and privately-held businesses. There are civil and criminal penalties for violations. Civil penalties top out at \$10,000, and criminal penalties top out at \$2 million and five years in prison.

Other states have followed suit with anticorruption efforts. OECD member states have been required to implement OECD anticorruption mechanisms. Increasingly, the development community, exemplified by the World Bank, is making anticorruption and governance measures part of their Country Assistance Strategies (CAS) and projects, as detailed below.¹⁸ The difficulty of these transnational programs is that it is still largely up to individual countries to make decisions about the extent of the anticorruption programs that they want in place. This allows each country to craft anticorruption regimes that are suited to their risk exposure and constitutional frameworks.

International Community and Transnational Responses to Corruption

There has been significant progress since the OECD Working Group on Bribery was launched in 1994. The Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions emerged in 1997 and came into force 1999, and most countries had incorporated it into domestic law by 2001. The OECD Anti-Bribery Convention requires all 30 OECD countries and six non-OECD economies to establish and implement a set of legal, regulatory, and policy measures to prevent, detect, investigate, prosecute, and place sanctions on the bribery of foreign public officials.

Phase 2 of the OECD Ant-Bribery Convention highlights how much work is still to be done. Although “important advances have been made against foreign bribery in the past decade... increasing volumes in transnational business, major new players in international trade, and the ever-evolving context in which business deals are conducted are the source of future challenges in combating foreign bribery.”¹⁹ There is still little awareness about foreign bribery, and oversight, auditing, and enforcement are lacking. “Generally speaking, while the bribery of foreign officials has remained rife in most of the world since 1997, very few criminal investigations have been launched, and prosecutions are even rarer. The number of convictions handed down by the courts is very low. The phase 2 country monitoring reports by the Working Group and studies conducted by civil society reveal a pressing need to improve the situation.”²⁰

The OECD Anti-Bribery Working Group 2006 Annual Report suggests three kinds of actions: “(1) the OECD Working Group on bribery should continue mutual evaluation of signatory states’ application of the convention since it came into force; (2) states’ parties need to persevere in raising awareness about bribery; (3) Essential to improve international coordination of laws and national enforcement systems, and to strengthen cooperation among government authorities in the anti-bribery campaign.”²¹ Likewise, transnational legal assistance is necessary, and care should be taken to avoid concurrent legal action in more than one state.²² These legal issues have become more of an issue as more countries are now prosecuting bribery violations.

Responding to Corruption: the International Development Institutions

When James D. Wolfensohn became the president of the World Bank in 1995, he says that he was advised to be wary of uttering the “C-word”. His response, as he tells it, was to use the word “corruption” as often as possible, and to catapult the Bank into a leadership position in the global effort to address corruption, both in its own projects and in its client countries. He spoke out notably in 1996 on the “Cancer of Corruption,” at the large annual meeting of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In September 1997, the Bank launched a first comprehensive anticorruption strategy, and in 2000, the World Bank’s Executive Directors took explicit note of corruption as an outcome of poor governance in a new Public Sector Governance Strategy. Efforts to ramp up anticorruption efforts are reflected in an extensively discussed and vetted Anticorruption and Governance Strategy.²³

The World Bank Group’s primary concern is that corruption threatens to cut into progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the institution’s core goals of advancing human development and welfare, both by dissipating and wasting funds and by damaging efforts to mobilize support for development financing. The World Bank, like other public institutions, has a fiduciary responsibility, enshrined in its Articles of Agreement, to ensure that funds are spent appropriately. The Bank’s scaled-up governance and anticorruption agenda—at country and project level, as well as global policy level—provides incentives to managers to work on corruption and governance issues on the ground. “The emphasis of the strategy will be on the front lines, tapping local knowledge and engaging closely with partner countries,” and using country frameworks and Country Assistance Strategies (CAS) as a way to mainstream corruption issues.²⁴

Anti-corruption efforts are seen as a critical part of governance, with governance understood as fundamental and foundational for development. The World Bank divides governance into five categories: “(1) the central government executive, including cross-cutting control agencies responsible for public finance and human resources management, and front-line regulatory and service provision agencies; (2) formal

oversight institutions outside the executive, including the judiciary, parliament and other independent oversight institutions; (3) subnational governments and local communities, with their own service provision responsibilities, and often their own local arrangements for control and accountability; (4) civil society and the private sector, both in their role as watchdogs (including the independent media) and as the recipients of services and regulations, and hence a potential source of pressure for better performance; and (5) political actors and institutions at the apex, setting the broad goals and direction of the system as a whole.²⁵ Each area represents a critical entry point for work on anticorruption.

The World Bank is well placed to help define standards and expectations, and to present and work with specific strategies and action recommendations at the country level. Pivotal areas for focus include the following: public financial management, strengthening administrative capability, rationalizing public salaries, moving from individual projects towards a broader focus by sector, governance at the local level, state oversight institutions, greater transparency in government, and participation in oversight by civil society, the media, and communities.²⁶ The Bank recognizes that it will need to police the projects it finances more aggressively and provide for higher levels of sanctions through its internal Institutional Integrity vice presidency (INT).

