

**Aristotelian Judgments on Good Virtues  
Towards the Justification of Christian  
Response on Payment of Ransom to  
Kidnappers. A Study of Ransom to  
Kidnappers.**

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**ABSTRACT**

Poverty and “extended corruption” have led to numerous vices, where people turn on each other in a desperate search for survival and/or for selfish political purposes. Ransom taking through kidnapping has never been what people condone in any part of the world, and will consequently not be condoned in the future. The act of kidnapping for ransom has become a business for fundraising by individuals to extort money from people using kidnapping tactics to traumatize people for money. Some can even kill victims of this circumstance if cash is not paid, while other kidnappers still kill the victim after receiving the payment. The paradox, raising the rhetorical question that has been bugging the researcher’s mind here, is whether paying the ransom requested by the kidnappers to save the life of the kidnapped victim is justifiable. However, insecurity in the world, Africa, and Nigeria, in particular, has turned vile, and injustice instead of Justice is now public. The researchers interacted briefly with Aristotle’s works, amongst others, on the subject of injustice and good virtues, particularly that which explains human actions in response to growing vices like kidnapping and ransom payment; this was used to seek answers to questions about this research with a pragmatic approach to the issue. The fundamental question is whether our moral or immoral actions count against us even if we are in

an ignorant state. The study finally presents that for Christians, the dilemma of paying ransom has been dealt with on the cross. Christians only need to act and pray in faith, letting God save his people in his way.

**Keywords:** “Justice”, “Virtues”, “Injustice”, “Kidnapping”, “Ransom”, “Extended-Corruption”, “Survival”, “Poverty”

### **ARISTOTLE’S<sup>370</sup> VIEW OF INJUSTICE AND GOOD VIRTUE**

When justice is being discussed, the reader can easily understand that the opposite aspect of that is or has to do with injustice. And for Aristotle, in his discussion on Virtues and Vices, he proved that “Injustice is a vice of the soul, through which men become covetous of more than they deserve. Illiberality is a vice of the soul, through which men aim at a gain from every source. Small-mindedness is a vice of the soul, which makes men unable to bear good and bad fortune, like honor and dishonor.”<sup>371</sup> He calls it a vice because it is not a normal, natural way for humans to live. Injustice is a vice because it is an evil act done by one or a group of people to others for personal gain. This is possible because there are individual sins and corporate sins, and since injustice is a vice of the soul, it does not go alone but with Illiberality and small-mindedness. These terms indicate the weakness embedded in

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<sup>370</sup> Aristotle (384–322 BCE) was born in Stagira in north-east Greece, an ideal coastal spot for a city, according to his own description in the *Politics* (*Pol.* VII 5). Aristotle’s father was doctor to King Amyntas of Macedon. In his ethical works, Aristotle shows great respect for medicine. When Aristotle was eighteen, he left Macedon to study with Plato in Athens. On Plato’s death in 348 BCE, he moved to the court of Hermeias in north-west Asia Minor, and then to Lesbos. During those years Aristotle did much of his copious research on biology that is reflected in over a quarter of his extant work. In 343–342 BCE Amyntas’ son King Philip chose Aristotle to tutor his teenage son, the future Alexander the Great. See Roger Crisp, (ed.) *Aristotle’s Ethics by Paula Gottlieb; The Oxford Handbook of the History of Ethics*, Oxford University Press, 2013.1.

<sup>371</sup> Jonathan Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle, The Revised Oxford Translation Volume One And Two*, The Jowett Copyright Trustees, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1984. 4256.

the mind of the individual that can result in injustice.<sup>372</sup> The mind develops with injustice after considering other people in society as not too important, and as those who are worth living in bondage and not in liberty.

