LEADERS AND FOLLOWE

- The Nigerian Experience

The Problem of Leadership in a Troubled Nation

one other than Professor Chinua Achebe,the Nobel Prize Laureate. Was he also right or simply callous? In his booklet published in 1983 **"The Trouble with Nigeria"** he wrote:

> Nigeria is not a great country. It is one of the most disorderly nations in the world. It is one of the most corrupt, insensitive, inefficient places under the sun. It is one of the most expensive countries and one of those that give least value for money. It is dirty, callous, noisy, ostentatious, dishonest and vulgar. In short, it is among the most unpleasant places on earth (P. 9 – 10).

What a hell! That was in 1983! And the situation does not seem to have changed for the better. Rather has it today deteriorated about a hundredfold! At least up to the late nineties Nigeria was not yet a nation associated with **International terrorism, suicide bombing, Al Khaida, Talibanism, kidnapping, high- jacking of airplanes, high sea piracy and Islamic Boko Haramism.** Things have changed a lot and for worse that many Nigerians are still sceptical about a brighter future for young generation of the nation. They believe there must be a radical change in leadership if things would get better.

Absence of Everything Good

I often thought it is madness for any right thinking person to wish to live long in Nigeria for the purpose of enjoying life and perhaps the fruits of labour! I never thought it possible for any sincere Nigerian to think that he or she is enjoying life because honestly speaking there is nothing to enjoy.

Mid August 2002 I was in United States on vacation. One woman wanted to know if I came from Nigeria. I told her I did. That was precisely the time the Amina Lawal and Beauty pageantry drama was capturing the attention of the international community. Amina Lawal, a single mother had been sentenced to death by stoning for having a child out of wedlock despite an international outcry. An Islamic court in the northern town of Funtua had rejected her appeal against the stoning sentence, handed down for having sex outside of marriage. Governments and human rights organisations around the world had urged Obasanjo's administration to intercede in Lawal's case and had warned that Nigeria would face international outrage if the sentence was applied.

Nigeria is deeply divided about the application of Islamic law, or Shariah, which calls for cutting off a hand to punish theft and death for adultery. Decisions by a dozen states in Nigeria's mainly Muslim north to adopt the strict Islamic code since 1999 sparked off clashes with the region's Christian minority and thousands of people have been killed killed.

My questioner looked at me with pity and remarked. "It must be awful living there (Nigeria)". Shocked, I concurred. But before she left me, she further enquired, "Will you return

to that place?" I said I would, but went away sad, considering the reality of what a woman who had not been to Nigeria thought. Surely she had heard a lot.

In December 2011, again in United States, some nine or ten years later, precisely on the Christmas day, I was exchanging greetings with some Catholics after mass. Earlier I had introduced myself as a Nigeria. One man asked me if I had heard what happened in a Church in Nigeria, how an Islamic sect called Boko Haram massacred many people in a suicide bomb blast. I answered, no. He added: "We thank God you were not around that church or city." But he enquired: "Will you return to Nigeria?" I grinned and went away sad.

Most Nigerians are concerned that the international attention to Nigerian problems surely scare foreign investors and visitors to Nigeria and the cumulative effect of all these things is that they create a very bad image for this country.

Nigerians are put to shame everyday in the lands of their exile. Many young immigrants are subjected to all sorts of harassment by police and security officials. Not a few had died in scuffle with police as these unwanted guests resist arrest or deportation.

"Achtung! Ein Nigerianer". [Attention! alert! A Nigerian is around!] is a usual distress alarm raised by security or customs officials at many international airports, (not only German), when they catch sight of a Nigerian passport. Meticulously Nigerians are searched at all ports – land, air and sea as they visit other parts of the world. It was a busy rush hour at the Frankfurt international airport that day. I was one of the hundreds of passengers of a Lufthansa carrier that landed from Nigeria. As I learnt later it was the custom that security officials are always alerted when any plane from Nigeria landed at the airport. Security officials with police dogs and specials customs officials take their positions at various exit spots to search the unwelcome Nigerian visitors. But not all passengers are Nigerians. Those carrying Nigerian passports are usually special targets.

So when I approached the customs gate, the cry was heard and I understood and spoke German. The officials did not know! Without raising his head to catch a glimpse of his latest victim, the chief custom's officer mutters a few sentences to his comrade as the examined my passport from cover to cover and back again: **"Not a bag guy….looks like a professor…he has travelled a lot….visited many countries of the world…a lot of visas and attestations…he may go.**

As I listened to their conversation, I was getting ready to challenge them if they had uttered any nasty remarks about me and my country. I would confront them and create a scene there at the airport, and let them prove I was a 'verbrecher', a 'criminal! It would be an opportunity to tell them to stop those prejudices and aspersions on Nigeria and innocent Nigerians. They would have then realised their 'dummheit' 'stupidity and blockheadedness' in believing they alone know and speak their native language, German!

Most Nigerian travellers are usually suspects of all imaginable crimes, ranging from fraudulent activities (including drug pushing) to terrorist acts. They are searched, men, women and children for illegal and dangerous drugs, bombs and money. Many Nigerian business men and women, together with politicians said to be regular money launderers. Not a few have actually been convicted of money laundering and jailed in London and United States. They transfer their illegal earned cash overseas and lodge them in foreign banks. The **EFCC**, the Nigerian Federal Government watchdog confirms most of the money laundering and associated illegal huge cash transactions levelled against Nigerians, home and overseas. Take a look at a usual report Nigerians are used to:

"Permanent Secretary Caught with N2bn Cash • Cabal moves N18bn from account, withdraws N300m daily" [Abuja, Monday, March 19, 2012]

A serving federal permanent secretary (names withheld) has been arrested over a N18 billion scam uncovered in the police pension scheme with N2 billion cash found in his residence. The matter has been handed over for prosecution to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC). The permanent secretary was a director in a federal ministry from where he was seconded to one of the newly-created ministries.

Two other accomplices, who are also a serving director (names withheld) in two federal ministries but who had earlier worked with the Police Pension Fund office, have also been arrested and handed over to the EFCC and ICPC for more investigation. EFCC's spokesman, Wilson Uwujaren, confirmed the report, saying that apart from the permanent secretary, there are four other top civil servants involved.

Sources in the Pension Reform Task Team (PRTT) told Daily Sun that investigation showed that "there is a syndicate which operates in the ministry. A cheque of N300 million was used to clear money from an account which is being kept for that sole purpose.

"The permanent secretary and his accomplices have been handed over to the EFCC and ICPC but investigations are still ongoing. On conclusion, we expect ICPC and EFCC to take the matter to court..."

Many Nigerian travellers are also said to engage in human trafficking. They have to produce **DNA** proofs that the young people they are travelling with are really family members or their children. There is no doubt these necessary and unnecessary searches conducted on Nigerians all over the world create nasty public scenes anywhere. Such may be enough to feel wary carrying a Nigerian passport or documents identifying your country of origin.

It happened again. This time, not at a German airport, but in **Moscow, Soviet Union**. A Nigerian citizen, carrying a Nigerian passport was delayed at the Russian airport customs. A student then in England, at university of London's Institute of education, a study trip to Moscow

was organized by the university authorities. We were two Nigerians in the group and had our visa and other documents for the journey, as we took the Aeroflot flight to Moscow.

At the customs every member of our group including my Nigerian brother passed all the screening tests and got over the gate ready to board the waiting bus that would take us to our hotel. The customs officials examined my passport from cover to cover and would not let me go. "What had gone wrong", everyone seemed to be asking. Our professor approached them to find out. They tried to explain to him.

At last I was called into a smaller room and asked to produce every other available document in my possession that would show I was the owner of the passport. Through a Russian interpreter, I explained I was the owner of the passport and argued I had ravelled with that same document to many countries and no one had ever questioned the ownership.

In fact it was after they had examined all the other documents I produced, library identity card, students' union ID, ordination certificate and meal tickets that I was allowed entry into the city. What was wrong with my passport? Soviet Union and Nigeria were great friends then. Had Russia also blacklisted Nigeria as a terrorist country? Many things worried me.

No. I was not a suspect. They found something wrong with my passport. My passport, they said had no government seal stamped on my passport photograph! They were right. And for the many years I had toured the world, it was only the **Russians** who detected a flaw in my passport. "The Russian secret police **KGB** was smarter than the America **FBI** or Israeli **MOSSAD"**, I thought. But thanks to God I enjoyed the study trip to Moscow and was not deported to my fatherland!

As a result of the notorious activities of truly a few unscrupulous Nigerians, the tendency to lump innocent Nigerian citizens together with criminals has become common place in most countries of Europe, Asia and America. It has even been proved that often crimes committed by some other Africans are recorded and inserted into the Nigerian "folder". When caught other black African youths claim to have Nigerian nationality. They don't like to soil the good name of their dear countries, where such criminal acts receive heavy jail sentences.

Not in Nigeria! Criminals rarely receive heavy jail sentences, which in other countries serve as deterrents. No. In Nigeria convicted criminals, money launderers and terrorists often go free after judgements for very ridiculous reasons. They escape from prison custody or a prison guard just released the 'suspect' after receiving a bribe from family and friends. It happens in Nigeria. How many convicted politicians and business men by **EFCC** had served even a one-day jail sentence? Don't arrested and convicted **Boko Haram** terrorists that bomb Churches and government buildings in Nigeria usually escape from custody the next day? Strange things happen in the country.

It is awful living there.

Most Nigerians who abandon their fatherland in search of greener pastures know the hard truth. They pack bag and baggage as they escape with no intention of returning in any near future. Those who have settled down in Europe and America after many years of struggle engage in frantic efforts to bring their families and loved ones over to the safer areas of the world. Nigeria is not safe, they inadvertently tell the outside world and investors. "Flee for your dear life before the Armageddon!"

It is worse for the Igbo of Nigeria. Known culturally for their attachment to land, Ndi Igbo don't easily exchange land for anything. It is a calamity not to possess a piece of land where you will be buried. That was 20 years ago or more. Things have changed. For the younger generation, it is worthless keeping any thing of value including land - at home.

"Ama gi chie." "Let your pathway close." In Igbo culture, this is a curse, the worst one can wish an Igbo man. One's pathway, inheritance, genealogy, the land symbolising life and prosperity, is his greatest and most cherished treasure. One who abandons or loses that symbol of life is worse than a dead man.

Today, most Igbo sons and daughters in Diaspora seem to accept that curse. They are ready to negotiate their inheritance in the village for a safe passage to anywhere, except Nigeria. What a tragedy! Most Nigerians who live in the United States struggle to settle down in that part of the world. The surest way to that dream is the Green Card. Once that is secured, comes the citizenship. Then the way is open to bring over the entire family and closest relations. It does not matter how long it takes, the number of trips these family members troop to the American embassy, the number of disappointments and insults, the cost of **DNA** and other tests.

Once the entire family and other relations have settled down in the United States or in any other Western country, it is celebration and of course 'Good Bye!' to that bloody fatherland. In other words it is 'Good Bye' to all possessions, including land and inheritance in the village! **"Ama ha echiela."** The deal is sealed. All rights to earthly possession and what they symbolise in the once-cherished traditional system have been abandoned.

Once I was having an English language class with my Class six High School students. We were rehearsing some "Figures of Speech", including "Similes" (comparison of things, which are alike in some respects.) It was an exciting exercise. **"As fat as a pig. As hungry as a wolf. As old as Methuselah…"** Some of the students didn't know who Methuselah was. But I was able to read out the story of this mythical figure from Genesis 5:27. Methuselah was the man said to have lived 969 years – thus a type of longevity.

I questioned the students whether any of them would like to live as long as Methuselah. All hands were up! Some said they would like to live more than 1000 years! It was so amusing as well as frustrating. I could not muster the courage to ask where, in which country they would like to enjoy their old age. These young Nigerians could not understand my embarrassment at

their childish crave to live as along as Methuselah in a land of chaos, restlessness and confusion. I pitied them. Or rather they pitied me. They were crazy. Perhaps I was really the crazy one!

Nigerians wishing to live long and 'enjoy' life in their fatherland may be better informed by the lamentation of the frustrated ancient Israelites whose future was so gloomy as a result of God's anger against the people's wayward life, that they had to raise this outcry:

> All our days pass under your wrath, our lives are over like a sigh. The span of our life is seventy years – eighty for those who are strong – but their whole extent is anxiety and trouble, they are over in a moment and we are gone [Pss 90.9ff]

Perhaps any right thinking Nigerians would be in the position to appreciate the frustration of the exiled Israelites who lamented over the shortness of their life! Abandoned by their God, there was no end to the lamentation of these wretched people. Perhaps their lost glory could be restored if they could learn some wisdom:

> Lord we have become the least of all nations. We are put to shame today throughout the world, because of our sins. We have no leader, no prophet, no prince, no burnt offering, no sacrifice, no oblation, no incense, no place where we can make offerings to you and win your favour [Daniel: 3.37].