Civil Society Responses to Corruption

The civil society response, as well as faith leaders and institutions, is our primary focus. Transparency International's 2007 survey suggests that citizens see non-governmental organizations (NGOs), religious bodies, and the military as the least corrupt of all institutions.²⁷ TI is at the forefront of an anticorruption movement as the leading civil society group in the fight against corruption, bringing together governments, the private sector, and civil society entities around issues of transparency and accountability. The organization "challenges the inevitability of corruption" in its work with 90 locally-established national chapters to bring about transparency in elections, public administration, procurement, and business, and to lobby governments for anticorruption policies.²⁸

TI has played a critical, non-partisan role in getting corruption issues on the agenda, publishing an annual Corruption Perceptions index and making available information about levels of corruption through its National Integrity Source book and database. While TI refrains from investigating corruption allegations itself—instead, it preserves its role as an independent convener and catalyst for anticorruption activity—and its presence has helped make corruption less of a taboo issue and more a part of the mainstream work of good governance promotion.²⁹

Indeed, some of the most powerful anticorruption efforts are international nongovernmental voluntary codes and coalitions that set benchmarks and norms on governance issues. The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) is one such movement, with its goal of increasing transparency and accountability in the extractive industries. The EITI is a coalition of governments, companies, civil society groups, private investors, and international organizations aiming to improve governance through the publishing and verification of company payments and government revenue from the oil, gas, and mining industries. "The EITI, in a nutshell, is a globally developed standard that promotes revenue transparency at the local level," setting benchmarks for countries but relying on countries themselves to implement the appropriate programs.³⁰ The Publish What You Pay campaign likewise aims to hold governments accountable by making government management of oil, gas, and mining revenue transparent. "When properly managed these revenues should serve as a basis for poverty reduction, economic growth and development rather than exacerbating corruption, conflict and social divisiveness."³¹

These civil society initiatives serve several functions: first, they set important benchmarks and provide strategic advice to countries; second, they provide citizens with an opportunity to monitor their government's revenues; and finally, they set international benchmarks so that anticorruption reformist actors and entities within a given country are able to look outside their contexts for affirmation and support. Paul Collier, a much respected analyst of the obstacles to development for the world's poorest countries, in highlighting the value of voluntary codes, urges that they be utilized even further to serve these information and resource functions.³²

Civil society initiatives include both efforts to mobilize and address political actors and more direct efforts, working to increase transparency and accountability. Box 4 highlights some dimensions of such approaches.

Business Response

Private companies and banks are increasingly challenged to adhere to ethical (as well as legal) standards, and this applies particularly to multinational companies. The existing array of initiatives, organizations, voluntary codes, and initiatives cannot be detailed here, and the 2008–9 financial and economic crises are shining new spotlights on both regulatory and ethical challenges. Two initiatives stand out, however: the Equator Principles, voluntary standards for bank investments, led by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), and the United Nations led Global Compact, now with

over 4700 corporate participants in 130 countries.³³ These focus particularly on environmental and labor standards, as well as broader human rights. Principle 10 of the Global Compact asserts that “businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.”

Many contemporary initiatives bridge sectors and bring together different kinds of institutions. An example that brings together civil society, international institutions, governments, and the private sector is the effort to recover funds that have been lost to corruption. This effort, spurred by the Stolen Assets Recovery Initiative (StAR), housed at the World Bank,³⁴ captures the moral fervor of many, and is advancing far beyond what was considered feasible a decade ago. Nonetheless, it is proving a slow and difficult process.

BOX 4

Delving More Deeply into Accountability

Richard Marsh, Director, ImpACT Coalition

Transparency and accountability trip too easily off the tongue when people are talking about organizations, especially not-for-profit organizations. I get the sense that these words are often coined without much thought. This is a shame. And it is also a shame that faith-based organizations, doing fantastic work, seem to perform rather less well when it comes to transparency and accountability. I see quite a number of reasons for this. Sometimes it's slightly misplaced thinking where accountability to overarching values replaces attention to more mundane aspects of accountability. Sometimes it is old-fashioned governance and/or communications systems.

Whatever reason lies behind it, the net effect is the same. When organizations refuse to take seriously the demands of transparency and accountability, they put themselves at risk of losing the confidence of supporters, beneficiaries and the public. The effects of that loss of confidence can be catastrophic.

But it need not be the case; transparency is simply making sure that information of all types is available quickly easily and fully to those who need or request it.

Accountability is much more complicated. It is about far more than just good financial accounting, although that is important. Accountability starts with an organization knowing who its stakeholders are and prioritizing them. It is important to know who you are responsible to and for what. From the UK, Christian Aid's accountability report *Listening and responding to our stakeholders* (<http://tinyurl.com/5lansq>) is a model example. Lots of organizations could adopt its simple and straightforward methodology.

I am convinced that faith-based organizations could be leading the way in become truly transparent and creatively accountable.

The ImpACT Coalition (www.impactcoalition.org.uk) is a coalition of charities working together to improve transparency and accountability. Many of our members come from faith-based organizations. The coalition offers to its members a free online toolkit to help them assess their performance in transparency and accountability. It's a great place to start planning for future improvement.