There are a few ways that Aristotle presented, as seen by Roger Crisp, that the Morality of human action is either justified negatively or positively, but it cannot be neutral because of one's ignorance.<sup>373</sup> Firstly, Aristotle, as narrated by Roger on the moral responsibility and moral dilemma, presented that "If a tyrant threatens the lives of family members unless you do something shameful, would it be voluntary to do as he says? Would it be right to do as he says?" And the answer to this question will be that "the good person will never act viciously and so will never be miserable."<sup>374</sup> We might now wonder whether a person is responsible for their character, even in things related to the above example. Aristotle answers that we are, in some ways, co-causes of our characters. Presumably, this means that whatever our upbringing and circumstances, we are partly responsible for how we turn out. Secondly, in the aspect of practical wisdom and virtue of thought, Aristotle will aver that "Unlike comprehension (*sunesis*), a virtue of thought that merely concerns judging the words of others, practical wisdom is prescriptive. Practical wisdom concerns living well in general. In short, it is a state of grasping the truth, involving reason, and concerned with action about human goods."<sup>375</sup> For

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<sup>372</sup> In my view these efforts have also failed because of weak sanctioning and deterrence mechanisms. Kidnapping thrives in an environment that condones crime; where criminal opportunism and impunity prevail over and above deterrence. This obviously calls for an urgent review of Nigeria's current anti-kidnapping approach to make it more effective. See Chukwuma Al Okoli, *Kidnapping for ransom has become Nigeria's latest security problem*, May, 2019.

<https://qz.com/africa/1624376/kidnapping-for-ransom-is-nigerias-latest-security-problem/> Accessed 9/10/2021 4:08pm

<sup>373</sup> Roger Crisp, (ed.) *Aristotle's Ethics by Paula Gottlieb; The Oxford Handbook of the History of Ethics*, Oxford University Press, 2013.

<sup>374</sup> Roger Crisp, (ed.), 2013,

<sup>375</sup> Roger Crisp, (ed.), 2013,

any common action, the mind is involved, and a man is practically wise enough to understand himself by being fooled by others or by saving the-self from unwise decisions. Thirdly, the final thought issued by Aristotle, as assessed by this research, judging from Roger's work, is of practical Reasoning, choice, and *Akrasia*, as he calls it. Similarly, the good person does not deliberate about whether to act virtuously, but will deliberate about what to do to achieve that goal in a particular situation. Aristotle describes deliberation in terms reminiscent of the doctrine of the mean, as "correctness following what is beneficial, about the right thing, in the right way and at the right time."<sup>376</sup>

## CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN RESPONSES ON INJUSTICE AND GOOD VIRTUE

Contemporary thoughts concerning Christians are to respond to injustice as opposed to good virtues. It is important that Christians begin to think positively about how they should respond to the world judging by the injustice and unending vices in society. As required in the lives of believers, good virtues<sup>377</sup> through the power of the holy spirit should replace the acts of the flesh in the Christian character. Austin and Geivett in the work *Being Well Moved* that.

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<sup>376</sup> Roger Crisp, (ed.), 2013. As this research deduces, Aristotelian virtue of character involves choice, the choice involves deliberation, and it is the mark of the person with practical wisdom to deliberate well. Aristotle defines choice as understanding combined with desire or desire combined with thought showing the importance of each division.

<sup>377</sup> Gregory W. Lee, 'Republics and Their Loves: Rereading City of God 19', *Modern Theology* 27, no. 4 (October 2011): 553–81, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0025.2011.01703.x>. In Lee's interaction with Gregory, he supported that "Gregory aligns himself with "civic liberalism," the form of Augustinian political thought he considers best suited for the cultivation of civic virtue, and advocates love as a means of connecting the Augustinian tradition with contemporary liberal concerns." See Eric Gregory, *Politics and the Order of Love: An Augustinian Ethic of Democratic Citizenship* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

While all believers should have such a thirst for him, and part of the function of the disciplines is to enter into fellowship with God, we believe there is great potential for *moral* formation that is at present unmapped. And we believe that the Scriptures strongly emphasize this aspect of following Christ. The vital linkage between our experiential knowledge of Christ and growth in moral formation is understood as the inculcation of character traits, or virtues.”<sup>378</sup>