(Lamentations: 5: 1-22) sums up the present mood of most worried Nigerians: *Yahweh, remember what has happened to us. Consider and see our degradation. Our heritage has passed to strangers; our homes to foreigners. We are orphans. We are fatherless. Our mothers are like widows. We have to buy our own water to drink; our own wood we can only get at a price. The yoke is on our necks; we are persecuted, exhausted, we are allowed no rest. Slaves rule us. There is no one to rescue us from their clutches. The elders have deserted the gateway. The young have given up their music. Joy has vanished from our hearts; our dancing has turned to mourning. The crown has fallen from our hands. Alas that ever we sinned. This is why our hearts are sick. This is why our eyes are dim. Why do you not remember us? Why do you abandon us so long?*

" And God Wept"

Among the Nigerian communities in the Unites States and Europe, a joke went round for sometime. As part of the conclusion of a world economic summit during the 1980s, each head of state paid homage to God and asked Him when their respective countries would be self-sufficient. (And when, Lord?) The Almighty boomed to each of them in turn that it would happen, but not in their lifetime.

Crestfallen and much in tears the delegates returned home. When it came to the turn of Nigerian head of state to ask when his country would be self-sufficient, it was God who wept, replying: "It won't happen in my lifetime." The fact of the matter, as many well meaning Nigerians have made it clear, is that the Nigerian Armed Forces, Police, and other Federal agencies of law enforcement must be reformed. This is sine qua non for the continued peaceful existence of this country. As disaffection looms, it is clear that until we elevate merit as the sole criterion for promotion to high office and distinguishing between opportunity and favouritism, dissatisfaction and resentment will seize the day in Nigeria.

Situations that must be seriously addressed by a new generation of youths in Nigeria are still evident in the present Nigeria that is despised by its sons and daughters, home and in Diaspora. Not only Nigerians flee their fatherland in large numbers today; foreigners, white and black, including the so called investors flee the land. As if scared to death by terrifying pythons Nigerians and their former friends and admirers continue to flee by land, sea and air without a glance behind.

The Exodus did not begin in 2012. No! "Search for greener pastures" started decades ago and main reasons were economic, better opportunities for economic survival. Citizens of many European countries migrated to the United States and still do so today for similar reasons. Such are the aspirations of people all over the world. The struggle for self-fulfilment and upliftment continues till date. But Nigerians have many other reasons to flee the fatherland. Perhaps some may return, together with their children and a new generation of Nigerians. However, not until the broken infrastructures have been repaired or replaced. Many factors that leave large number

of Nigeria in a state of bondage must be dismantled before peace and tranquillity can be restored. These factors include state of insecurity, uncontrollable corruption, yawning gap between the rich and the poor, religious turbulence, state of war and leadership problems which compound already sore situation in the country called Nigeria.

Insecurity – From Drug to Human Trafficking

The illegal trade in goods such as drugs or weapons has been with us in Nigeria for some time. **Cocaine-pushing** started blossoming in the late eighties and gained notoriety with the "Letter Bomb" saga associated with the death of a Newsmagazine editor, called Dele Giwa in the early nineties. Many Nigerian youths liked the trade which often yielded millions of dollars in hard currency. They said a small lump of it, as small as a candy or cough drop can cost hundreds of dollars at a dark street market in a big city.

The drug trade has continued to thrive in Nigeria as Nigerian drug barons hire the excited youths, mostly college and university dropouts, who serve as apprentices thus carrying the trade to remotest parts of the universe. About 90% of Nigerian youths serving various prison sentences overseas are convicted offenders in drug trade.

The drug trade has for long gone hand in hand with another illegal business trade referred to as **"419"** in Nigeria. It is a chain of highly organized and sophisticated business meant to deceive, cheat and lure unsuspecting people, companies and business concerns to fraudulent business transactions. Only greedy partners, those who want instant wealth get trapped. Before their eyes open, they had lost hundreds and millions of dollars

The term **Four-One-Nine [419]** is used every day to identify the nation, Nigeria, with all sorts of evil as well as corruption. A **419e**r is known to be **a thief, a criminal, a cheater, a con man.** In a wider connotation he can be identified with so many detestable atrocities. He is no doubt a member of a **devilish cult.** He is a **killer, armed robber**. He may be **a kidnapper**. As his fame grows he may end up founding more sinister gangs that can accomplish his goals as he retires to the background. In a large scale, his notorious gangs can kidnap high profile citizens and rob banks. There are so many evils that a **419er** can do within and outside Nigeria.

Many Nigerian 419ers are known to be drug cartels and barons. Some are specialists in currency and the mint industry. They deal in foreign and local currencies, genuine and counterfeit money. That's why they 'dash' out money in cartons, millions and in large denominations. As many people, within and outside Nigeria learn their lessons of '419', the business continues to attract less number of youths and partners. But Nigerians must find other routes to make fast money. They have found one in the kidnapping business.

The State of insecurity has truly assumed an agonizing proportion as **kidnapping** has become a common business in Nigeria. The verb 'kidnap' (abduct, take hostage, snatch, capture), formerly associated with political agitations), has become a regular feature of life in Nigeria of

today. It has become a lucrative business. It is easy. It is fast and yields incredible amounts of money within days, if not hours. It has continued to create young affluent millionaires if not billionaires! The traders in this human commodity have usually little to suffer before they grab millions of naira or dollar or even euro. Not only that they cart away, without molestation cartons of money; they often murder their victims in cold blood!

The **commodities for sale** are easy to come by. These include men and women, old and young, adults and children, Accessories and terms for quick negotiations include threat to kill hostages if challenged by security forces or if ransom demanded was not quickly released in time. And it works for abductors. Soon any organized chase for criminals is forgotten or abandoned. Jubilation and thanksgiving celebrations follow. The kidnapped dad, mom, brother, sister, child has been released 'unharmed!' The **tool(s)** used for the operation may not be expensive; a gun and a bullet. A **cellular phone** does the rest of the job.

The terrifying security situation in Nigeria has further helped to drive most of our brains abroad and into exile. You go to British High Commission or the American Embassy in Lagos and behold the people seeking visas to check out. About 95% again are from the South. Today, the staggering number of Nigerian professors in American universities, highly qualified medical doctors, engineers and specialists serving in their medical institutions calls for high-powered investigations into what has gone wrong with us at home? Does that shock anyone? Should there be any cause for alarm?

Search for Greener Pastures

A Nigerian Newsmagazine, in a title: **"Nigeria: A New Paradigm"** once stated as well the obvious when as back as 1998 it wrote "We have, at the national level become nothing but a hodgepodge of glorified ethnic nations - forever searching for identity within our own country, and every able-bodied citizen escaping our shores to become janitors and security guards in Europe and America." **Dr. Ibiyinka O. Solarin, Political Science Professor, Texas, USA, in article "Nigeria and the hour of decision: The bell tolls"** said the same in other words: "The present is pregnant with meaning for the future. The present thickly cloudy and uncertain terrain has infinitely positive possibilities if the opportunity is firmly grasped. Nigeria can begin again, on the basis of equity and justice, because there will never be peace without these two attributes in this land. If this African experiment in fashioning a modern powerful nation-state fails, it will constitute a colossal loss to people of African decent everywhere."

Mma Agbagha reflects on the death of Semira Adamu - a 20-year-old Nigerian girl who died under tragic circumstances in Belgium. Semira Adamu, like 2 or 3 other Nigerians died of suffocation in the hands of the Belgian security officers who were bent on bundling the lady back

to Nigeria against her will. The tragedy throws light to the fate of Nigerians in Diaspora - in search of the greener pastures. **(Re- Post Express October 15th 1998.)**

No doubt, the story of Miss Adamu is the story of most Nigerian youths - the story of a young woman who fled home in search of greener pastures. She was born in Nigeria during what was generally referred to as the turbulent years. She was also raised in a society that no longer cared about its own. Or how else could one come to terms with the dilemma that eventually forced her to flee Nigeria?

Like every Nigerian fugitive, Adamu had to flee her fatherland to Belgium, where she hoped to find asylum and regular residence. But she was mistaken. Unfortunately, the picture of the Europe she had in her head did not square up with the reality on the ground. Instead of a sympathetic reception in Brussels she found unusually hostile and insensitive hosts. The laws she ran into were rigid and inflexible. All over the world, tough immigration laws and their stringent enforcement have combined to thwart the hope of foreign immigrants. Where the illegal immigrants' will to resist deportation is matched by immigration authorities' resolve to enforce the law, tragedy had been inevitable. As long as the conditions at home, in Nigeria remain hostile to citizens, Nigerians will continue to defy odd to seek what they erroneously see as greener pastures abroad.

The gruesome and tragic stories of many unfortunate Nigerians in Europe, America and Asia should prove a turning point in the revolution to make helpless immigrants see Nigeria for what she should really be: a place to come home to when the search in foreign lands gets awry. After all, that is exactly what has brought a flood of exiles back to the country.

Millions of well-educated Nigerians who once formed an ambitious middle class at home and have fled the country in total frustration continue to search for identity elsewhere. Regrettably ethnic divisions, poverty and mass ignorance have made it virtually impossible for an **honest, intelligent and well-meaning leadership** to emerge. While one may be saddened by the past and recent events in Nigeria, it is not out of place truly to share the belief of most Nigerians that this is the best opportunity we have ever had to shed some of the burdens that have held us back since independence. There are many Nigerians who believe that no matters the present odds, in fact the road to recovery may after all not be far. Unfortunately conditions at home have continued to deteriorate. The people have every reason to weep.

"HARD TIMES" (IHE ISI IKE) SYNDROME IN NIGERIA

One of the notable aftermaths of leadership failure and economic disasters in Nigeria is the syndrome, which has become a permanent feature of the miserable situation most Nigerian masses find themselves. One man's gain becomes a misfortune for the masses, signs of economic-political instability. While privileged Nigerians, mostly politicians whose bread had been buttered by the gods that help them win elections store the excess wealth they grab through

fraudulent means in banks overseas many Nigerians suffer and die in poverty. But before they store the excess wealth anywhere those politicians must first of all re-fill their empty storehouses. Surely a lot of money has been borrowed. The donors must be re-paid in cash and kind, partly through ministerial appointments and contract awards. The new ministers, advisers and contractors are free to collect back cash from government treasury anyway they choose. No one dares question them or ask for any account of jobs executed.

Having initiated measures for settling the donors, some amount (part of the budgets) must be used in settling the thugs and hoodlums hired to help the emerging politicians win the election through all sorts of crooked means. It would be dangerous if thugs were not settled in time and fully!

The next stage is the re-filling of purses that had been emptied during electioneering campaigns, as politician hopefuls doled out lots of money to everyone whose assistance was needed to grab the much-coveted political post- Chairmanship of Local Government, First Citizen of the State, and of course the Presidency.

Come what may, under no circumstances would the political godfathers be forgotten. They too must be settled. This is where the entire state or local government feels the greatest and most devastating economic pressures. Settlement of a godfather or godfathers, who must have masterminded the emergence of the man now in power, depending on negotiations could become a monthly burden and can consume a large chunk of the government treasury. No doubt the above tasks and many more must need about two, three years or even a whole tenure of office to accomplish before any meaningful program or project could come up in the agenda, before anyone can think about the people to whom it is said power belongs!

It may not be out of place if lawmakers of the nation took care of their special needs before thinking about the people that voted them into office. They are free to fix their salaries, allowances and other fringe benefits as they wish. They can squander millions of naira in furnishing their private apartments and offices, buy new cars and take trips overseas as they wish. The business of law -making is a part-time affair for them.

Who is to blame for the mess? Do the Scriptures not tell us that what one sows, one reaps. Is it not true that any business or enterprise, which the tortoise directs as chairman can survive only by tricks and fraud? Igbo people also make it clear that when a fraudster tries to bury himself, one hand will always show up. After each change of government in Nigeria, military or civilian, times continue to harden. Nothing gets ‘soft’. The political, social, economic situations worsen, as the masses emerge from one hard and biting experience to the other. The evils the corrupt leaders perpetrate are soon uncovered. But who punishes them? In spite of wide publicity given to their criminal acts, no one, absolutely no one cares to desist from evil conduct. None of the exposed perpetrators ever resigns his or her post in shame and apologize to the offended humanity. What a tragedy !

Ask any suffering Nigerian why he does not look happy in his fatherland. The answer is a 'refrain' that tells the rest of the story and points to where the nation is heading to: There is absolutely no sign of hope that things will ever get better in any foreseeable future. The way is long. The troubles will multiply. The suffering is indefinite. The sickness is incurable and which means the patient will die after all. It is a matter of time. "IHE ISI IKE" is an Igbo language expression which describes vividly the exact picture of the situation in which most frustrated Nigerians find themselves. It tells the story of an oppressed people whose leaders have abandoned in the wilderness after promising to lead them into a land flowing with milk and honey, the giant of Africa as well as the most populous and oil rich nation in Africa, if not in the whole planet.

- **Man, why are you selling your land and property?** *It is a result of the hard times we are experiencing in Nigeria.* ***"Ihe Isi Ike."*** *I want my son to escape to overseas. His flight to an unknown destination may bring hope to the family*.
- **Boy, why have you dropped out of school? "Ihe Isi Ike".** *My parents cannot afford my school fees. They have asked me to stop school and to fend for myself. This is why I am pushing the barrow, selling pure water and chewing sticks.*
- **Girl, why were you not in school for a month? "Ihe Isi Ike**". *I have to sell re-chargeable cards, raise a phone-call kiosk to raise my school fees. Things are hard for my parents and my brother who has been training me in school is out of job. He is not doing anything*! Ihe Isi Ike!
- **Papa Emeka, why has your store remained closed for quite sometime now? "Ihe Isi Ike".** *It is not that I purposely shut it down. It is empty. I have no money to buy anything for sale.*
- **Uncle, why have you not completed that building you started many years ago? "Ihe Isi Ike***". I can't continue. Prices of cement, zinc, rods, wood have gone up. It is impossible to get the house finished. I am even thinking of selling some of the unused blocks and rods to keep my children alive.*
- **Man, why are you looking like a ghost? Are you sick? Have you gone for a check-up?** *No I am not sick.* It is **"Ihe Isi Ike".** *It is frustration. I don't sleep in the night. There are a lot of things worrying me. My problems are too many to mention." Check-up or no check-up, the diagnosis is nothing but frustration, pains, agony, and hopelessness. Since I was retired about 15 years ago, I have not received any pension or gratuity*.