Hypothesis and possible areas for continuing dialogue: The growing focus on corruption has generated a complex array of institutions, approaches, social movements, civil society institutions, laws, codes, and practical experience. These are often not easy for non-specialists to tap. There is a gap between a certain attitude of fatalism that views corruption as largely inevitable and a growing determination to work purposefully to address it. Efforts to bring this body of experience to the broader civil society movement, including faith institutions, could take different forms, ranging from highly pragmatic toolkits to cross-sectoral encounters. This could contribute to enlarging the body of those who can engage directly in addressing corruption and help render their efforts more effective.

Part III

Responses of Faith Leaders and Institutions to Corruption

Speaking Truth to Power

Throughout history, it has been faith leaders first and often foremost who have been some of the most courageous and effective voices in efforts to combat corruption and promote good governance. The central question raised in this report is to what extent this is happening today, and what roles faith communities might play in the evolving global response to corruption issues.

The religious world has long seen itself as having a prophetic role of “speaking truth to power.” Defining and preserving social standards is another central role of faith. And most religious traditions hold dear their role of speaking and acting for society’s poor and excluded. The reality is more complex; faith communities themselves do not always live out the values to which they aspire and, in daily practice, some leaders ally themselves more with the rich and powerful than with the

poor and oppressed—but their prophetic role remains a common ideal.

Faith institutions rank amongst the most trusted institutions in many very different societies. Many families and communities expect that religious teaching will instill solid values, while faith leaders have durable roles in reminding and admonishing people to adhere to such values: raising their voices to denounce breaching of standards and the failure of public integrity. The morality authority of pulpit and temple are widely looked to, even if doubters suggest that the lessons heard there are too seldom carried further than the church or mosque door. Parables and teachings from different faiths are common points of reference in debates about public ethics across the globe. Perhaps the most widely quoted teaching is “to do unto others as you would have them do unto you”, a “golden rule” found in one form or another in virtually all faith traditions.

BOX 5

An Interfaith Declaration: A Code of Ethics on International Business for Christians, Muslims, and Jews

In 1988, a group of influential Christians, Jews, and Muslims began a process of dialogue aimed at agreeing on common standards and approaches to issues of ethics in business. The work concluded with agreement on a code of ethics in Amman, Jordan. Seen as a practical guide and tool, the code also aimed to highlight common ground linking the three monotheistic faiths and its applicability in widely different fields, including business.

The effort was part of a series of interfaith discussions launched in 1984 by HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, and HRH Crown Prince El Hassan Bin Talal of Jordan, with Sir Evelyn de Rothschild as patron.

The Code emphasizes the common grounding of business ethics in four principles: justice, mutual respect, stewardship, and honesty. As an illustration, the Declaration’s statement on honesty is as follows:

“The fourth principle inherent to the value system of each of the three faiths is honesty. It incorporates the principles of truthfulness and reliability and covers all aspects of relationships in human life—thought, word and action. It is more than just accuracy, it is an attitude well summed up in the word ‘integrity.’”

Personal values, ethics and religious beliefs/teaching are all linked, across widely different contexts and societies. Faith teachings help people to define and monitor their standards of behavior. Private morality and values—whether or not derived from religious principles—have obvious links to public morality. Box 5 is an example of drawing on faith principles in framing standards and principles.

The field of international development offers many contemporary examples of faith leaders working in a variety of partnerships to fight corruption. Many are not explicitly articulated as linked to development, but are no less relevant.

One area of action is that of global anti-corruption events, where the focus is increasingly on global inequity and the international development agenda. The 2003 International Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC) in Seoul—in alliance with TI—involved an unusual effort within that movement to involve both religious leaders and religious approaches explicitly in the dialogue.³⁵ The 13th IACC meeting in Athens, on October 30–November 2, 2008, also constituted an effort to reflect on the roles that religious voices could play, although the focus was fairly limited.

Active and courageous individuals make a great difference and pave the way for further action. Cardinal Oscar Rodríguez Maradiaga of Honduras is a fine example of one widely-respected leader within the Catholic Church who speaks and acts to promote integrity and transparency. He is widely known and appreciated for his active role in working for higher standards of governance, and sits on the boards of many international bodies, speaking frequently to this end. His work also demonstrates how faith leadership on the governance agenda can make a great difference.

“Corruption is a cancer that has spread throughout the world, but it has done so in a particular way on our continent, to the point where we have a culture of corruption. The abuse of public office, political kickbacks, omissions, illegal gifts, bribes, tax evasion, fraud—these are our daily bread.”

—*Honduran Cardinal Oscar Andrés Rodríguez Maradiaga*

John Githongo, a former Kenyan journalist and government official, and perhaps one of the world’s most resonant voices on the anticorruption agenda, has also served as Vice President of World Vision, a Christian relief, development, and advocacy organization.³⁶

“If I am a traitor for fighting corruption, so be it. I cannot apologise for that. A thief is not a lesser thief just because he comes from your own tribe. Fighting corruption is not treason against one’s community.”