It is often easy to think that, as a Christian, one’s moral character does not matter to society, especially in aspects of administering justice. But though the world hates Christ, it does not speak negatively of his lived character. We will only be hated for our lived character, especially when it tends to confront injustice in society. As guardians of God’s kingdom here on earth, we are to fearlessly<sup>379</sup> be stewards of the truth in all aspects of our daily living. In other thoughts concerning a true Christian virtue, DeYoung moved that “Courage counts as

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<sup>378</sup> Michael W Austin and R Douglas Geivett, ‘Being Good: Christian Virtues for Everyday Life’, *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 6, no. 2 (September 2013): 296–301, <https://login.eaccess.library.moore.edu.au/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0001967424&site=ehost-live&scope=site>. Another writer proposes a dour idea concerning living in the society where human actions are highly seen as importantly morally. Ira proposed the idea of ‘intelligent disobedience’ noting that this can “achieve the awareness and skills to avoid the “just following orders” trap. Regardless of the pressure we feel to obey those in authority, we are accountable for our actions. We need to be able to take a stand and do the right thing when what we are told to do is wrong. If we do this well, even those issuing the wrong orders will benefit from our having made the right choice.” See Ira Chaleff, *Intelligent Disobedience Doing Right When What You’re Told to Do Is Wrong*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc. 1333 Broadway, Suite 1000 Oakland, 2015. 9.

<sup>379</sup> See Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung, ‘Courage as a Christian Virtue’, *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 6, no. 2 (September 2013): 301–12, <https://login.eaccess.library.moore.edu.au/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0001967426&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

a virtue not only because it is a stable and reliable way of perceiving and responding to the world, but also because it is *good*.”<sup>380</sup> It could be a deception if a person does something evil excellently and calls that a virtue. For an action to be a virtue, it must be good and geared towards holy living. This calls for ethical consideration of human action, but Christianity in itself is not all about the rationality of an individual; it is also in many ways that which exhorts the Christian as a follower of Jesus to seek to also embody the moral and intellectual virtues of Jesus Christ, our lord.<sup>381</sup>

The question some may have in mind is whether theology has anything to do with the social injustices happening in many societies today. The answer to this question comes with a thought of whether we, as theologians, often allow our study of God to affect our day-to-day life. If it does not, then we are studying theology in a vacuum, and it will not be useful in any way towards combating social injustice. Goumundsdottir supports this argument by appealing to that.

I think it is time that theologians, as well as the Church at large, speak up and speak to the social injustice we are faced with because of the economic collapse in Iceland in autumn 2008. If we think theology (i.e., the discourse about God) does not happen in a vacuum, if we think it is affected by, and

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<sup>380</sup> DeYoung, In other thoughts concerning happening in human life Kushner would explain that “sometimes the impulse to identify cause and effect leads to less desirable results. A farmer’s cow gets sick and dies the day after the farmer has had an argument with a neighbour woman. He jumps to the conclusion that the neighbour is a witch who has put a hex on his farm, testifies against her, and would have her hung for witchcraft. Sometimes the efforts to identify the cause of what has happened can be just plain silly. It has been said that superstitions arise at the intersection of maximum concern and minimum control. We care very much about something—money, love, pregnancy—and if we can’t get the result we want by ordinary means, we will resort to all sorts of irrational measures.” See also Harold S. Kushner, *The book of Job: When bad things happen to a good person*, Schocken Books, Random House, Inc., New York, 2012.