- **Papa, you look too old; a lot of gray hair. You have almost gone bald**. I am sure you are not yet 50? *You are right. People think I am above 80*. **"Ihe Isi Ike."**
- **Young man, are you not married yet? You must be over 40 now?** *O, yes. How can I marry? Who will feed me and my children? I still depend on my grandmother for food and pocket money.* **"Ihe Isi Ike".** *I am looking for somebody who can help me with money to travel out of this country. I will be glad to travel to anywhere, even to Chad, Gabon, Cape Verde Island , Western Sahara region or Niger Republic. I will be ready to wash plates for them or graze their cows as long as I don't find myself any more in this country called Nigeria.*
- **Okada man, "Why are you angry barking at everybody?" "Why are you angry?" "Ihe Isi Ike**." *My wife is pregnant and is expecting our ninth child. She needs money for antenatal. I have not made any reasonable amount since morning. I heard they had increased the price of fuel. I don't know which way to head! Nothing has changed for the better in this country. Each new government brings fresh hardship and misery.*
- **Oga, "Why are you trekking this long distance to work?" "What of that your car, your son bought for you sometime?"** *"I am sorry. I can't maintain it anymore.* ***Ihe Isi Ike.*** *The tires are wobbling. The engine is bad and that car has gulped the little money I saved. They have even increased the price of fuel. The worst is that for more than one year now I have not heard from my son. I don't know whether he is alive.*
- **Emeka, "Why have you taken to Okada business?" "Why have you abandoned your welding and machine work that helped you get a wife and build a personal house?" Ihe Isi Ike.** *"There is no NEPA or what they call it; no electricity. The generating plant I have been using is old and I can't service it anymore. The worst is that they have increased the price of fuel. I can't make it anymore. I am tired of this life."*
- **Papa Ebere, "Why have you taken to this illegal business in oil products – buying and selling of unrefined oil products, illegal oil bunkering, breaking of oil pipes, mixing oil, fuel and water, in the name of fuel? Ihe Isi Ike**. *You know the saying that 'People in their correct senses don't join these mushroom Churches." In fact most people in our country today are out of their senses*

because things are hard. Many have taken to illegal trade and business, just to make ends meet.

"One man's meat is another's poison." "One man's misfortune can become another's fortune." This fact finds a disturbing demonstration in the Nigerian factor "Ihe Isi Ike". Many young Nigerian men who faced uncertain future in their fatherland but managed to flee the country have settled in many countries of Europe, American and Asia. To quality for citizenship or be able to obtain work permit and earn a living in foreign lands many have been forced to take foreign wives, while our young, beautiful and even better educated, decent and qualified ladies languish in Nigeria as perpetual spinsters. Many of these educated young women at home are found today selling re-chargeable phone cards. Many sell roasted corns at street corners, while some take to some other dirty businesses. What they have lost through Ihe Isi Ike, their counterparts elsewhere in far distant lands have gained - lovable Nigerian husbands, very rare commodity all over the world today!

The catalogue of **"Ihe Isi Ike"** can continue in Nigeria. One old village chief was asked whether things would be better in Nigeria in the near future. He retorted **"Nkea bu asaa nta"** Simply translated: **"It is only the beginning of hard times."** It will be worse. It will be worse because frustration will lead many into a lot of evils – name them – armed robbery, prostitution, illegal business in oil products and so on. The old chief in other words was saying that great disaster is ahead. So those who can and want to flee the land have still ample opportunity before the **Armageddon!** On **12th June 2008** to be precise, the Nigerian Foreign Affairs Minister, revealed to Nigerians and the world the number of Nigerians serving various prison sentences all over the world. What? **Twenty five (25) thousand Nigerians!** Surely that number must have doubled or tripled by now. "It is only a beginning"; you may agree.

CAN'T MAKE ENDS MEET- FROM TRAGEDY TO CATASTROPHE

"Inability to make ends meet" in Nigerian context is synonymous with Ihe Isi Ike – Hard Times" and as well express utter despair. It is a situation in which the Igbo people of Nigeria succinctly express the last word of hopelessness *–Elu Eru Aka, Ala Eru Aka – Neither the sky not the land is within reach – Gawa agawa adighi mma – Lawa alawa adighi mma, – Neither continuing the journey not abandoning it is a better option. It is a leap* from tragedy to catastrophe, a gory picture of a drowning man!

To make (both) ends meet means to live within one's income; to balance one's income with one's expenditure. For most Nigerians, it is no more possible **to 'make both ends meet'**. If such a situation arises and becomes unbearable, something must be done to

ameliorate it. Some options are possible. One can **"make up"** (what is missing, one's rightful pay or remuneration, which has been denied one by competent authority for whatever reasons. In Christian ethics it is also referred to as "occult compensation". In whatever situation or terms – political, social, or economic – occult compensation is immoral.

Elsewhere in most parts of the world however one can take up a second or third job to earn more. Perhaps one's daily or monthly 'take-home packet ' does not meet one's needs. There is therefore nothing immoral in working harder or for more hours to earn more, in other words 'to make ends' meet. In Nigeria, generally 'to make ends' meet' points to unpalatable and immoral undertaking one has embarked upon as a result of frustration. For most frustrated and exploited Nigerians, "to make ends meet", to amend a deteriorating situation a 'short-cut' or route must be taken, and fraudulently to achieve a maximum benefit or income through some illegal activities.

It is an illegal activity one has been forced into as a result of **"Ihe Isi Ike"** as the following dialogue would prove:

- Following a tip-off from vigilant villagers, police caught ten young men who were vandalizing oil pipelines somewhere in Nigeria. They were caught with more than 50 large jerry cans**. "Why have you people taken to this illegal and criminal business of breaking oil pipelines and selling unrefined oil products to people." Ihe Isi Ike**. *This is the first time I am involved in this dirty business. I have been a successful trader at Alaba, Lagos market. My capital has run low now. I am unable to make ends meet. So I have to do something.*
- A 'fine' middle-aged man was caught in armed robbery case. He was a member of a syndicate specialized in snatching flashy Lexus cars from people. When he ran out of luck and was caught he confessed: *I am not an armed robber in fact. I just joined this gang just* **'to make ends meet'** *I am a university student but got involved in this business because of poverty I can't continue my studies.*
- A former youth leader and civil servant became a pastor and founder of a new Church, which he named **"World Miracle Church of Christ'**, was asked why he abandoned his Catholic faith and nice job in civil service. His answer: *My monthly salary is no more enough to keep my brothers and sisters in school. My parents are old and things are hard for me. I hope to make ends meet through the evangelization job I have taken up. This is the most flourishing business in Nigeria today!*
- A former university graduate in Mass Communication was caught duping people, promising to obtain visas and jobs without tears for young people eager to travel abroad in search of greener pastures. Why are you doing all this knowing too well that you can't accomplish your promises? His answer *For many years after my graduation I have been without job. I*

can't live like this. My family burdens are overwhelming. I can't make both ends meet any more. I have to embark on some business to make ends meet.

End of Suffering in Sight?

It is frightening to note that "Ihe Isi Ike" for many Nigerians may not pass away soon! Once it was the fate of Ghanaians in the early eighties. There was devastating famine, political instability, total economic breakdown, chaos and confusion. Many brothers and sisters from that neighboring West African country fled their fatherland. They found comfortable shelters in Nigeria. But the hard times did pass away and they recovered their breath, lost glory and almost everything that placed that nation on the world map as 'great African nation.

Will the giant of Africa, Nigeria ever rise again? Will it recover from the rude shock inflicted on the people by the privileged few and their leaders? The answer to these questions is within the reach of every honest Nigeria. The truth is that since independence in 1960 Nigerians have been in bondage of poverty and frustrations. Both under the civilian and military rule the leaders had maintained their stiff grip on the throat of the harassed Nigerians threatening to strangle them to death. Matter grew worse during the Structural Adjustment Program [SAP] of one dictator after another. Most Nigerians were almost 'sapped to death'. That was the beginning of the mass exodus of many – professionals and the best brains from the land in search of 'Greener Pastures.' Many thought their sojourn in foreign land, their exile would be short. No! As things got worse many settled permanently overseas with their wives and children. Those who could return home occasionally spend a few days to sell off whatever property they still owned in their fatherland.

The era of oil boom could not even put smiles on the faces of Nigerians. Only a privileged few enjoyed the wealth or squandered it. Rather the situation continued to deteriorate as those in power, the heartless leaders found one reason or the other to increase the prices of petroleum products, thus tightening their grip on the throat of the dying people. Even as one regime vacates seats for another, each made sure that "Ihe Isi Ike" continued.

Any Songs of Deliverance?

So all said and done, poor Nigerians, more than 90% of the people may not after all sing songs of joy one day when their sufferings will come to an end. Will it be in a dream Nigerians would sing a song of deliverance! "When Yahweh delivered Zion from bondage it was like a dream. How we laughed; how we sang for joy! Then the other nations said about us "The Lord did great things for them." Indeed he did great things for us. How happy we were!" [Psalm 12:1-3]

Will Nigeria's fortunes be restored?

"Restore our fortunes, O Lord. May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy! He that goes forth weeping, shall come back with shouts of joy bring his harvest." [Ibid].

Perhaps in a dream, like it was with the oppressed Hebrews of old! Only the new prophets of prosperity (never doom) in Nigeria try desperately to sustain the hope of the hopeless Nigerians. As far as these numerous prophets – founders of new Churches and religious movements are concerned – it is absurd to preach "the Cross" to the Nigerians masses already overburdened with suffering and all sorts of ailments. There is no surprise that many miracle Churches exist at every nook and cranny of our communities and members are Legion. Someone has to sustain the hopes and aspirations of poor Nigerians. One day a 'messiah' will arise from among his people and set them free from bondage. He must be a Nigerian – selfless political leader, incorruptible, detribalized, and God-fearing. He will be the one to wipe off his people's tears and restore their lost dignity. Then the millions of sons and daughters of our fatherland will return from exile, some from United States of America, Europe and Asia. Those who have taken refuge in remote places of the world during the times of misrule and economic disasters will return to re-populate Nigeria – our engineers, scientists, doctors, professors, and business men and women. Then other nations will come seeking friendship with the political and economically stable Nigeria. Hurrah! I assure you that that messianic leader will rule over Nigerians forever. There will be no need for elections. For that "Man of the people', who has made justice, equity and fair play his watch-word, his tenure of office will have no end! No doubt Nigeria will be a blessed land – flowing with milk and honey, a true fatherland, the most populous nation in Africa and an enviable world power!

Hymns of Victory and Liberation?

Many patriotic and God-fearing Nigerians cross their fingers and pray for victory over evil, victory over tyranny and oppression. That day of liberation may eventually come and no more like a dream. It will be true liberation and victory and the hymns and dancing with tambourines and drums will resemble those of the ancient Israel. Nigeria's fortunes will be restored. The era of one naira to one dollar will be restored, pyramids of bags and bags of groundnuts ready for exportation to other lands, millions of barrels of palm oil ready for shipping to overseas, millions of cocoa and rubber plantations adorning Nigerian thick forests and all that made Nigeria a great nation in the past will put smiles and joy on Nigerian faces. No one will ever think of any greener pastures outside our fatherland. Rather foreigners will be struggling for space to reside and earn decent living in Nigeria.

In Midst of Chaos Nigeria Continue to Tick

Often in an apparent state of confusion and disorder, Nigeria continues to tick; in other words continues to function 'properly'. The states and ethnic groups continue to stick together. What keeps Nigeria "ticking?" How has this nation continued to survive all the hard strokes being directed at her from all sides? It is just like a player in football field against 22! What keeps her alive in the face of its numerous problems, name them - abuses, scandals, deceptions, betrayals, shocks, denials, deprivations, mutilations, battering, plundering, and of course abandonment. Millions of its citizens have continued to immigrate to other countries of the world, vowing never to return to their fatherland in any foreseeable future.

How has the economy not yet completely collapsed? Everyday reports indicate that its leaders and con men embezzle and transfer billions of dollars to foreign accounts. And there are no signs that massive corrupt practices will ever become a thing of the past. Like an unfed sheep that is daily milked, Nigeria continues to stagger and pant in agony. Dehydrated and sick, Nigeria continues to gasp for air. But it has not breathed at last!

It has degenerated. Once a rich nation, today Nigeria is among the poorest in the world. Once a lender nation, today it is a borrower nation. Once an exporter nation, today Nigeria is the most notorious importer of all importable. It imports every type of food at exorbitant prices affordable only by the wealthy class. Its citizens only eat from the crumbs that fall from the grand masters' table. She is known world-wide as a dumping ground for all second-hand articles, known as 'Tukunbo.'

Once Nigeria served as a haven for many European, Asian, and African countries. Not only oil company workers and their families took Nigeria as their second home. Filipinos, Turks, Lebanese, Indians, Sri Lankans, Pakistanis, and other Africans took up teaching appointments in Nigerian institutions of learning. Many became contractors on road construction companies and agricultural sectors. They sent their hard-earned revenue home to support families and dear ones at home.