—*John Githongo*

Notwithstanding numerous examples of individual leaders who speak with courage, persistence, and wisdom, global movements and discussions on integrity and governance have involved faith leaders less than might be expected. There is significant room for additional engagement and partnership, and the spotlight now shining on the damage that corrupt practices inflict on development work has direct implications for faith institutions when they themselves are engaged in designing and running development programs. A question arises as to whether faith institutions are sufficiently sensitive to the potentially corrosive effects of “leakage” of funds and conflicts of interest, and whether they are well-equipped to combat those problems. As faith organizations become more involved in relief operations, HIV/AIDS programs, and other development work, through both congregations and development institutions, new demands for accountability arise.

Policy Issues and Priorities in Religious and Ethical Approaches to Anti-Corruption

A workshop about the potential roles of faith leaders and institutions in the global integrity and anti-corruption movement formed part of the International Anti-Corruption Conference in October-November 2008. Box 6 summarizes the objectives and outcomes of that discussion. Box 7 summarizes the consultation on the topic at the Berkley Center on October 14, 2008. Read

together, the proposals for action constitute an operational agenda for continuing analysis and consultation.

“For many [religious leaders] this fight [against corruption] is not sufficiently directly involved in human poverty—it is too abstract to make the link. It is not considered a basic for overcoming poverty.”

—*Gesine Schwan (Athens, Faith and Human Security workshop, November 1, 2008)*

BOX 6

13th IACC, Workshop Special Session on Faith and Human Security

November 1, 2008

Background and Objectives

Faith leaders are critical social (and often political) actors, and their engagement in governance and anti-corruption efforts can help ensure holistic approaches to creating shared security. Peace and security are not just about diplomacy and state solutions; they are also about social goals and norms, and inter-group relations. Faith leaders and communities have roles in all aspects, but particularly the latter: they so often play key roles in people's lives. Many faith leaders possess a deep historical appreciation of the evolution of social norms, values, and tensions that can exist between the different [social and institutional] dimensions. With this understanding, this workshop will bring together faith and secular governance leaders to name and outline the elephants in the room—the most difficult issues at stake in fighting corruption—and then suggest advice on how to move forward in including and energizing faith leaders and institutions in order to overcome these challenges. The workshop aimed to encourage experts to explore key questions and creative solutions. How best to energize and include faith leaders and institutions in anticorruption efforts? How should we think about how to deal with nepotism and conflicts of interest? What is the best way to balance positive values-based education with deterrents? How can one approach innovative reforms in permissive institutional cultures that look the other way on lapses in integrity? How might one respectfully advocate for religious communities to fight corruption within and beyond their own communities?

The Workshop

The session focused on the connections between faith-based institutions and the anti-corruption movement, and how they can complement each other. Many worthwhile themes and ideas emerged.

1. Religious ideas and traditions are part of the culture of integrity, and are at the root of human rights and ethical principles.
2. There is a lack of consensus over whether or not faith-based institutions should be considered NGOs. There is a tension in linking them together, not least because of the size of the religious world in comparison to the NGO sector.
3. Many social initiatives, particularly in Latin America and Africa, are motivated by religious beliefs. But faith-inspired institutions are not so active in governance initiatives, as they are moral institutions more closely aligned to issues of poverty and human rights. The fundamental nature of corruption as a cause of social injustice is not yet fully understood; as such, it is not necessarily seen as a priority. Faith-based organizations can be blind to the importance of good governance.
4. People who identify themselves as religious make up at least three quarters of the world's population; as such, they also make up a large proportion of the people who give and take bribes. If anti-corruption was incorporated into the ethics of religion, this ➤

BOX 6 (continued)

could have some impact on bribery; we might be able to build a global moral consensus not to accept bribery.

5. Religious groups could be of assistance in the fight against corruption in four principle ways: religion is a rich source for the content of relevant norms; religious groups could mobilize their members to support ethics and integrity; they could advise members on how to interpret and apply ethical norms; and religious faith gives reason to obey ethical norms.
6. We need to recognize the need for a global set of values, and that these must be derived from the full range of ethical cultures. There may be no consensus, but there is congruence; religious groups have all dealt with the same issues, but have arrived at differently nuanced solutions.
7. Faith-inspired organizations have a history of changing perceptions, and have influence over people across the world. Examples of previous causes that faith-based institutions have worked on include HIV/AIDS and the stigma that accompanies the disease. They have managed to bring about change in many areas of Africa. As such, they could be worthwhile partners in the fight against corruption.
8. While there may be a debate about the role of faith-based institutions in the fight against corruption in some areas of the world, in others they are intrinsically linked to this effort, and as such cannot be ignored.