<sup>381</sup> Austin and Geivett, ‘Being Good’.

is also affecting its context, then theology must have a part to play in the political discourse.”<sup>382</sup>

Christian theologians should not only consider whether or not to engage with the wider society but also actively influence it, as the decadence in society calls for an active response. Goumundsdottir presented the above to address the abuses of power practised by a select group of investors. An example of the exploitation of power that took place is the privatization of the Icelandic banks, together with major businesses and institutions owned by the state. This mostly happens when many in the theological settings think of society as divided into a sacred and secular society, that the secular society cannot be influenced positively by the gospel because of the injustice it holds dear. The proposition is that each segment of society can only influence itself. However, for an African-like society, it is somewhat impossible for any group to live as a separate entity since Africans were built within a worldview of social communism. The Goumundsdottir position, therefore, can mainly apply strongly to Iceland's societal setting, where individualism is the norm. Nevertheless, to keep contextualization aside,<sup>383</sup> Christianity in Nigeria, as an African country, is or has gradually become an antagonist to the

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<sup>382</sup> Arnfríður Guðmundsdóttir, 'Aiming for a Just Society: A Theological and Constitutional Response', *Political Theology* 14, no. 2 (April 2013): 188–200, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rlh&AN=87773736&site=ehost-live>.

<sup>383</sup> Donald McCloskey, 'Bourgeois Virtue', *American Scholar* 63, no. 2 (Spring 1994): 177, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rlh&AN=9403287752&site=ehost-live>. McCloskey gave an example that if a roofer wants to do injustice it would only be on the payment of his work not on the roofing itself, because for one bad roof he makes his career has ended there. One can never be corrupt when he/she knows that will jeopardize his career and even ruin his future earnings.

political society, mainly because of how corrupt the society has become.<sup>384,385</sup>

Because a responsibility given to an individual is wrongly done or administered, it does not completely make the facts surrounding that action false. Also, if money, that is good in itself, is used to achieve a bad purpose does not mean that the goodness in the money is deceptive. Revering also gave a similar analogy, noting thus "...the fact that the Bible has been used as a legitimation for slavery, and for a geocentric cosmology, doesn't mean that the Bible has ceased to be the Word of God."<sup>386</sup> He feels that the just war theory is good, but if it is

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<sup>384</sup> See Kate Meagher, 'Hijacking Civil Society: The inside Story of the Bakassi Boys Vigilante Group of South-Eastern Nigeria', *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 45, no. 1 (1 March 2007): 89–115, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4486721>. This is a position that the researcher is not proud to speak or write of, because morality and good virtues cannot thrive in such an environment. People in some parts of the country get surprised at a rejection of bribery by a person; one can even become a laughing object or is seen as foolish in some cases. See also Ayodeji Olukoju, "Never Expect Power Always": Electricity Consumers' Response to Monopoly, Corruption and Inefficient Services in Nigeria', *African Affairs* 103, no. 410 (1 January 2004): 51–71, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3518420>. The People of Nigeria including Christians are often required to get used to the trend of things. But as a called people of God who are transformed by Christ' death is to set a different by opening new form of life for the socio-political society of Nigeria. Another relevant text is Harvey Glickman, "The Nigerian "419" Advance Fee Scams: Prank or Peril?", *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne Des Études Africaines* 39, no. 3 (1 January 2005): 460–89, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25067495>.

<sup>385</sup> Bello and Jamilu introduced that "...kidnapping has been taking place in Nigeria due to the activities of insurgent groups in the Niger Delta region, but it increased with the emergence of "Boko Haram" terrorism in the North-eastern Nigeria; corruption is not strongly related to kidnapping, but they have indirect connection whereby youth political thugs served corrupt political leaders and turned out to become kidnapers, sometimes for ransom from political opponents; poverty is correlated with kidnapping in Nigeria..." See Ibrahim, Bello, and Jamilu Ibrahim Mukhtar. "An analysis of the causes and consequences of kidnapping in Nigeria." *African Research Review* 11, no. 4 (2017): 134–143. See also Godspower, Okee Oyindenyifa, and Simeon Abel Igah. "The Study of the Remote Causes of Restiveness in the Niger Delta Area of Southern Nigeria." (2022).