More than one million Ghanaians and citizens of neighbouring African countries took over Nigerian townships and villages as street cleaners, shoe-polishers, and labourers. The search for greener pastures in Nigeria took a dramatic and unpleasant turn that the Federal Government of Nigeria was forced to order a repatriation of all illegal aliens who had misused or abused their welcome to Nigeria**. "Ghana must go,"** at a time became a household term, and in fact a big tough raffia bag goes by that tag name today. It was the name of the bag Ghanaians used to pack their belonging as they left the shores of Nigeria for their fatherland or other greener pastures.

That was many years ago. Today things have changed and Nigerians are seeking refuge and succour in Ghana. The former masters are being fed from crumbs from the former servants' table! The marching tune and direction have changed. The rich have become the poor. Nigeria

has become smaller than Ghana and many other nations. The song in a school drama ***"When I was rich,"*** fits the Nigerian situation today:

> When I was rich, When I was wealthy, I had many friends. I had many acquaintances, many companions, many associates, and many cronies. But now I am sick. I am old. I am weak and poor. Most of my friends have abandoned me. They have deserted me. I am now a lonely fellow. And I have no hope of survival.

Better organized, and led by better cultured and honest leaders, Ghana, and **not** Nigeria, is the African leader and champion in everything, in politics, economy and sports. Great foreign leaders wishing to pay a courtesy call to the African continent choose Ghana as their first port of call. They invite other African leaders to meet them in Ghana for a chat if there was need. They usually avoid Nigeria. Like the Israelites of old the lamentation in Nigeria continues.

> Let my eyes stream with tears day and night, without rest over the great destruction, which overwhelms the virgin daughter of my people, over her incurable wound. If I walk out into the field, look! Those slain by the sword. If I enter the city, look! Those consumed by hunger. Even the prophet and the priest forage in a land they know not. Have you cast Judah off completely? Is Zion loathsome to you? Why have you struck us a blow that cannot be healed? We wait for peace, to no avail; for a time of healing, but terror comes instead. We recognise, O Lord, our wickedness, the guilt of our fathers; that we have sinned against you. For your name's sake spurn us not, disgrace not the throne of your glory; remember your covenant with us, and break it not (Jeremiah: 14:17-21)

SEARCH FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT: THE INDIAN PARADIGM

India is a vast land and a continent, even though Geographers and Historians refer to the region and state as 'subcontinent'. Much is of course known about India by the West, America and the rest of Asia. It is a nuclear power, a nation on the brinks of joining the First World nations and a nation teeming with peoples of all languages, cultures and color. Here, like Nigeria, more than 30 languages are spoken. English is the common language (the British were there in the forties!). Hindi and Tamil are among the well developed languages. Nigerians who visit India, precisely Chennai (formerly called Madras), will be very familiar with Tamil language. They say in short that each state has its own language. A student can take all known courses in college and university curriculum without any reference to English language. Even the most educated are much more at home with their local languages; this is why when two Indians are speaking with you, they easily switch over to their local language they are more conversant with! You can compare this situation with that which the Yorubas and Hausas (but not Igbos) find themselves.

Indian continent and people are not unknown to Nigeria and Nigerians. Most of us who finished secondary school education in Nigeria before the Biafra war broke out will remember that most of our Physics, Chemistry, Zoology, Biology and English teachers were Indians and Sri Lankans (Ceylonese). They taught the sciences well and that was why the missionaries 'imported' them. Recently in Business and Technology, Nigerians have come into closer contact with the Indians. In the 1970s and 80s Indian business men dominated most major road and estate construction works in Nigeria. Some of them left Nigeria when Nigerian economy started collapsing under poor management coupled with unstable political leadership and massive corruption.

Some Nigerian state governments find business dealings with India more comfortable than with Europe and America. Nigerians prefer China, India to Germany or Britain. Many Nigerians are very familiar with such names as 'Tata' and 'Keke There are many Indian-made vehicles of every specie on Nigerian roads – township and rural. Indian manufactured drugs and medical products are found in abundance in Nigerian markets. It is amazing.

Even as early as early 1960s Nigerian students eager to further the education they could not afford in Nigeria had taken refuge in Indian Universities scattered all over Bombay and Madras. Most Nigerians who are forming strong growing communities in most cities of India today are those who took their tertiary education in Indian universities. As well, some of them took Indian wives and are doing quite well like their counterparts in Britain and United States.

Better Medical Treatment.

Today, Nigerians are fleeing Nigeria to India, not in search of work (none available), better comfort or greener pastures. No! India is still struggling to feed and find employment for its large population. But they have almost succeeded in attracting foreigners, including Nigerians to their formerly impoverished land by creating self-employment opportunities in areas such as medi-care, computer science and general business opportunities. Experts say that most computer wizards one finds in Europe and America today are Indians!

No one will be surprised to find many hi-tech-hospitals, therapy and rehabilitation centers springing up in many cities of India. They say Indian doctors are among the best in the world today. They specialize in all sorts of treatment, including of course surgery. Such names like **Apollo Hospital, Miot, Dr. Kamashi Memorial Hospital and Life-Line** specialize in sophisticated cases of heart diseases, kidney problems, various kinds of cancer diseases, psychiatrist and neurological problems. And the doctors are not doing badly. Their good performance is assured by the length of time and resources spent in medical schools in India. **Here I like to share my experiences with fellow Nigerians and any one who cares about my visit to India, precisely in search of medical treatment**. **"BACK FROM INDIA**" is a more elaborate write-up I composed after I returned from the medical trip. But I have culled this

portion to fit into our present topic on "Leaders and Followers". There is a lot to learn, share and discuss

To go for medical treatment in India you must have obtained a recommendation note from one of your Nigerian private doctors. Most of them know India and the facilities their hospitals offer to help desperate Nigerians. Ready with your invitation letter proceed to Indian High Commission in Lagos or Abuja. There may be need for an embassy doctor to approve your request before you are issued with a visa.

Welcome to India!

God bless Nigerians who can afford the resources to pay the hospital bills in India. Not as exorbitant as what one would pay in the United States or Europe, it is a quite good sum of money. The trip is not for any poor man, I can assure you. If you are not rich, forget it. If you have no sponsors like I had forget a medical treatment trip to India. If you a casual fellow with the ambition to stay alive long, maybe up to 100 years, you can try it. But remember what the psalmist tells us concerning longevity**: "Our life is over like a sigh. Our span is 70 years or 80 for those who are strong. And most of these are emptiness and pain. They pass swiftly and we are gone…Let us know the shortness of our life that we may gain wisdom of heart" (Pss 89).** If you insist, be prepared to sell some of your family property to procure good health in India!

Want to come to India for serious medical treatment or surgery in **Apollo or Miot Hospital?** (These hospitals are found in most major cities of India - Mumbai, New Delhi, Chennai etc). You must be prepared to pay a deposit of not less than $8,000 to start processing your papers after your local doctor had confirmed your disease could not be treated in your country. Be prepared to pay for all the medical tests, including CT-scans, PET- scans and X-rays. Do you know what **PET-SCAN MACHINE** is? They say it is one of the latest and most sophisticated scan machines that can detect and locate any cancer virus no matter how small and at what part of the body the worm is hidden. Other scanning gadgets can just tell you cancer is around. But where? How big? They use these and other sophisticated modern gadgets and machines to detect your ailment. And you meet experts as you travel from one scan room to the other. The results of scans and X-rays are accompanied with detailed reports which help the doctors to treat you well. By the time you know it your medical bill is running to two digit numbers in dollars. Some hospitals don't accept the local currency.

As you check your pockets please do not forget your airfare from Nigeria. Your loved ones will no doubt be anxious to visit you and see how far you have improved. The journeys to and fro, short and long will always drain your purse. At a time it might look ridiculous to worry about the fat bill. The important thing is whether the patient is reporting some significant changes in his life. That is a more serious point to consider. What is money afterwards? A Latin

adage has the following to say about this loved and hated commodity. It says that "without money, there is no life". Not true? Another adage puts it this way "Money is the root of all evil." People hold this view. The Bible confirms it, too. But the truth is that money is good. It is only avarice that paints the bad picture!

Whatever view people like to hold about money and poverty, I believe the English writer Bernard Shaw put an end to this controversy. For Shaw it is clear who is responsible. He asserts: "The greatest evil and worse crimes is poverty". Don't you see that these are interrelated! As you check your pocket, my dear sick visitor to India, do not forget the cost of food. You may need extra food-support. Indian menu is a disaster! "One man's food is another's poison." You find the phenomenon everywhere. Indians are mainly vegetarians; they rarely eat meat or drink alcohol. All the huge cows roaming the highway, the street corners and everywhere are sacred to the Hindus who dominate the land and government.

In the Hospital

You, as a patient have little or no problem. As you relax in prayer at what happens next, your senior doctor will order all sorts of tests and X-rays and in fact a 'General Checkup'. You don't know all the 'other diseases' and ailments you have been putting up with; please tell the doctor when asked. Even though you came for a heart problem, make sure you order a 'general check-up'. If you are a man and your main problem is that of heart –chronic or mild, you must also reckon with other men's diseases which oftentimes send men to untimely death. Prostrate diseases are rampant among all men, white and black. As from 30 men must be wary (on their guard) against the possibility of their prostrate problems going or becoming 'cancerous'. If so there is reason to show a big concern. "A stitch in time saves nine", they say. The hospital environment will be your cherished community and family for the next few weeks you many stay in this foreign land.

With Whom to Interact!

As a foreigner from Nigeria, able to make it to India, whatever your problems you will go back home happy and much-better than you were when you first arrived India. If pains still persist after all the treatments, you should not worry; nature will play its own part in complete healing when you are discharged and you return home. You only need to pray.

Usually a deluxe room or ward is assigned to you (deluxe = special, sumptuous, luxurious, exclusive, plush, expensive, superior …). There is everything in your apartment including **ICU** (Intensive Care Unit) gadgets. Next to your spacious room is a smaller bed for your aid, your boy, sister, wife etc, who has come to take care of you.

In this room, you have cable TV, refrigerators and assorted fruits are supplied, cold drinks and whatever else you may need. The toilets may have up to 6 towels and you must tell them

whatever you need and these will be supplied. These are parts of mundane things employed to calm a troubled soul. They are important and expensive and you must pay!

The situation in the ward, in your room is important and needs close examination. The person you interact with everyday will no doubt influence you; perhaps accelerate your quick recovery. He or she is next to your doctor. Let us first look at the figure of the Indian doctor. **The**

Doctors: Nigeria doctors, please take note!

Whatever part of India they come from, whatever their color, some may be described as 'white' (Caucasian?); others half white half black. There are still many others 'deep black'. All said and done, color does not play any major role in the society we are describing, The doctors can be described as nice, kind, friendly, gentle, knowledgeable and profoundly humble. These virtues are opposed to proud, haughty, arrogant; unapproachable and so on The Indian doctor is a fine fellow, man and woman.

The Indian doctor is thorough in whatever he does; he meticulously oversees the procedures for the surgery. Everything would be ready before the surgery begins. The patient, he insists, he tells the nurses and all hospital attendants should not be treated like any other 'animal'. He is a human being. The patient must be brought early enough to the theatre to familiarize himself with the huge place. He should not be made to look afraid and disturbed and his blood pressure running high! In medicine, especially surgery, one of the doctors I knew well, Dr. Samson, says there is no room for half-measures. **The Nurses and Other Attendants** are also very good and many are so useful as doctor's aids. Most Indian registered nurses and midwives have high reputation in America and Europe, where they outnumber their counterparts from other regions of the world.

What I did not see in India

(1) I did not see any person, wealthy or poor, kidnapped in India and fantastic ransoms paid to obtain release of victims. There is absolute security in the villages and cities and people went about their business 24 hours, round the clock without any molestation from hoodlums, bandits and swindlers. In fact I never heard any sound of gunshot from any quarters.
(2) I did not see any police check-point where vehicles were checked and controlled by security men in police or army uniform. But there were police wardens at check points on the roads directing the flow of traffic. The traffic wardens help the street lights especially at multiple junction roads. The street lights function 24 hours round the clock.
(3) I did not see "toll gates" where men in army or police uniforms collected money and other bribes from motorists and passers-by.

(4) I did not see young men and women, boys and girls selling re-charge cards, sim cards and phone accessories at road junctions and open market places. If you are a foreigner in India, you must produce and present a certified photocopy of your international passport before you can purchase a mobile phone, buy a sim card or re-charge your phone. This is for order and security.

(5) I did not see money-changers at road junctions and free-markets exchange Dollars, British pounds and Euros for Rupees. Once again for any such monetary transactions foreigners must produce international passports with valid visas. Moreover only certified agents and banks are authorized to transact such businesses. In fact I did not see any illegal" Dollar Market."

(6) I did not see anybody, normal human beings or even lunatics 'pee pee' or 'poo poo' at any place, public and private property. I did not see anybody, male or female, young and old urinate into the gutters or at the foot of trees and poles. I must add too; I did not see anybody naked. There were a few fellows I saw that looked like lunatics (by their look, unshaven and unkempt), but they were never naked. I didn't see them performing any frivolous antics at street centers and middle of roads.