Recommendations and Follow-up Action

1. Educating and reaching out to religious leaders on the ways in which corruption contributes to inequality, poverty, and other issues that they currently work on.
2. A survey should be undertaken to investigate the religious motivations of people working on governance and anti-corruption issues.
3. A proposal to involve faith-based institutions in an integrity initiative: full financial disclosure from national governments. Rather than being prosecuted for corruption crimes (a complicated and often unsuccessful process), corrupt individuals could be convicted on the technicality of filling out the financial disclosure form incorrectly and/or dishonestly. This might reduce the burden of proof for those who wish to prove that corruption has taken place.
4. Churches are as prone to corruption as any other institution. In order to play a role in the anti-corruption movement, therefore, they need to acknowledge this and set an example of how institutions should function in terms of good governance and accountability.
5. The anti-corruption movement can work with global interfaith and other religious movements in identifying their roles in fighting corruption and integrating it into their work.
6. Peter Eigen (TI founder) recalled that TI tried to set up a dialogue with religious institutions at the 11th IACC, but this has not yet become a relationship. TI is interested in forging these links, and would need concrete examples of how it can use the tremendous resource of faith-based institutions.

Participants

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StAR Secretariat, World Bank Group; Senior Fellow, Georgetown University Institute for International Law & Politics

Charles Sampford

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BOX 7

Summary of Brainstorming Meeting on Governance and Faith, Berkley Center

October 14, 2008

The challenges of governance in a general sense, and of fighting corruption, more specifically, loom large on today's international development agenda. The brainstorming meeting aimed to explore, with a diverse group of faith, business, academic, and civil society leaders, how a gamut of religious institutions and individuals are engaged in the effort, and how they can do this more actively. The impetus for the event was the October 30, 2008 International Anti-Corruption Conference in Athens, where a panel was to consider specifically how to engage faith communities more actively in global anti-corruption alliances.

The discussion ranged widely, beginning with how different people saw the problem of corruption, how they and their institutions dealt with it in practice, and some issues and risks involved, including the practical dangers of confronting corrupt practices—particularly in countries with authoritarian regimes.

Important themes included the following: (a) strong views on the harmful effects of corruption on very poor people, who are forced often to pay high and frequent bribes; (b) the importance of focusing on areas where corruption has significant impact, notably extractive industries where religious leaders in are taking the lead in working for solutions; (c) practical dilemmas faced

by many in religious communities, including missionaries and NGOs, on how to deal with a corrupt environment: whether to pay or to refuse to bribe, and how to deal with real threats; (d) the importance of addressing issues of transparency and accountability within religious institutions and communities, since doing otherwise would make it difficult to preach or act against it in a broader context; (e) the central importance of information—getting the facts out, using freedom of information channels, and helping to harness information; (f) persuasive arguments that fighting corruption is about more than laws and financial incentives, though both are important; it calls for a focus on ethical principles and standards, which can be framed as “the common good”; (g) the importance of working in alliances: both in local situations, where a group of institutions can develop standards and set the tone more broadly than an individual acting alone; and at the international level, where strategies to fight corruption and improve governance can be more effectively advanced if there is a common understanding of issues and approach, and a common purpose. There was a suggestion that the “middle levels”—not global church leaders, not the parish priest or imam, but the bishops or leaders who are pivots—should be the focus.

Faith Engagement to Fight Corruption that Impedes Development

10 Possible Areas for Action

1. “Mapping” is a common appeal and refrain.

The call for “mapping” means learning more about who does what, where, with what resources, and what impact. This information is scattered and not readily available. This makes strategic initiatives difficult, and impedes experience-sharing and alliance-building.

A quick but systematic survey that might involve a range of institutions and approaches (for instance, two countries, a selection of faith institutions, and a sample of leaders) could test whether such information could be obtained. Then its usefulness and demand for findings could be assessed.

2. Discussing perceptions about common and diverging approaches to ethics and morality could help identify real issues and dispel misunderstandings; closer examination of scripture and religious teaching could help build commitment.

Ethical challenges are often less straightforward than the Global Ethic would suggest. Cultural differences do affect many institutional arrangements designed to ensure integrity. Various faith traditions and cultures bring shades of difference to interpretations of public morality and integrity. Holding assumptions and ideas about how different cultures and religions approach corruption could be beneficial.

An illustration of presumptions about cultural characteristics delves into past analysis when thoughtful analysts, including World Bank economists, suggested that Confucian family values worked against public norms of accountability and objectivity; the suggestion was that an emphasis on social hierarchy might dampen entrepreneurial behavior, or that family loyalty would always trump objectivity in hiring. This fostered pessimism about development prospects in Asian societies. History has prompted a sharp reassessment of these contentions, but similar arguments suggest that traditional African religions, which give special importance to chiefly authority and community obligations, block progress in a similar way. Similarly, some see honesty as a culturally varying virtue. However, when experience is examined

and people are actually asked about their values, such differences often fade or decline in importance. The implicit assumptions deserve more robust debate, and perceptions of difference are worth examining.

More broadly, an exploration of how different faith traditions approach what are today understood as corrupt practices could be useful, both to yield insight and as sources of dialogue and mobilization. This could address scripture, traditions, parables, and practice among different faith traditions related to ethics, accountability, and integrity. Benefits might include deeper understanding, accentuated by stories and other teachings, and material that would allow thoughtful discussion of subtle differences in approach and traditions that might underpin a stronger consensus for change.

3. Mobilizing World Faith Traditions

There is also significant potential in mobilizing the organizations of the world’s faith traditions. Faith organizations have vast networks and infrastructure, including often sophisticated and far-reaching channels of communication. Some networks have actively mobilized to address corruption and public integrity (examples include Malawi, Zambia, and Kenya during critical times of political change), but their potential has not yet been fully tapped.