<sup>386</sup> Alan Revering, 'The Injustice of Some Attacks: A Response to Stephen Strehle', *Political Theology* 5, no. 3 (July 2004): 350–60,

manipulated into something negative does not entirely make the theory absolute. Morality in the Christian and even the non-Christian is a treasured virtue which is required of all to uphold, but if it does not happen doesn't mean that there are no reliable morals still existing in the modern society. Modern society only needs to be more focused on the quest to maintain a sound perspective towards the question of what moral decision is helpful for the development of good virtues in contemporary society. Tankebe, in suggesting a more practical initiative in the modern African society, exposes that "Accounts of African vigilante self-help also illustrate the importance of police corruption as an explanatory factor. In most cases, corruption means police neglect of their duties, with, sometimes, law enforcement agencies colluding with criminal elements for personal gain."<sup>387</sup> For a group of individuals to decide on self-help, it means that the help that is expected is either not sufficient or is not even there at all. If the law enforcement agencies become criminal elements (corrupt) themselves, then society must resort to self-help. Though some of these alternatives don't really work most of the time, as with the example of the Bakassi boys in south-eastern Nigeria and even popular Vigilante groups in most parts of Nigeria today. He further added by concluding that "Addressing the vigilante problem requires implementation of democratic policing mechanisms intending to ensure that policing not only is responsive to public safety needs, but also adheres to democratic principles of respect for the dignity and civil liberties

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<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rlh&AN=13616606&site=ehost-live>. This was said when he was discussing on the legitimacy of the question that, Does the 'just war' tradition provide an appropriate moral language for describing this situation—or is the language of morality simply out of place altogether with regard to war?

<sup>387</sup> Justice Tankebe, 'Self-Help, Policing, and Procedural Justice: Ghanaian Vigilantism and the Rule of Law', *Law & Society Review* 43, no. 2 (1 June 2009): 245–70, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29734190>. His position here is that people go out of their way to protect themselves because the government task force responsible for the protection of lives and properties are no longer reliable. Hence, people device means of survival in the name of 'vigilante', which at some points often breaks the governmental law because of aggression from youths Vigilantes.

of citizens to build public trust in the police.”<sup>388</sup> Now, the implementation of law in society also requires a sound moral foundation that will be a virtue that builds and not destroys society. Laws are implemented through practical character, not from mental imaginations, because they deal with people’s lives in society, whether Christian or non-Christian. As contemporary Christians, our responses to the physical environment either positively or negatively speak of who Christians are as a moral people, because a particular kind of responsive character can only be seen as a virtue when it is good or aims for a good life and achieves it. The following section focuses specifically on a particular character that would show the true virtue of Christian life (Paying ransom to kidnappers).

#### JUSTIFICATION OF PAYING RANSOM TO KIDNAPPERS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

If one looks closely at the security situation in Nigeria and the northern parts in particular,<sup>389</sup> violence has become part of the day-to-day life of people. Now, as seen in the previous section, an act can only be seen as a virtue when it is done for the good of society. There are several contemporary debates about whether paying ransom to kidnappers for the safety of a loved one who is a hostage is justifiable. But before this study goes to that length, the question is, what is kidnapping itself? This is a process that consists of precisely two stages: the first

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<sup>388</sup> Tankebe. As he will quote Young on the state of a police force which is “a reflection of the way of life, standard of probity, as well as a measure of political responsibility of the community”. See Young, A. *A Report on the Gold Coast Police*. Accra: Government of Ghana. 1951. 1.