(7) I did not see any people, men and women, young and old fighting, quarrelling and exchanging angry words and hauling stones and sticks at one another. These Indians are absolute gentle people. In most congested street corners and roads people in a hurry push at each other, but no one gets angry. When 'accidents' happen, to your greatest astonishment what you find is mutual apologies! "I am sorry". Who has offended the other? They go about their business peacefully.

(8) I did not see self-styled pharmacists, compounding, prescribing and selling drugs to patients without prescription from qualified medical doctors.

(9) The Indians should be among the best and most elegantly dressed people in the world. Men always dress 'British' in style – trousers and shirts (long and short sleeved). Women have the traditional wear at home and at every other occasion. Few men put on the traditional wear – wrapper. School children and students are always in uniform, clean and elegant.

(10) They have great compassion for the sick. In most of their hospitals, the inscription on the hospital walls and wards are clear and teach the lesson: **"The most important person in this hospital is the patient"**. A visitor can then draw more conclusions!

(11) I did not see any stabilizers attached to the TV sets, refrigerators and other electrical appliances in my room. No voltage drops in power supply, 24 hours daily!

Medical treatment in Nigeria - Which way forward?

I made casual visits to Miot, Apollo, and Kamatschi hospitals in Chennai. I took time to visit these three famous hospitals which bring Nigerians almost daily to this part of the world to enrich my experiences on this topic. Everywhere you go, you find Nigerians, the grand patronizers of these hospitals. Those Nigerians I visited and interacted with spoke with passion and almost in tears questioning why Nigeria could not compete with India in this particular healthcare issue. Nigerians, joke aside, have great brains in every field of human endeavor. But why does it not work in our fatherland? Are you not worried too? What are the issues at stake? Almost everyone agreed that we still have a long way to go in areas of power generation, water, and roads.

On a very serious note all concerned Nigerians, home and abroad - I have spoken to are making passionate appeals to our leaders, particularly political and Church leaders, as well as good-spirited individuals and philanthropists to come to the rescue of many beleaguered, stressed and harassed Nigerians who spend life's fortune in search of good health care outside Nigeria,

Government must take a serious look at the provision of power and other necessities of life to make the dream-like goals of most Nigerians look like a realizable venture. We may start by taking good care of the hospitals we have in our fatherland, which must include the maintenance of the existing structures we already have. Wonderful incentives must be made available to young medical students to take unprecedented lead into the intricacies of modern medical research which may bring about astonishing major break-through into areas such as heart surgery, cancer treatment and other everyday ailment that if not well handled send a great number of people to their untimely death.

Wohin Nigeria? The Lamentation

Who says Nigeria would not recover from the comatose situation in which our past and present leaders have left her for quite a time now? No! Nigeria will wake up again from slumber, from the snooze and take back her hitherto and enviable position among the community of developed and developing nations. But we may have to reflect a bit and ask the Lord who forgives to restore our lost glories. We must lament however, rid ourselves all our haughty attitudes and lifestyles and humble ourselves asking for forgiveness and restoration before the Lord**: "Oh Lord will your wrath last forever? We have been scattered all over the nations and are there daily humiliated and impoverished. We have become fewer than all nations because of our sins. In our blindness and recklessness, we have lost everything, even our consciences."**

If you visit the Indian embassy or consulate in Lagos and Abuja and behold how Nigerians seeking for visa to travel to India for medical treatment, you can appreciate the picture of poverty and humiliation I am painting! Nigeria can become once again a haven for people of the world who seek security, but cannot find it in their country; who seek good health care but

can't produce qualified medical personnel to run their health institutions; who seek education but can't boast of qualified teachers and professors or even educational institutions adequately equipped to meet the needs of our modern hi-tech world of today. Nigeria must become a nuclear nation like India if we are to realize our dreams!

The Lord can touch the hearts of our leaders to hearken to the voices of the poor and oppressed in Nigeria. The sick, no matter the seriousness of their ailments **DO NOT** need to travel abroad, spend life's fortunes to seek medical treatment for an aching limb. All the sophisticated surgeries and transplants can be performed here in our fatherland, in the bigger and smaller city hospitals, name them Abuja, Lagos, Ibadan, Port Harcourt, Enugu, Benin, Kano, Kaduna and of course Owerri and Orlu. Then all the other nations from Africa, Europe, Asia and America can flock our embassies overseas looking for visa to visit Nigeria. This may look like a dream, but no doubt a dream that can be converted to reality, just if we wish!

NEED FOR A REVOLUTION Many believe a revolution in Nigeria is long overdue. But which type will favour us? Should we try the **East European, Napoleonic or Bolshevik type?** What of the **"Arab Spring'** formula? It was not only Cardinal Okogie and Professor Wole Soyinka who have called for one. One Charles Kumolu, reporting for a Nigerian Newspaper of January 4, 2012, informed Nigerians that the nation's problems have continued to escalate. And when highly placed Nigerians, especially the clergy speak out, there is real need to panic.

We were told that the Catholic Archbishop of Lagos had warned that Nigeria was drifting dangerously, asking that urgent steps be taken by the Federal Government to address the current insecurity in the country. He called for what he described as the **''revolution of the mind and spirit."**

Okogie lamented that the government has failed to protect Nigerians in the face of incessant bombings by Boko Haram Islamic sect. In his New Year message to the nation 2012, Okogie said only the collective will of the citizens, government and God can change the dark cloud hanging over Nigeria. The cleric said: "To get back on track and salvage our beloved country from its present woes, there is need for change. There is an urgent need for a revolution. In line with the three dimensions of man, revolution is possible at the physical level, at the level of the mind and at the level of the spiritual.

"However, for us Christians, violent revolution at the physical level is excluded. When we speak about revolution we do not mean a bloody revolution but a revolution of the mind and spirit "That we are born to be great is clear to all. But unfortunately, we are not great. Instead, we are a nation in distress, a nation on the verge of falling, a nation that is gradually drifting. "Our woes as a country are visible in every thing: epileptic power supply, the death traps we call roads, insecurity of life and property, irrational and unjustifiable ethnic and religious riots,

unrestrained corruption in the corridors of power and beyond, high rate of unemployment and abject poverty."

He expressed confidence that Nigerians could come out of the challenges posed by current insecurity, but stressed that this could only happen when leaders decide to be true shepherds and not wolves. Okogie said: "In spite of all the evils that besiege us as a nation, Nigeria is redeemable. A new national order where all can flourish irrespective of tribe or social class; a new society characterised by justice, peace, love, and true reign of brotherhood is still possible in our country. "But we must first get it right and this can only happen when our leaders decide to be true shepherds. There is anger mixed with fear, distrust, anxiety and uncertainty in our nation. In fact, a dark cloud hangs on the faces of the people. "The nation is moody and in a mourning mood. Only the collective will of the citizens and the government with God's grace can change the sad and dark cloud hanging over Nigeria.

Nigerian Legislature, Apex of Corruption – Soyinka

In his own call for a revolution, the Nobel laureate, Prof. Wole Soyinka castigated the Nigerian Legislature as the "Apex of Corruption". "Nothing short of a revolution can rescue Nigeria from total collapse", he insisted. He was the first to point at the terrible 'extremities' Nigerian corrupt politicians can go. Many Nigerians, young and old are truly fed up with all our political institutions. Soyinka, who used 'hydra' and 'octopus' as images to define the kind of graft confronting the country, said the National Assembly was the pinnacle of what he described as "hydro-pus" corruption.

As we were informed by Gbenga Adeniji of Nigeria's Vanguard Newspapers, the renowned playwright spoke in Lagos on Monday at the Town Hall meeting organised by the Save Nigeria Group and its allies with the theme: 'Endemic Corruption-the Bane of Good Governance.' He said, "The Nigerian legislative system is hydro-pus. There is no way you can fight corruption without changing the legislature. Here, the more corrupt a person is, the more chieftaincy titles he gets.

"We need a complete systemic transformation. Why should there be full-time legislation. Corruption is right at the top and drips down. He also appealed to Nigerians not allow themselves to be pushed into reprisals by the bombings by Boko Haram. Soyinka said, "They want to push patience to a limitation. They have embarked on a programme to push neighbour to neighbour. We must not accept the agenda of Boko Haram. Don't even for a moment consider reprisals. Protect your neighbour." The playwright, called for a Sovereign National Conference to address the problems bedevilling the country.

What Type of Revolution?

But Wait! It is easy to take to the streets and protest the deplorable economic, social and political situation in Nigeria. It is easy to cast aspersions on the leaders of the nations and call for their heads and call for a sovereign national conference. No. There is need to stop a while and search our hearts, everyone, from the most highly placed Nigerian to the smallest toddler, and find out what has really gone wrong.

There are a lot of factors that must be in place before a true and successful revolution can take place, otherwise the movement will be counter-productive and can even lead to more disastrous situation. The **Biafran Revolution** did not succeed. It was a total disaster! Why? There are many reasons that led to its failure. A revolution that will usher in a "New Nigeria" must NOT fail to reckon with some important factors:

Need Not be a Bloody Uprising! It doesn't need to be necessarily bloody. Biafra Revolution was too bloody and the cost in human resources was enormous. Do we need to count the number of very important leaders and personalities killed during the January and July coup d'etat of 1966! Can we truly arrive at a rough estimate of innocent civilians killed during the series of pogroms and massacres of easterners living then in the Northern parts of Nigeria? What of innocent civilians, the main targets of the air raids? The number of kwashiorkor kids that died of starvation had always been measured in hundreds of thousands! No. A revolution of that type may after all not worth all the pains any more.

A Mass Movement of the People: A revolution that will capture the interest of all Nigerians can never be seen as "ethnic" or "sectional" in nature. No. The Biafra revolution failed because it was tagged **"Igbo".** All the rest of Nigerian ethnic groups that count in hundreds never caught the fever and showed little understanding of what was at stake. Their brothers and sisters living then in Northern Nigerians were not among those targeted for extermination or 'ethnic cleansing' .Their members were safe and well protected in the Nigerian enclave. Most of the "other Nigerians" never tested hunger or mortal danger from warfare and homelessness.

The **Arab revolution,** still going on, has been a momentum, a rare opportunity for mass protest against corruption and dictatorship. When corruption with its attendant evils reaches scorching and intolerable levels, a mass revolt takes place. When the rich and privileged few grow richer, the masses grow poorer a situation of uncontrollable restlessness and disaffection must naturally arise.

The unbearable burden: In Nigeria, the burden of corrupt leadership has become excessive and there is little or no more room for tolerance on the part of the oppressed masses. The Nigerian masses, North and South, East and West have borne this burden for long. The Hausa/Fulani, The Igbo, The Yoruba, The Efik, The Itshekiri, name the more than 250 big and smaller ethnic groups have not had it fine since the days of the colonial masters and their successors. None of the people can claim they have had an **uninterrupted power supply, clean**

drinking water, good roads or any such social amenities people all over the world enjoy in abundance. No!

CHAPTER TWO

ENIGMATIC NIGERIA – THE BEST AND THE WORST OPPORTUNISTS BLOW HOT AND COLD

The best patriotic leader, the one who emerges with best of intentions to govern his fellow citizens and bring them to the 'promised land must still be very careful. Ready to sacrifice everything to achieve success, his efforts may be greeted with cynicism. Unless the emerging leader has a lion heart, unless he is a 'radical' and a no-nonsense fellow, and remains unshaken in his 'dreams', he may easily get discouraged and give up.

The reasons why the failure of leadership in Nigeria can also be attributed to the failure of 'followership' are too many. There are a lot of contradictions in their lifestyles. Nigeria is an enigma, an unfathomable mystery. There is nothing one cannot associate with the fatherland, home to more than 150 million people. There is nothing you cannot predicate of the nation and its people, namely nothing you cannot declare of her to be true or false. A lot of contrasts abound. **The richest** oil-producing nation in Africa and as well the **poorest** nation in the community of oil producing nations of the world; the most populous nation in Africa. In other words, the **greatest,** a giant on the sun; but the **most feeble.** Her output, her performance in human resources is poor and shameful. Little nations in Africa, some a tenth as populous as Nigeria (Ghana, Chad, Niger Cape Verde, Gabon, Vernanda Po (Malabo) are better organized. Citizens of the giant nation flee to these little islands and desert enclaves for refuge and succor. More than 25% of Nigerians live outside the nation and are scattered all over the world, in search of greener pastures leaving their God-given treasures to decay, as giant and expensive structures lie in state of dilapidation and ruins!

Dear reader, if you are able to rehearse these old rhymes about Nigeria with me, you have to exercise patience and bear with me. At the end of the 'lamentation' you will agree with me that Nigeria is 'Full of Contradictions' **Leaders and followers** look like opportunists, blowing both hot and cold. When it looks like this nation of variegated ethnic groups, with patches of different colors would disintegrate, soon a sort of revival of interest in a united Nigeria emerges from nowhere. Wonders will never end.

Best Favored – Most Unlucky and Unfortunate Nation

Nigeria is said to be one of the best favored nations of the world in terms of human and natural resources; one of the best if not the best favored nations in the world with the best climatic conditions. Rain is abundant. The land is fertile for the growth of any type of crop and

vegetation. Sunshine is very admirable. No adverse weather conditions, earthquakes, hurricanes, drought, famine, surnamies, flooding and name all the fearsome natural disasters that have devastated the richest and poorest nations of the world. But at the same time, Nigeria is said to be the worst place to live on earth. Many prominent Nigerians and authors have said worse things about our fatherland and no one has summoned courage to question, challenge or contradict them!