A first step would be to explore faith leaders’ and networks’ reticence towards anti-corruption campaigns. Testing better ways to communicate about anti-corruption work could help break communications barriers.

An example of a purposeful effort to engage networks is the June 2006 conference on corruption, organized by the Vatican’s Pontifical Council on Justice and Peace. It focused the attention of the vast network of the Roman Catholic Church on fighting corruption and indicated specific programs and measures that could combat it. Such events, combining both pragmatic experience and prophetic voice, might find counterparts in other faith organizations.

Other options include finding ways to build on the moral and practical voices of individual spiritual leaders, many of whom command vast communications networks. Ensuring more explicit dialogue and focus by faith-based NGOs, churches, and spiritual movements might also spur them to engage more actively in “integrity alliances.”



4. The Power of Information

Probably the most powerful tool for fighting corruption is information: whether disclosure of assets by public servants, investigative journalist reports, public hearings, obligatory publication of public budgets, publicly available accounts and audits, public bid openings, etc. This explains the focus in anti-corruption work on transparency, which is inextricably linked to accountability. Faith communities and institutions can be far more actively engaged in such efforts. The Africa Monitor, inspired and led by Anglican Archbishop Njongonkulu Winston Ndungane is an example: its aim is to monitor, publicize, and comment on development progress with particular reference to results compared to commitments. The effort by an Indian civil society movement termed the “Fifth Pillar”—freedom of information—to engage faith leaders at a major conference in August 2008 is another example (Box 8).

Father Henriot, a Jesuit priest working in Zambia, offers another illustration of the powerful voice that faith can add to what are too often rather arid debates about governance. At two 2007 events, he argued strongly

that the moral dimensions of corruption cannot be left aside; that public and private morality is indeed at issue. He demanded strong leadership, and also highlighted the tight relationship among different forms of corruption—large scale corruption that dissipates funds, the “middling” corruption that saps administration, and the corrosive effects of petty corruption (payments to teachers, policemen, for registering a birth), which erodes public trust. His voice is compelling, and voices like his deserve to be amplified.³⁷ His central conclusion: “Good governance for sustainable growth, is for me not simply an economic and political issue (bureaucratic and technocratic), but a moral and ethical issue, profoundly a matter of social justice.”

The major global interfaith organizations—including the World Conference of Religions for Peace, the Parliament of the World Religions, the United Religions Initiative, and the WFDD—could offer important vehicles for addressing public integrity and accountability, if they chose to make those challenges a priority. Since each organization is increasingly engaging in practical and prophetic work on social justice, public integrity and good governance seem to offer logical extensions of this work.

BOX 8

The “Fifth Pillar”: The Power of Information

The 5th Pillar is an Indian movement mobilizing networks of activists to create awareness in their communities about the Indian Right to Information Act and supporting citizens in their efforts to question their government and to abstain personally from taking part in corruption, and particularly from giving or taking bribes. The 5th Pillar is actively trying to organize faith leaders and communities as part of this movement. A symbol of the 5th Pillar campaign is a “zero rupee note”, literally a large rupee bill meant to be given in place of a bribe if a bribe is requested: it commits the bearer of the note to neither give nor accept bribes. The aim of the organization is both to inspire individuals personally to free themselves from taking part in corruption, and to motivate and support individuals to mobilize their communities, and the citizens of India more broadly, to demand a more accountable and transparent government and society.

5. Education and Religious Teaching

Faith institutions play significant roles in many dimensions of education. Churches and mosques directly run extensive school networks. They offer Sunday or Friday religious education classes to both children and adults, and influence public school curricula in important ways. A recurring theme in discussions among faith organizations is the ethical content of public and private education.

There is considerable potential to build on these efforts and institutions, working more purposefully to advance the cause of integrity and good governance. Model programs, case studies, and best practices in effective teaching of ethics in educational systems at all levels—especially those that illuminate the roles that faith institutions can and do play—are possible avenues. Efforts could focus on curricula in faith-run schools and direct and indirect contributions to teaching values in public school systems. There could be particular focus on curricula of theological training institutions, and communication through faith-led media at local, national, and international levels.

If faith leaders and institutions are to fight corruption effectively, influencing public policy and engaging in activities such as monitoring development programs, those involved need good information. This includes an appreciation of what works in fighting corruption, and access to information that can underpin effective monitoring efforts. Workshops on governance would equip faith leaders and communities with better tools and foster more active engagement. There are obvious issues around the extent to which faith institutions can and should enter into the core of development programs—but where they do play active roles, it is imperative that they be equipped with the appropriate knowledge and skills.

6. Integrity within Faith Communities and Programs

A question often posed is how far religious leaders and institutions are willing to go in examining their own practices. To preach and teach well about corruption, one's own affairs must be in order, and this rule applies equally to faith leaders and communities. One practical avenue for action is more transparent record-keeping and clearer mechanisms for accountability within religious communities themselves. There are exemplary cases of clear public accountability and monitoring of community resources within faith communities. However, the accounts, audits, and reports of many organizations, especially but not exclusively small institutions, are often fairly rudimentary. Demands by development agencies for adherence to strict procurement, monitoring, and reporting practices in faith/development partnerships such as HIV/AIDS programs, can generate resistance.