<sup>389</sup> The Ecumenical Patriarchate, ‘Statement Condemning Religious Violence in Northern Africa’, *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 59, no. 1–4 (Spring-Winter 2014): 380–81, <https://login.eaccess.library.moore.edu.au/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rlh&AN=103675478&site=ehost-live&scope=site>. They viewed that In Northern Africa, both believers of Islam and Christianity are obliged to promote a God of love and compassion. And the political authorities are responsible for protecting their citizens, especially the more vulnerable members of their societies. Such acts are unacceptable from the perspective of religion and morality, as well as by standards of international human rights.”

stage is referred to as the logistical stage, where kidnappers secure a hostage in an undisclosed location. When the first stage is successful, then they go to the second stage, which is that of negotiation, where the kidnappers announce the custody of the victim and stage a negotiable price to be paid for the release of the hostage.<sup>390</sup> Sometimes the kidnappers can be violent to the victim, and sometimes they are focused only on the price. Since it is now a lucrative business for many in the northern parts of Nigeria, the kidnappers would count the cost of the two stages to decide what the ransom would be. Some kidnappers only go for either the first stage (Capturing and securing multiple hostages) or only the second stage (Negotiation). This could all be done within the same city or in the forest, operated from any secure location suitable for carrying out such operations as decided by the kidnappers. Because this is successful does not make the whole action right. This research is not focusing on kidnapping and hostage taking, but rather on the response of the kidnapped victims' families, which would either be just or unjust. For Christians living in a violent world, a holistic response that will show the authority of God through the Holy Spirit over human life is essential.<sup>391</sup> It can be a virtue of human ability to wait and trust in God to save

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<sup>390</sup> KHUSRAV GAIBULLOEV and TODD SANDLER, 'Hostage Taking: Determinants of Terrorist Logistical and Negotiation Success', *Journal of Peace Research* 46, no. 6 (1 November 2009): 739–56, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25654494>. Other relevant sources are Yusuf Kamaluddeen Ibrahim and Abdullahi Ayoade Ahmad, 'The Causes of Kidnapping and its Implications on Nigeria', (*Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal (LASSIJ)*, Vol. 4, No. 1, January-June 2020), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.47264/lassij.4.1.1>: Ene, Warikiente Robert, 'Kidnapping and The Nigerian Society: A Sociological Insight', (*International Journal of Development and Management Review (INJODEMAR)* Vol. 13 No. 1 June, 2018), 161-172; Daniel Meaders, 'Kidnapping Blacks in Philadelphia: Isaac Hopper's Tales of Oppression', (*The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 80, No. 2 (Spring, 1995), pp. 47-65; Benjamin Okorie, Ajah, Bonaventure N. Nwokeoma, and Okpan, Samuel O, 'Socio-Economic Implication of Kidnapping and Hostage Taking in Southern Nigeria', (*Journal of Law and Judicial System Volume 1, Issue 1, 2018*), 51-59.

<sup>391</sup> See Charles F. Stanley, *How to Let God Solve Your Problems: 12 Keys to a Divine Solution*, Great Commission Media, Published in Nashville, Tennessee, 2008.

his people in his unique way through actions that are suitable for the current circumstance. The research first of all discusses the primeval views on Kidnap responses and then the contemporary Christian responses to this issue.

### **Primeval Views**

Kidnapping and the act of paying ransom have been started since human history was first recorded, and it has been an official way of gaining authority over an individual or a community. Whatever form it takes, either that which is done for slavery, spoils of war, or for business trade is much more common than it is done in the contemporary world. In human history, the taking of the people of Israel by the Babylonians was the highest form of kidnapping that has ever happened, and that led to a total removal of a particular race into captivity. They paid the ransom by their obedience and service to the king of Babylon. Those who disobeyed never lived to tell the story. Wright presented this story extensively, analysing historical engagements as compared to contemporary acts of kidnapping of victims, thus,

What comes through very clearly is that prisoners of war or other captives who came into the hands of governments, armies, brigands, tribes, or opposing camps were carefully inspected and evaluated to determine their utility as bargaining chips, and rapid decisions were taken as to their disposition. Decisions were made quickly because no self-respecting businessperson (kidnapper, slaver, tribal chieftain, governor, etc.) wants to hold onto useless inventory. The result for those victims who were to be ransomed was the same as that of kidnap victims today. They were forced to endure a period of captivity under often dire circumstances during which an amount to be paid for their freedom was negotiated. Once payment had been delivered, if all

other conditions were met and the victim was still alive, he or she would be liberated.<sup>392</sup>