Nigerians are said to have the best 'brains' in the world and in knowledge, brilliance, intelligence, innovation, hard work they should compare favorably with their counterparts all over the world. Alas! And **unfortunately** Nigerians never put their cherished 'talents' and 'charisma' into useful ventures that help to improve fortunes of millions of people all over the world. They turn their admirable knowledge in technology, science and arts into most horrible, obnoxious, detestable and stunning ways and means of achieving selfish motives that can shock and render those that fall into their nets useless for life.

It took the United States FBI, time, years of surveillance and incredible amount of resources to discover how a Nigerian man of 28 was able to manufacture, distribute and sell the fake American Green Card to needy illegal aliens in that land. Examine the "Nigerian Made" **Green Card** well and it was a carbon copy of the real thing. Turn it upside down, left, right and any how and it looked 'genuine'. How do they do it? It is only an educated expert that can accomplish such a feat! And as the story went, the Americans had to pay the young wonder man a lot of money to explain and demonstrate scientifically how the third world man from Nigeria did it. Wise Americans! They did not prosecute jail or bully the young man. They organized a red-carpet welcome for the con man into the club which only people of worth, intelligence and charisma belong! They turned evil into good; the **worst into the best!** After all it is best to use God given talents to help humanity and not dupe people.

There are too many other stunning stories of 'despicable' achievements of Nigerians, at home and in Diaspora, which actually could have earned their fatherland honor and respectable place in the modern history. Regrettably these 'achievements' instead of placing us on the world map as a great people rather put us into ridicule and shame. All of us, home and abroad, we are taken to be con men, dupes, interlopers that can never be trusted, honored or even made welcome into any city. "Take care. They are around", expressed in words or signs, tells the rest of the story about the best and the worst of a people and nation!

Nigeria is said to have the best pilots, medical doctors, judges, engineers, professors, and even computer experts in Africa if not in the world, but where are they? Do not be surprised to note that Nigerian hospitals and clinics are the worst equipped in the world! One medical doctor may take charge of more than one million patients while elsewhere in the developed world; the ration is usually less than 100 patients to one physician. Nigerian nurses are said to be the best in Europe and the United States. They work day and night and make lots of money; but at home

quacks and "**Nurse Eliza"** and **ward maids** take care of the sick and even perform surgery! No wonder thousands of Nigerians who visit these **hospitals, most of them not better than 'sickbays' or 'rehabilitation centers** usually end up in the mortuary! The busiest part of Nigerian hospitals is the mortuary. Most of Nigerian pregnant mothers die at child-birth. There are no drugs, doctors and qualified nurses. Most of the best we have continue to flee the land as a result of harsh political and economic conditions. Go and visit the **Orlu General Hospital** in Imo State, before the Rochas government took over its rehabilitation, and behold what became of a proposed General and Specialist hospital; the miserable dilapidation of expensive structures of "Health Center" that could save sick Nigerians, young and old, poor and rich the pains and stress of traveling abroad for medical treatment. The **best** became the **worst!**

Tell me, then why India or Saudi Arabia should not become the "Promised Land" for sick Nigerians, rich and poor, young and old, who seek medical treatment and are not yet ready to die in their God-deserted fatherland. As long as you have the money visit India, Pakistan or Saudi Arabia for your headache, toothache, eye, nose, kidney transplant, liver or heart problem. The Indian doctors and their counterparts will take good care of you as you pay through your nose for even a cup of water delivered to you on your sick bed!

Before the unquenchable corrupt practices invaded Nigeria and the best brains opted for "greener pastures" abroad, Nigerians used to produce the best politicians, medical doctors, Supreme Court judges and professors. The politicians were usually well versed in the game of politics, theory and practice. Not in Nigeria today. The nation has the worst politicians. Actually most of these men and women may not be called politicians in any fashion. Con men and impostors have invaded the field of politics. What have you? The worst contractors, businessmen, serving or retired police officers and military men. Some became heads of state and ministers through the barrel of the gun in military coups. The rest you find in the arena of politics are ordinary village chiefs and wretched primary and secondary drop-outs.

In the past Nigerian police force used to be a force to reckon with in Africa. They were the best in peace missions in troubled regions of the world. To pass all the tough screening exercises those days to get recruited into the Nigerian Police Force used to be the hard nut to crack. No more today in Nigeria. Nigeria has the worst police force in the world.

By their fruit you shall know them. They set road blocks at major and minor roads of the cities and villages, cause traffic jams and confusion and collect 'tithes'. Woe betide any motorist who fails to pay. They don't save lives any more, but destroy. They are no more friends but enemies of the oppressed peoples of Nigeria.

There is nothing one can say about Nigeria and would be proved wrong. You can say anything about the country called Nigeria and entertain no fear of contradiction. If 'good' her people may not care to know; those who care may even be amused, and never enthused; if 'bad' almost everyone would agree with you. They will concur; see eye to eye with you. The matter is

a far drawn conclusion. No one will take you to court for insulting their leaders and fatherland. No one may frown at your idiosyncrasy and lack of patriotism. And in this case you may assert without any fear of contradiction that Nigerians, from the smallest toddler to the most highly placed and educated officials, are 'honest' people, 'straightforward', 'liberal' to a fault and don't usually care to know whose horse is gored!

Fair is Foul and Foul is Fair – A Litany of Contradictions

There are a lot of agonizing contradictions in their actions and words. There are lots of consoling statements about Nigeria and there are too a lot discomforting remarks about the nation, Nigeria. What does one make of the statement by Aljazeera newscaster about Nigeria while reviewing or assessing the country the Late Ya-adua ruled before his death? "He (the Late Nigerian president) was said to be an honest man, **but the country he governed is said to be the most corrupt nation on earth!**" No one has ever challenged that foreign news media and showed any concern about that scorching statement. Who knows if the statement is a *fait accompli*? We need to examine more of these "allegations*"* against our fatherland, Nigeria. It may not be easy to dispute the fact that Nigeria is full of amazing contradictions and rude surprises.

The Most Religious People on Earth & The Most Vagrant and Eclectic Religious Bigots

One renowned African writer and clergy man had in his book on religious practices among the people of Nigeria told students of religion that religion is embedded in the African blood, and psyche, citing examples with the Igbo people of Nigeria. He wrote: ***"When the Igbo eats, he prays, when he works, he is at the same time praying, when he sings, he is at the same time praying***. In other words their entire life and humanity is completely permeated with 'the **godly,** the **spiritual**' and what have you!

True! The writer's assertion may look honest in theory but in practice; Nigerians cannot be taken as deeply religious people. Those who claim to be Christians in reality and practice belong to other religious denominations, including paganism and occultism that satisfy their earthly yearnings, especially wealth and security. One East African writer and poet summarizes African's and Nigerian's religious life style:

"Oh unhappy Christian, Mass in the morning, witch doctor in the evening, amulet in pocket, scapular around the neck!"

Other titles and write-ups on 'African Christianity' speak volumes about their eclectic mentality and life style: **"Christianity in Africa: to save or to enslave?" "Post mortem for Christianity in Africa" Post Christianity in Africa**"; **"Disfigured Christianity in Africa". "Not the Christian Religion!"** These writers and authors insist that the so-called 'very religious African Christians (especially Nigerians) have derailed. The proliferation of Churches and the incredible number of founders and prophets truly go to prove that Nigerians' religiosity has not much to do

with the "here after' than 'here and now. Much of it is based on the material benefits of the individual.

Among the large Christian population of Southern Nigeria most leaders of the new Church Groups and Pentecostal Assemblies see their churches as money-yielding venture and enterprise. Behold how they advertise their 'products' in the news media and the number of hours they air their brand of 'evangelism' everyday. There is no doubt that advertisements and radio/television programmes have become huge sources of revenue for both public and private news media in Nigeria today.

Not a few of the founders of these new Christian assemblies promise miracles and wonders on earth and Nigerians who consult them in the hour of need are many. The evangelist and pastors heal. They make the blind see; the lame walk. They even raise the dead. If you have been a poor man, go to the pastor who will pray for you and change your life. He can 'see' the secrets of man's heart, tell you who your enemies are; the enemies that had used charms to destroy and put you in perpetual bondage of poverty and ill-health. The day you attend any of the grand Crusades and Miracle Assemblies your fortunes will change. Your eyes will open and your life will never be the same again. But watch out most of the pastors are occult men and women. For them and their clients every disease or ailment is 'man-made', poison. Of course no one dies a natural death. Some enemy has been responsible. The Man of God smells out witches and destroys bad medicine. In the midst of his oppressed people (oppressed by enemies, poverty and ill-health) stands a liberator the promised 'messiah'.

No one doubts that most of the peoples of Southern Nigeria are mostly Christians. But alas, a new brand of Christianity! Anybody can become a member and break away and found his or her own Church at any time. Their 'Ministers', 'Pastors' and 'Evangelists' are not usually 'ordained' or rather they 'ordain' themselves and take titles of bishops, priests, preachers and prophets. Like their Muslim counterparts these Nigerian Christians are the **most 'devout'** Christians in the whole world. Why? Because they perform pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Rome and perhaps Lourdes and Fatima. While some of the Christians truly undertake this 'holy journey' to mend their broken and sinful lives, others enroll to travel out for business. Many, who actually reach their "Promised Land", don't usually return to Nigeria again. In search of greener pastures, they find new homes overseas, in Europe, America or Asia. It has been a wonderful opportunity to take leave of the bloody country called Nigeria!

These wonderful Christians, especially the **Igbos of Nigeria**, don't fail to shock their admirers when it comes to 'Christianity in practice'. They don't practice what they profess. Large majority of Igbos still cling tenaciously to the old superstitious practices of their forebears. They still practice to the core the discriminatory caste system of their pagan ancestors that divided families into **"sons of the land" and "slaves" ('osu').** No one, not even the most exalted traditional ruler or the most renowned professor would agree to join a crusade to discard this

shameful practice. The Christian religion they claim to profess does not influence their decisions. Hypocrisy pervades their way of life.

In the Muslim world of Nigerians, the story cannot be different. Morally and spiritually Nigerian Muslims cannot be trusted no matter the number of times they visit Mecca in the year or pray daily. Nigerian Muslims and Christians are among the most corrupt politicians in the world. Morally there is little to write home about the Muslims. They commit all sorts of 'atrocities' in the name of 'Islamic practice'. How can an ex-governor of a state marry a 13-year old girl and pay a dowry of $100,000 to purchase this pearl, his grand-grand daughter? Who will doubt it! Islamic religion permits the acquisition of wives and every type of immorality and promiscuity! That is Nigerians' brand of religion and moral/spiritual practices.

It is about Nigeria and you will 'jam' a lot of confusing and amazing realities: "Nigerians are the most religious people in the world!" Why? Over 750 million of its citizens (mostly from the North) are **'devout'** Muslims. Why 'devout?' That is 'pious', dedicated' 'committed', 'staunch', 'sincere,' because they perform their hajj every year. They squander millions of public money on pilgrimage to Mecca. There in Saudi Arabia, some of the 'devout' Muslims may never return with others. Having been caught in fraudulent acts and businesses, these may languish in jail or even be executed. There are many other reasons why these people should be revered as the **'most religious people in the world'**.

The Litany may be long: They don't take alcohol 'publicly'. They cut off the limbs of poor village sinners, who steal goats and fowls or sit together in bus with women. But those highly paid officials who steal millions and billions of naira from government coffers go free! Not only that. They organize 'jihad' and cut off heads and limbs of ''infidels', non-believers, mostly Christians. They organize attacks, raid villages, set houses on fire when Christians and their other enemies are asleep. The larger the number of infidels you are able to destroy in the most dastardly, shameful, agonizing, excruciating manner, the greater your reward in paradise. And by their fruits you shall know them, devout, and most religious people in the world!

The **"most religious nation in the whole world"** in a twinkling of an eye becomes the worst and most corrupt nation on earth! The nation, Nigeria enters the list of 'terrorist' nations that may not be visited by decent and right-thinking people of the civilized world. Because her people are members of terrorist organizations, suicide-bombers, and notorious traders in hard drugs, the religion they practice becomes bankrupt. It is a misnomer, therefore, (wrong use of word), to say that Nigeria is the most religious nation in the world. What a contradiction!

Being listed among the worst terrorist nations in the modern world is very distasteful. The citizens of such nations are subjected to every type of humiliation when they try to visit other parts of the world. No one likes to sit near them in the plane or bus. They can never be trusted and given a responsible job in their land of sojourn. Has religion changed the lives of the citizens of the most populous nation in Africa?

The Most <u>Democratic</u> Nation where <u>Dictatorship</u> Reigns Supreme and Unchallenged

In Nigeria '**democracy'** means **'no rule of law'**. It is easy to practice. There is no doubt about it. Nigeria is the most 'democratic' nation under the planet. United States, Britain, France, Russia and their allies are making false claims. They should come to Nigeria and learn what democracy is all about. In Nigeria you see democracy in action!

If America's brand of democracy is said to be best, why does it take them so long a time to pass a simple bill on, for example, 'Health Care" or "Immigration". They should come to Nigeria and learn from Nigerian Law Makers.