Some faith leaders argue that strict regulations and accountability mechanisms are cumbersome and intrusive, and that they constitute a breach of the trust that binds their communities. They are seen as impeding a focus on core missions. However, demands for greater accountability are becoming more important as faith communities become more active in programs to fight poverty, such as campaigns against malaria and in support of public education, and receive external funds on a much larger scale.

Focusing on “corruption-proofing” faith-run programs has interesting potential as a way to surpass reticence among religious leaders about focusing on corruption.

While some religious leaders in Africa are unambiguous about the evils of corruption, for example, others tend to see the problem in more nuanced ways—holding that the briber and receiver of the bribe are both responsible. The concern of these religious leaders is that critics of corruption have focused unduly on those who accept bribes, people who normally reside in poor countries, and too little on the patterns and mechanisms that allow those in rich countries to bribe with impunity. Debate about the issues and their consequences would be useful across the board.

7. Faith Engagement in Monitoring Poverty and Public-Sector Expenditures

Faith institutions in several countries have engaged actively in processes that develop poverty reduction strategies and, after their approval, monitor their implementation. Some such programs are directly tied to international debt relief programs and the formal Poverty Reduction Strategy Processes that engage the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Zambia, Bolivia are examples). Such engagement involves faith leaders in key policy decisions on poverty and social spending, and opens pragmatic avenues for monitoring public programs.

This engagement is an essential part of the widely-acclaimed participatory approach to developing and implementing anti-poverty strategies. However, much remains to be done to make this engagement more effective, including effective participation by faith leaders and enabling faith actors to gain the knowledge and confidence that they need to be well positioned to discuss issues of economics and finance where they might lack training and experience.

8. Integrity, Ethics, and Accountability: HIV/AIDS and Gender-Linked Violence

Focusing too narrowly on fighting corruption can cast a negative aura around the broader efforts to enrich ethics, accountability, and integrity. There is a tendency to define institutional ethics programs in terms of rules: for example, government spending, procurement, and conflicts of interest. This is even truer today, in light of the intense spotlight on lapses in public honesty. Discussions with leaders and thinkers from different faith traditions underscore, however, a common discomfort with grounding the definition of ethics

and integrity in rules. For instance, a discussion with religious leaders about flawed procurement can turn imperceptibly toward questions of equity, and touches raw nerves on the issue of fairness. Are the rules of the game truly transparent, or are the odds stacked against local and small participants? Norms, standards, and rules are vitally important—but so are honest and forthright efforts to address the broader ethical issues

embedded in contemporary debates about globalization. A broader framing of ethics, accountability, and integrity can help open dialogue on central issues and allow for linkage among pragmatic concerns about the management of public finances and the drive for equity and social justice, including wider access to health care.

One way to link the different dimensions is to focus on

BOX 9

Corruption and Extractive Industries

Rev. Seamus Finn, Oblates of St. Mary

“Instead of contributing to the development of our country and benefiting our people, our rich mineral resources, oil reserves and extensive forests have become the cause of our misery.”

—Congoese National Bishops Conference,
July 2007

Corruption in the extractives sector presents itself in a variety of ways. The discovery of natural resources within the boundaries of any country is influenced by a number of factors that political leaders don't often control. The tools of discovery are constantly being refined and improved in such a way that discoveries of new reserves of valuable natural resources are often thrust unexpectedly on political leaders.

In recent years, numerous statements by religious leaders in different countries around the world have highlighted a long list of corrupt and abusive actions by political leaders. These have included instances of bribery and self-enrichment, as well as the systemic consequences for large numbers of citizens who lost opportunities for investment in education, health care and other basic human needs cause.

In many instances, the absence of an updated legal framework for handling discoveries of oil, gas or minerals brings about numerous challenges and potential pitfalls. Without an updated legal framework, which establishes and protects ownership rights for individuals and communities, opportunities for fraud and corruption are easily found. This situation is often made worse if the demand and price for the resource is subject to significant fluctuations, growing demand or geopolitical considerations.

Contracts for the extraction of natural resources present a different set of challenges, because they often involve a number of different actors from both the public and private sector and a number of international players. The establishment of a well-organized, transparent, and monitored process for the extraction of natural resources has eluded many governments. The experience of the Chad-Cameroon pipeline project demonstrates that, even with such a process in place, respect for the terms of a contract cannot be guaranteed, and there is often no legal vehicle for addressing such abuses.

A final corruption challenge presents itself in the local communities that are immediately affected, both by the footprint of the mine or the oil or gas fields, and by the transportation of these resources to market. The quality of the relationship, and the standards that a company or a conglomerate establishes with local communities, has a significant influence in this arena. How security is established and enforced, how employment opportunities are apportioned and compensated, and how any philanthropic activities are processed, can establish the foundation for a climate of either corruption or integrity.