This analysis gives clear insight into how victims might be treated; hence, ransom would be paid as required, since it seems to be the norm for those weak families. Since they can not fight to take away one of their own, they must accept the treaty to save the victim's life. Paying a ransom by either the victim himself or the family in the times of the antiquity is the only choice to survive. More or less, only the brave and the strong don't get to pay any ransom because they will survive the fight and possibly receive the ransom paid by others. Unlike contemporary African and Nigerian societies in particular, targeted kidnappings are rarely mentioned in antiquity, and victims are not known before their kidnapping, only on a few occasions. People across history have had to pay the ransom using whatever means are required because they have little or no liberal choice for their survival.<sup>393</sup>

Stemming from the history of kidnapping and the quest for ransom payment across the years: on the one hand the

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<sup>392</sup> Richard P. Wright, *Kidnap for Ransom: Resolving the Unthinkable*, Taylor & Francis Group, LLC, 6000 Broken Sound Parkway NW, Suite 300, Boca Raton, 2009, 2-4.

<sup>393</sup> In the Old Testament it is presented that *[w]hoever steals a man and sells him, and anyone found in the possession of him, shall be put to death*. Exodus 21:16. In a similar note the Quran presented that *[w]hen you meet the unbelievers in jihad [holy war], chop off their heads. And when you have brought them low, bind your prisoners rigorously. Then set them free or take ransom from them until the war is ended*. Koran 47:4. In fact, people can sale themselves into slavery for particular purposes, either to avoid war or to show allegiance to a ruler. For Christianity kidnapping is highly prohibited and seen as sinful and punishable by death when perpetrators are caught. But Islam have commonly accepted the practice of kidnapping or hostage taking since the very beginning of the religion. The histories of the early Islamic leaders, including the Prophet Mohammed, describe numerous examples of prisoners being taken and ransomed. One of his wives, in fact, was a captive taken in battle who was offered the choice of being ransomed or marrying him. This practice continued for centuries, with some scholars justifying this on the basis that the civilization in which Islam was spread led to no other fair conclusion. See Richard P. Wright, 2009, 5.

contemporary world has seen and is still experiencing a revolution on the quest to improve kidnapping skills to target particular individuals on the other hand divergent views are raised concerning the justification of paying ransom since there are human right laws that are enforced after the abolition of slavery since the late 1900s. The issue still pending is whether the contemporary world will still justify the payment of ransom as done in antiquity. The following discussion presents the contemporary Christian perspectives concerning the justification of ransom payment.

### **A Contemporary Christian (Biblical) perspective**

Many in contemporary society have second thoughts on paying ransom to save kidnapped victims from their abductors. It is mostly because the demands are mostly for money and almost nothing else. Since the payment of ransom tends to be an encouragement for kidnappers to continue with the act, Christians have questioned those who happily pay to save their people as a form of supporting or financing crime in society.<sup>394</sup> Judging from the weakness of the government, especially in Nigeria, to support security operatives to fight kidnapping in the country, which is on the increase, a concrete Christian decision of not paying ransom to save kidnapped victims will still maintain a flexible position. I have two views to be considered for this position:

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<sup>394</sup> The federal government of Nigeria had earlier proposed the criminalization of ransom payment to kidnappers in Nigeria. The premium Times reported on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August on the federal government plan to enforce this act into law. But Security experts and lawyers dismiss the bill as both insensitive and impractical. This is not encouraging the payment either, but it is a move aimed at being flexible in an unforeseen circumstance—knowing that security in Nigeria is not reliable—the victim’s family members can not reject any possible negotiation or payment and allow security operatives to apprehend the perpetrators, because that has never happened. See Nasir Ayitogo, *ANALYSIS: Can criminalisation of ransom payment stop kidnapping in Nigeria?* <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/482167-analysis-can-criminalisation-of-ransom-payment-stop-kidnapping-in-nigeria.html> Accessed 9/10/2021 4:00pm