In Nigeria a bill is not passed on the basis of its 'usefulness', either to the nation or her people. No! The simple ground for initiating and passing a bill in Nigeria is on the number of law-makers that can benefit from it. Secondly the bill's easy passage may depend largely on the alignment of the law-makers. If it will serve the interest of Muslims of the North for example, political ideologies and manifestoes play no role. The interest of the Northern Elders and Cabals is final. So the passage of bills in Nigeria does not need too much debate and scrutiny. Why waste a lot of time, money and energy when simple 'rule', as in Nigeria can do the work? There are many other examples. But take note of Nigeria's brand of democracy. It is peculiar to Nigeria. People take little or no interest in their affairs of their country. Law-makers can do whatever they like since the people never voted them in. Many did not even cast any votes. In most places no voting is ever conducted, in local, state or federal levels. So why not go about your business and let them do their thing as they like? So we arrive at very sad conclusions:

(1) It is only in Nigeria that political leaders are 'appointed' by self-styled grandmasters and not 'elected' by the people. One 'king-maker' can order every ambitious Nigerian aspiring to any high office to withdraw from the race and bury his ambition.

(2) It is only in Nigeria that local government elections are rarely organized. The king-maker selects his team and changes the players whenever he wishes. Is it not democracy?

(3) It is only in Nigeria that 'king-makers' receive the largest portion of allocated revenues and the people suffer in abject poverty. Their 'salaries' 'remunerations' are automatically deducted monthly and safely paid into their foreign and local accounts.

(4) It is only in Nigeria that elections for political offices are replaced by a system called **'zoning'.** The **presidency** is zoned to the **North East Nigeria** for 8 years; the **senate leadership** is zoned to **South West Nigeria** for 12 years; the post of **deputy senate leader** is for **Federal capital territory** for the next 8 years**; the office of house of Reps leader** is the prerogative of the **minority states.** What of the **INEC (Independent National Electoral Commission) leadership**? An **oil-producing state** must keep the post as long as they want. **Minister of petroleum and oil resources** is zoned to **Muslim states**. Oil is the most important revenue for the survival of the nation and a loyal and

committed Muslim Iman or Alhaji can handle the office better than any Christian from the south of the country. What of **Minister of information?** It can be zoned to **Igbo people of Nigeria** to keep them quiet. After all that office is not an important one in Nigerian system of democracy. So, there we are. Nigeria's brand of democracy is special and unparalleled, unmatched anywhere the so-called democracy is practiced!

Most Patient and Tolerant & Most Impatient and Disorderly People on Earth.

Who says Nigerians don't live 'double lives', the **best** and the **worst.** They are very **patient** and **tolerant** people you will get on this planet. Government can treat them anyhow and they remain calm. They rarely demonstrate against injustice mated to them. They are forced to pay electric power bills monthly when most of Nigerian towns and villages have never enjoyed electricity for months, even years. Those who enjoy any **NEPA** (as the power generating company or authority in Nigeria is known), are always ready to change or switch over to their generators immediately power failure is encountered. The disappointed people rarely complain, because they are used to failures, disappointments and failed promises. Most Nigerians are forced to pay taxes when no one cares to offer them any job opportunity.

Check, for example what an average Nigerian motorist has to put up with on their village and city roads. How many police (also called security) check-points one must contend with when roads are blocked from all sides by a multitude of uniformed police and military personnel and with any available dangerous missiles and debris, name them**, tree trunks**, **heavy iron bars, parts of broken vehicles, broken bottles and sand bags and all sorts of dangerous 'weapons of war?'** Often one meets the same scenario at the next 'check-point' barely a few yards away! One must stop and show one's vehicle and personal identity cards, including voter's cards, national identity card, **ATM** card and all your vehicle emblems, local, state and national. If you are driving a jeep or any other vehicle bearing tinted glasses, you must produce a document signed by the Inspector General of Police at Abuja authorizing you to ride on such a vehicle.

That may even be the beginning of your ordeal with the police at one check-point (there are many others in front). If you prove stubborn and impatient and refuse to "settle" the matter with a few naira, be ready to produce all the receipts of whatever you are carrying in the vehicle. If you have members of your family in your car, they all must produce documents showing who they are. This check is important. Who knows whether your 'passengers' are not armed robbers and kidnappers. And there are many of them these days.

As one security officer takes his time to do the checking with just one driver of a vehicle other motorists must **patiently** wait in line. And when it is your turn make sure you smile and give out some tip after sweating for several minutes at one check-point on the Nigerian road.

Is it at a **Nigerian bank?** Customers (Nigerians) must wait for hours **patiently**, often standing for hours to pay in or cash a simple check. Unconcerned bank managers and their officers do their trivial private business when customers wait for hours to receive any attention! Some days banks may not even open and no apologies to waiting customers who arrive so early to transact business. Reason(s)? No business, because information received confirmed **armed robbers** were on their way to rob banks. Sorry! Another reason could be that the **computers** were not working and so data could not be transferred from headquarters to local branches. No! There are many others reasons to try the patience of the oppressed Nigerian bank customers. There isn't **money** in the bank safe. Some supplies are being waited for. Their van may arrive the next day! There is of course no money in the **ATM** machine for those who could use the automated machine to collect little sum of money.

No. The bank's **power supply** could be a reason to close business for a whole day, thus sending the patient and tolerant Nigerians away without apologies. The generator may not be working because the contractor who supplies gas failed to do his job. There are too many reasons why Nigerians must be subjected to all sorts of suffering and disappointments.

Who says Nigerians are not the most **patient** people on earth? Where else under the sun can one behold such scenarios, and catastrophic situations one has to put up with in Nigeria! Please doff your caps for Nigerians. They have the nerves to tolerate injustice meted on them by public officers and authorities who are supposed to be serving the people.

But alas! Nigerians are also known to be the **most disorderly** and **most impatient** people under the sun. You don't need to travel far to be convinced. At the so called road check-points or crossroads in the villages and cities come and see for yourself what 'a **chaotic situation** means. In a twinkling of an eye a tiny one-way-road is converted to a four-way! The most **patient** people turn into the most disorderly mob. There is no rule of law and everyone is caught up in the web! Like a tied and locked up slave, who sees a little loophole for freedom, confused and frustrated Nigerians break loose from their dungeons and clamor for liberty. In a hurry to attain their desires and get to their destinations, they unleash untold hardship on their fellow harassed citizens. Some truly **impatient** and out of frustration vent their anger on fellow oppressed brothers and sisters. They fight for every bit of space and opportunity offered to them. It is a very deplorable situation.

Most Critical of Their Leaders & Most Accommodating Citizens

When the Nigerian economy and political institution finally collapsed in the hands of the corrupt politicians led by leaders in military uniform, truly began the final exodus of masses of Nigerian from the bedeviled nation. Their best brains migrated to other countries. They could not tolerate the political and frivolous antics of politicians in army uniform. The injured Nigerians, very critical of their leaders, poured abuses on these leaders as they fled their fatherland. Some

continued their campaign against bad leadership from abroad and vowed never to return to Nigeria again. Truly many have nationalized in their new-found-lands.

Who will believe it that these same Nigerians, living at home or abroad would turn round to crown their once-discredited political leaders kings in the new political dispensation? They are ready to nominate and vote for them at elections or even return some 'unopposed!'

Naturally wealth is power. Having accumulated more than they will ever need in life's time, they look for power too, and political power for that matter! This is where they easily draw poor Nigerians into their net. Crazy Nigerians, also in search of wealth or oftentimes of "survival" are ready to crown the criminal their king, as long as he has the money! Nigerians attend their feasts and their campaign rallies where they are usually rewarded with some crumbs that fall from the master's table.

Any attempt to discredit the budding and rising billionaire by his 'enemies' is usually met with stiff resistance from his supports. Demonstration rallies and carnivals are organized and songs of praise to restore the sagging dignity of the known 419er can surprise those who know the victim thoroughly well. His praise singers maintain he is their hero. Wherever he is heading to his supporters are ready to follow. They are ready to swim and sink with him. He is their king, their hero, whatever the realities of his life. This is the true mercurial attitude of Nigerians, their inconsistent 'attegiamento' towards those that elsewhere, out of shame for their criminal activities should never be allowed to smell any public office anywhere and at any time in the history of a nation. Nigerians forget easily and blow hot and cold at the same time. It is a tragedy.

Very Kind to Foreigners – Can Hate Their Kinsmen and Fight to a Finish

There is no doubt that Nigerians show extraordinary love and acceptance to foreigners (white and black) they find in their midst. They harbor illegal aliens and refugees from neighboring countries like Chad, Niger and citizens of other countries (India, Pakistan, and Lebanon) that come to seek fortune in Nigeria. They trust these foreigners more than their own countrymen. You don't blame Nigerians for their acts of charity. Maybe their religious sentiments have a part to play here.

In the eighties when Nigeria was enjoying relative peace and prosperity accruing from the oil boom, it was widely known that Nigerians welcomed and accepted Ghanaians who fled their fatherland those days in search of Greener Pastures in Nigeria. Even when government ordered the repatriation of the illegal aliens, most Nigeria families offered refuge to the desperate Ghanaians. Surely when the 'visitors' decided finally to leave, Nigerians gave them gifts and escorted them to the borders to escape the wrath of the immigration officers. You just cannot beat Nigerians when they have to deal with 'friends' from other nations.

Unfortunately these same Nigerians, young and old, can hate and fight their kinsmen, countrymen, and their very neighbors and go to any extent to win court cases. In some communities and among some ethnic groups, the first son of a family is ever ready to chase his very brothers and sisters out of their natural homes and make these perpetual refugees, simply because an obsolete community law maintains that the first son of a family takes all that belongs to the family, house, land and economic trees after the death of the father of a family.

These loving and kindhearted Nigerians who would never marry a so-called "Osu" (Igbo word for untouchables) from a neighboring community will be ready to take a wife, slave or free-born from any other part of the world, except from his own community. For them 'untouchables' don't exist anywhere except in their very communities.

The Most Patriotic – The Most Resentful of a United Nigeria

When the once Libyan powerful president, Muamur Ghaddafi suggested that Nigeria, the giant of Africa should be divided into two to make way for peace in one of the most turbulent, ungovernable and variegated nations in Africa, some **"patriotic**" Nigerians, mostly politicians poured all sorts of abuses on the Libyan leader and called him all sorts of dirty names they could think about. These politicians and legislators (none of them chiefs, emirs, obongs, obas or genuine community leaders), would not like to hear any such "catastrophe" befall Nigeria, their beloved fatherland. They cherished a united Nigeria more than anything else!

Are they sincere? Don't listen to those 'patriotic' Nigerians. Not up to 20% of Nigerians love their fatherland. They hate the national anthem and flag. They don't believe Nigeria is a 'united nation'. If these folks love a strong, peaceful and united Nigeria, why the agitation for more and more states? Is the state of California in United States of America not bigger than most European countries? Why have the Americans not opted for more states in their fatherland?

I have not heard any Nigerian who said or wrote the words **"I love Nigeria!"** or **"I am proud of my country".** There are no **'T- shirts'** bearing such symbols. I have not heard any Nigerian political leader who ended his speech or address to Nigerian people with the refrain **"God bless Nigeria!"** American politicians and leaders usually end their addresses with **"God bless America!"** Americans love their America and fight for its survival and unity. They spend every dime and energy to protect lives and property of American citizens (White, Black, Red and Brown), within and outside their fatherland. Religion and ethnicism cannot divide them.

Not Nigerian leaders! If any opinion survey could be organized, no doubt that the result would be stunning. More than 80% of Nigerians wish that Nigeria should be broken up to more than 36 countries. They would wish that the 'realignment' of the entity called Nigeria be effected today! A united Nigeria is a far cry from most Nigerian citizens. Nigerian political systems, parties and manifestoes point to fragmentation of the nation.

One of the past presidents of Nigeria had said it and it is part of the Nigeria history today: "There is no basis for unity!" Why then the hue and cry against Ghaddafi's proposal for break up the Nigerian nation, at least for the interest of peace and freedom of religion. Those communities and states that want complete freedom of religious practices like Islam and sharia can have their way without infringing on other people's religious sentiments. Relative peace may reign.

Nigerian Youths, Most Respectful and Submissive - Most Abusive and Nasty

Most Respectful youth

The old tribal and traditional respect for the elder in almost all Nigerian ethnic groups has defied (resisted) the insinuations of the western democracy and secularism to follow the dictates (direction or order of reason and conscience) of self respect, independence, equality, liberation from slavery and so on. These dictates affirm the dignity of man and equality and shuns any ideology of 'primitive' allegiance to authority and in our case here to an elder, especially a far-distant 'senior' or elder.

Among Nigerian ethnic groups today, the Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba and the smaller ethnic groups we still find respect for seniors and elders a revered institution and tradition. Young people greet the elders, known to one or not, offer seats or seating positions to 'superiors in age and dignity. In some ethnic groups in Nigeria it is rare to find youths of closer relations address their seniors by the proper names. As sign of respect for the seniors (brothers, sisters, uncles and aunts), the young call their elders not by names but by pseudonyms. Among the Igbo people, the elder is 'dede', 'dada'; every woman, known and unknown is 'mama'. A more elderly man or woman is 'papa' 'papa nke ukwu', or 'mama'or 'mama nke ukwu'. Still to avoid any sign of disrespect, among very close relatives, families and extended families some 'strange' names and 'nomenclature' are coined or invented. Names like, 'Oga', 'Kunku', 'Nkwa Nkwa', 'Tenta'. While the younger generation may no more use these older words and names, they have come to apply names like 'Brother', Sister', 'Anti', 'Uncle' etc. This is still another way of expressing respect and even affection towards one's elder or senior. The use of first names will not only show disrespect, but may uncover a state of suppressed aggression. In this case the elder is not only abused but may also be warned to beware. The younger person is not happy. He is aggrieved

Since this type of behavior and respect for elders is commendable virtue among all peoples of the world, we are happy to note that Nigerian youths possess the virtue in abundance. While the influence of 'secularism' or 'modernity' may lead to some adaptations or even the abandonment of this tradition, any Nigerian may still assert without contradiction that this tradition is a cherished one in our communities, ancient and modern.