“Oil and diamonds, almost exclusively, fed the conflict we suffered for the last twenty-five years. And since the war has ended, many people have been very surprised that these same resources have not been able to feed our internally displaced people.”

—Catholic Bishops of Luanda,
24 March 2004

problems with clear ethical dimensions through practical advocacy and dialogue. One example is domestic violence, which opens up a host of questions around the discriminatory treatment of women within households and communities. Efforts to confront domestic violence involve the full gamut of ethical challenges. The complex ethical issues posed by the HIV/AIDS pandemic offer similar scope for linking dialogue and practical action.

9. Taking on Special Challenges (1) Extractive Industries, Stolen Assets

Acting to address specific problems is a potential avenue for action, and can bring faith leaders both into advocacy and action alliances, and into thoughtful dialogue and analysis in a search for solutions. Box 9 outlines the example of extractive industries (mining, above all) and the

role that faith leaders, and specifically a growing network of Catholic bishops is playing. Another potential area for mobilization and action is the recovery of stolen assets.

10. Linking action from above and below

Poor governance is both about individual ethics and about systems, and is thus both a local and global issue. Leadership, or “fire from above”, particularly from political leaders, is essential—but so are community action and the mobilization of civil society. Box 10 focuses on the central roles of local government, with reference to Nigeria. Dele Olowu, pastor and development expert, suggests that faith communities can play major roles both as direct community actors on issues such as malaria, as well as by closely and effectively monitoring the development work of local government units.

BOX 10

Improving Governance From Above and From Below

Dele Olowu, consultant, pastor, formerly Professor of Administration and Local Government

Development must start at the local level and it must work there.

Unfortunately, in spite of a major reform of local governments in 1976 and the infusion of huge intergovernmental financial transfers estimated at 5% of the country’s GDP, most local governments in Nigeria have not been very successful in terms of development impact—judged by their performance in health care (mostly preventive health, which included Malaria control). An example is the Barkin Ladi Local Government in Plateau State, with 11 other “success stories”, out of 774 LGUs. The main explanation for this success was strong local leadership and their engagement with local the non-governmental community and faith-based organizations.³⁸ What is essential is to build a framework for co-production by local government and faith organizations, working on a pilot basis.

Taking a specific program and challenge (like malaria) could create major rallying point for inter- and intra-faith collaboration to reform and revitalize local level governance in Nigeria. This might hold the key to reforming governance in Nigeria while at the same

time helping to push the malaria agenda.

Nigerian local governments receive huge sums of money in the form of transfers, but most of these are stolen or mismanaged, rarely used for development initiatives. In the past, especially under military rule, local governments could be (and were) held to account by the national government, and this led to some commendable developmental impact. With the advent of democracy, the courts have ruled that local governments are constitutionally independent entities (which they are); but, paradoxically, this has served to weaken accountability and responsible governance at that level. By enhancing the capacity of faith based organizations to hold communities to account, we would go a long way to enhancing the capacity for performance at the local level both of the government and of FBOs.

We must ask how faith organizations in Nigeria are engaging with the governance challenge. A practical, pilot program that brings parties together within an articulated governance framework might help to provide a robust answer to this question, building from below and orchestrating from above at the national level.

Part IV

Paths Forward

Corruption is indeed an evil, aptly termed a cancer. It gnaws away at public confidence and the quality of public programs. Lessons from successful experience suggest that multi-faceted approaches work best. Leadership can achieve impressive results, often in a quite short time frame, in modeling behavior, and community mobilization and vigilance are equally effective.

Corruption is not eradicated by moral discourse, administrative fiat, or policing alone. It is deeply embedded in human social traditions and practices. Too often, public debate is not accompanied by action to foster greater understanding, respect, and curiosity. It is necessary to seek out common concerns and values, and to explore areas of significant difference. Given the present-day urgency of fighting global poverty, which is so closely linked to international peace and security, we cannot afford such divides. Every party must come to the table in an effort to devise and agree on ethical standards, as well as mechanisms for enforcement and accountability. Religious voices and organizations should be vital players in this process.

Despite historical gulfs separating secular and religious development work, these worlds have come closer in recent years, with recognition of common ground and efforts to engage in dialogue, even on areas where there is significant disagreement. In a post-9/11 world, more secular actors now appreciate how critical it is to be in conversation and partnerships with faith institutions and communities, which play important roles in development—in social service provision, advocacy efforts, and strategic issues of governance and social cohesion.

Religions offer the power of language and story, as illustrated in Father Henriot's image, a fitting conclusion to this report:

“There is a 16th century saint, Thomas More, who was the Chancellor of King Henry VIII of England. Asked to go against his conscience, to deny his trust, he answered very poignantly that public trust is held like sand in our hands. If we open our fingers only a bit, to be only a bit corrupt, the sand of trust flows out quickly and is completely lost. A beautiful image, I believe, to remind us that indeed... we can together close our fingers, clasp our hands together with each other, to halt corruption.”³⁹

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This paper is part of a series of reports that maps the activity of faith-based organizations around key development topics. These reports explore the role of religious groups in addressing global challenges as a way to bridge the coordination gap between secular and religious organizations in the common effort of international development work.



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