1. This position supports the idea of paying ransom: The reason is that God created humans as rational beings who are not only able to think critically in difficult situations but also to act wisely from the knowledge given. Because if we look together into the mirror of God's Word to discover the real inner nature of man and we will see our immense value in the eyes of the God who made us. We cannot, in this situation, as Christians conclude on what should or should not be done because God can use us to save others for particular reasons, and or save them his way without any physical effort of ours. As Christians, we should see our ability to pay the ransom to save a victim of kidnap for ransom as a divine favor from God to save his people, not our strength. This knowledge strengthens believers' continuous hope in God to save them by any means. The weakness of this position is that perpetrators do not understand God's sovereignty; hence, they are blind to this fact and only see what they do as lucrative. Our refusal to make efforts to save a person from kidnappers in the current situation in Nigeria, to some extent, increases the risk of exploitation and possible death of the victim.
2. This position goes against the idea of paying ransom: Christians have been encouraged that "*In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have over-come the world.*" (John 16:33) The question is whether our God is not powerful enough to save the victim from the kidnappers as he did with Peter from prison in the early Church (Acts 12:4-11). Prayer and praise are not enough to move God into action, but to help the family trust and wait on him to glorify Himself in the life of the victim. God lets everything happen, either good or bad, for a particular reason. This is aimed at unveiling the true virtue of complete trust in God with no human effort attached. (cf. 2 Cor. 1:3-7) We can not, because

of worry, add a single day in our own or other people's lives (see Matt. 6:27), and also our efforts can expose our true doubts to our supreme God, who is the Lord of the Host. We do not have faith in him to save our family members, which is why we can limit human effort as a blind comparison to that of men. Whether or not we think God has no business with human affairs, we will trust Him to be continually God in our lives.

It is not so easy for a Christian to decide between these two positions concerning our human efforts to save ourselves and God's action to save us. The kidnappers can use people's weakness (the fear of death) to exploit them. Christians can decide to yield to exploitation or maintain their hopes in Christ's victory over sin. Whatever position a Christian takes in Nigeria today, God is still at work because people will always need God's redemption either from supernatural forces or from the self.

## **CONCLUSION**

The overview of Aristotle's work has given this study a new insight towards an improvement of some basic Christian ethical thoughts for human actions in society. That all human actions must be accounted for (Matt. 8:36ff: cf. Micah 3:8), because they are done within the continuous mind of the self. Because they are physical and practical, one has the right to judge their being right or wrong before wisdom is applied for moral action to take place. Stemming from this early historical beginning, the research moves that judge from the density of kidnappings for ransom in Nigeria and the northern part to be precise, payment of ransom through an impossible and unstoppable problem in the country, even with the attempt to pass a law against it, the actions people take whether they are willing or not as a response is one's responsibility. If one pays ransom to kidnappers, it is and should be seen as an intentional action to save the life of a victim, either a family member or a relative. Since the citizens of Nigeria can no longer rely on the

government to secure the society from Kidnappers, Nigeria is now left in a dilemma, as seen in the current study.<sup>395</sup> For Christians, the dilemma has been solved, and a choice is obvious; there is a victory that has been won over every kind of evil. Christ is the victor over every threat of the enemies of every human society. Christ is the first choice for every Christian in Nigeria; any other alternative must be secondary since Christ is the lord over all dilemmas, since he is sovereign over all creation. The challenge is how much trust Christians seldom have in God to save their loved ones from kidnappers. He has promised to be the redeemer. Christians in Nigeria should not see paying ransom to kidnappers as the only alternative, but in Christ, who is the saviour of his people who are created in his image, regardless of their physical actions towards the problem.

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<sup>395</sup> See Eke Chijioke Chinwokwu, Christopher Eraye Michael, Militancy and violence as a catalyst to kidnapping in Nigeria, (*International Journal of Police Science & Management*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 2019), 17–35.

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