Most Abusive youth

The most respectful and admirable youth may without warning turn to an abusive and aggressive fellow on earth. He throws all virtues of decency away and is ready to confront the elder, known to him or not, no matter the elder's dignity and position in community with the most abusive and shocking language one can imagine! The 'Oga' becomes an 'idiot'. The former 'papa' becomes 'an old papa' that must get out of the way!' The abusive language will no doubt include rhetorical questions like "Who are you?" "Do you give me food" etc'

The traditional respect for the elder is thrown to the winds as Nigeria's radicalized youth disgrace their elders in the families and in communities. At public gatherings the younger ones take front seats while elders may stand or find accommodation elsewhere, as their sons and daughters don't take notice of their presence any more. At communal meals elders have to serve themselves or go hungry as younger ones grab best seats, serve themselves with the best food and drinks. Days are gone when elders should sit and their food and drinks are served them by their sons and daughters.

Even when some cultured person often reminds the youth to vacate a seat for the elder or to serve the elder first such 'commands' or 'reminders' are greeted with derision, that is with contempt or ridicule. The young ones seem to ask for explanation. "Is this fellow looking for honor and respect not crazy?" Doesn't he know we are in modern times where equality, autonomy and individualism and in vogue and should replace the old fashioned and primitive tradition of respect for elders? Who is an elder by the way?

In closer communities and societies the "dede" or "dada" or "mama" and the other old pseudonyms have given way to western nomenclature. "Anti" or "uncle" is in vogue and there would be nothing wrong in addressing an elder – chief, pastor, elder brother or sister by the first name. The younger one feels no qualms in even asking the elder to vacate a seat for the person who got it first no matter the age or status.

In the past, during the glorious reign of respect and obeisance or curtsy to the elder, it used to be an unfamiliar sight to see the elder join the queue at bus stations, fuel station or in the markets. The young people used to be ever-ready to give way the elder and in some cases personally serve the elder who is quietly persuaded to stay aside while his needs were taken care of. Unfortunately today the elders may no more expect such services from the youths and it is quite regrettable.

During the modern times of kidnapping and violent robberies not a few elders irrespective of age and status had been violently manhandled, detained, abused, tortured and disgraced by the youth. Some kidnapped elders who ventured talking to their capturers by way of counseling had met with brutal treatments, including terrible beatings, punishments, abuses and

even death threats if the elder dared preach repentance, conversion and good morals to the spoilt and aggressive youths.

Is it possible to reverse the trend of events? Can order be restored where traditional and moral values such as respect for the elder receive proper attention which they have enjoyed in the past in the Nigerian society?

The Nigerian Factor: "This is Nigeria". "You are in Nigeria"

"This is Nigeria" is common expression Nigerians use to inform any one who cares that 'truth', 'honesty', and sincerity', has little or no place in the matter at hand. The Machiavellian principle is applicable, namely 'the action justifies the means'. Machiavelli, the Italian politician and statesman (1469 – 1527) advocated putting expediency (convenience or pragmatism) above political morality and the use of deceit in statecraft.. In other words one should not have any scruples (sense of right and wrong, conscience, principles or ethics) in gaining what one wants. With the statement ":This is Nigeria" or "You are in Nigeria" tells you right away that with regard to the matter at hand "international law" or "rule of law" does not apply. You are in a different world altogether. The world of Nigerians, where the rules of the game rarely apply.

"**This is Nigeria**" or "**You are in Nigeria"** warns you to beware. The expression is synonymous with contradictions and insincerity. The way they do their things are different and it works for them! Do not be worried. Don't be embarrassed. Do not complain. Just try to understand and accommodate the strange things you see and encounter.

"Nigeria Today" – The Best – The Worst", takes its course from the type of negative moral values which Nigerians cherish and adore today at the detriment of what should be consistently and without any qualification truly the best. Do Nigerians always mean what they repeatedly say and maintain in everyday speeches and actions? We can hardly vouch for Nigerians. A few examples may clarify our stand.

Nearly every Nigerian political leader and aspirant to any political office, like their counterparts all over the world would normally insist on **"free, fair and credible' elections.**' Everyone abhors any fraudulent activities that might jeopardize the chances of any aspirant. They condemn election rigging in all its ramifications. In asserting what would look like a "vow" demonstrating their sincerity and commitment to truth and honesty, Nigerians exercise no qualms in asking God or Allah to take their life away if they ever lied or had any intention to cheat anybody! No. Do not be deceived; Nigerians generally don't mean what they say.

Behold, as they condemn an evil, they at the same time plan seriously how to beat the gun. Their plans include of course the ways and means of gaining advantages over other aspirants and competitors. Their reason? "This is Nigeria. You have to fight to win the race no matter the actions taken to win."

As political aspirants climb the mountain tops and trees to condemn election rigging, even pointing accusing fingers at named opponents and political parties, no one will be surprised to be told that the accusers had already perfected and marshalled out their plans to rig the so-called forthcoming elections. The plans must include multiple voting, stuffing of ballot boxes with the desired votes, sneaking in illegal ballot boxes and stealing those of their opponents. Do not count out plans to bribe security officers, opponents' agents and of course electoral officials, including the INEC.

Their 'sayings' and 'doings' are full of contradictions. At least we are sure of Nigeria's political leaders. They claim to be **'democrats'** to the core. They claim they believe in the freedom of speech and movement. But if you don't agree with them in politics your career in politics is doomed. **Democrats** today are ever-ready to turn **dictators** tomorrow and stifle (strangle to death) any form of opposition as they seek to realize their political goals. Democrats in name who form hundreds of political parties today in a twinkling of an eye compromise their integrity by dismantling all their newly formed parties' emblems to join the **winning party** where they feel they have more chances of grabbing a political post. If Nigerians are true **democrats** why do they decamp from one party and join the winning party?

The so-called democrats which claim they cherish democratic principles are gradually, through the mixed signals they are sending to the Nigerian electorate modeling a political system which eventually becomes **one-party-system!** Hence the slogan "If you can't beat them, join them!" If Nigerians through the contradictory and dubious life-style of their political leaders eventually, either by omission or commission end up embracing one-party-system of government how comes the need for any organized elections. Why do we need to spend billions of naira in elections where one candidate is a credible competitor?

Even though they find themselves under an umbrella of 'one party', quarrels between winners and losers used to be many. No wonder then that contestants who fail to outmaneuver their opponents and so lose the election are the first to cry 'foul!' and even go to court to seek redress. It is not a question of who is cheating the other, who is playing according to the laid down rules. No! It is a question of 'who outsmarts the other party!

Most Resourceful – The Most Wasteful People and Nation

Before 'fast business', including '419' and drug-pushing gained ground in Nigeria, Nigerians used to cross mountains and rivers in search of wealth. They used to undertake all sorts of mini and dirty jobs to get money to feed their families and keep life going. In some ethnic groups and communities family ties are so strong that one head of a family may be forced to cater for many extended family members. Some rich Igbos today do not fail to recount how they started with nothing but honestly ended up wealthy merchants. Some had to travel from house to house

picking empty bottles and cans to sell to manufacturers of fake products just to make a few pennies or kobo.

Many wealthy Nigerians from various ethnic groups do not fail to recount their humble, painful and miserable beginning. Life was never rosy for them as some of them could not even finish up their primary and secondary education as a result of poverty. Parents and families could not afford school fees, school sandals, school bags and books. Some dropped out of school because the burden was too much for the mother who had to go it alone as the husband died when the kids were yet toddlers.

Many wealthy Nigerians who had it rough in life served so many masters and ladies in all sorts of trade and domestic chores. Some, who were not so lucky, were dismissed by their masters and mistresses on trumped-up charges of stealing or bad behavior. The discharged "unfaithful" servant had to find new masters who could employ them and so give them a fair trial.

All said and done, it must be clear to all and sundry seeking for fame and greatness that it can never be so rosy to attain such status and statures in life. One has to suffer to attain great heights. Servants who were lucky with their masters and mistresses and received help and support must still be careful on how to begin their own trade. In other words one has to be **resourceful.** One has to be creative and ingenious. One has to be imaginative and capable of managing the little he has received from benefactors. The converse is **wasteful.** The wasteful servant will not be able to make it in life. He will become poor having lavished the little he received from those who wished him well and success in life.

Perhaps the scenario we are painting here may not apply in reality to the Nigerian modern society. Days have truly gone when the majority of Nigerians embraced servitude and lowliness to rise to prosperity. No! Today suffering and long days of service under a master or mistress may not suit an average Nigerian youth as they seek to rise to highest rungs of the ladder to achieve wealth and greatness. There are so many easy ways to get to the same height without pains and even licking the dust. These other easy ways include robbery, drug-pushing, kidnapping, '419', prostitution and many others. Immediately one succeeds in grabbing immense wealth, one rises to the top. Literacy may not have any role to play if you have money.

\Whatever the case may be, whether he acquires his or her wealth by sheer benevolence of people, through service, hard work and suffering or by dubious and questionable means one thing is certain about the spending character of Nigerians. They are wasteful to the core. This is clearly manifested in their flamboyant life-stype, which is demonstrable in the type of personal houses and homes they build for themselves. As long as the means, the money is there, one is free to build for self and family estates in each Nigerian state capital. One can purchase any type of car and as many as possible.

Since governments are run by the same true Nigerians one can see the same wasteful spending disease manifested in the type of projects they undertake. As long as the money is in the coffers of the state treasury and having stowed away the much he needs for extra personal needs, one could undertake the mounting of billboards advertising government projects and achievements in office. No! That is yet nothing to show that there is enough money to spend, than to waste. Why not begin a project like the manufacture of aircraft and cars even though there are no airfields and roads? There is money in government coffers and political leaders must spend as they like to show that something is being done for the people.

Why not begin a nuclear plant project? After all third world nations like India, Pakistan and Iran are nuclear powers! Nigeria is the most populous and richest nation in Africa. Why not begin multi-billion projects like hotels, universities and polytechnics in each local government of the state even though government may not have any intention of completing any or even going half-way? The projects can be abandoned at any time, especially when there is a drop in oil revenue which surely affects federal government allocations to state and local governments. No wonder there are so many abandoned projects in Nigeria. Multi-billions are **wasted** in ill-conceived, useless, unpopular and unplanned projects. "This is Nigeria". You can't beat them in wasteful and reckless spending.

Free, Fair, Credible Elections in Nigeria

"Why do they **waste** such incredible amounts of money in such a project?", one may ask. Nigerian political leaders as well as every electorate know right from the start of an electoral process that the exercise is doomed to failure, yet everyone insists on carrying out all the programs and requirements which would be fair, free and credible election! These include formation of new parties, revision of voters' register, creation of new and more voting centers and booths to accommodate the teeming numbers of voters who would troop out to vote for national leaders of their choice (even though their votes will never be counted!) Other measures that would help make the elections **free, fair and credible** include the appointment of federal, state and local government electoral commissioners, agents and security officers. Thousands, if not millions of ballot boxes must of course be provided. To ensure **free, fair and credible elections** there may even be need to introduce the latest electoral gadgets and system yet to be practiced in developed nations like United States of America, Britain and France.

Why do we go all the length to spend billions of naira if not dollars in such wasteful exercises? Political pundits and experts may supply the answer thus: "It is all necessary in a democratic process. The spending 'avenues' must be diversified so that more operators of the system, local and foreign may gain from the booty! This is typical a Nigerian factor, **squander mania, an idiosyncrasy and eccentricity, a detestable unconventional behavior,** a system of

wasteful spending in Nigeria, where the privileged and the rich continue to grow richer and the poor, poorer.

To eliminate such wasteful spending in the Nigerian system of governance, especially in their electoral system, perhaps one **mad man** could have offered a way out of the mess, a ridiculous solution to the nightmare. When the Igbos want to say the truth, they put the words into the mouth of a mad man. **"Dear countrymen why do you waste such amount of money every time on such useless project, like elections and voting? Why do you involve the so-called electorate and people who don't know and care about what you do? You blind leaders, have you not heard about 'grassroots democracy?' Let each community or local government send a representative to Abuja or Lagos and there you people can select and appoint your political leaders. That will truly be free, fair and credible 'election!"**

CHAPTER THREE

MANY 'LEADERS' – FEW 'FOLLOWERS'

In Nigeria everyone wants to be a distinguished leader and a **'Number One', with many distinguished titles** for that matter. No one wants to 'follow.' No one will therefore be surprised at the scandalous proliferation of political parties and churches in our fatherland. Where one fails in a bid to grab the leadership of an old or a new Church or party, a usual option is to decamp and found a new one. Here the new ambitious leader has the sky as his limit in the practice of leading his or her frustrated people.

Who should be surprised that Nigerian policy makers are "wiser" than the leaders of the developed nations of the world, including the United States of America, France, Germany, Britain and others who operate basically two political parties, namely the Democratic and Republican parties or simply, the Progressives and the Conservatives. Not so in Nigeria! Room must be made for all who want to lead to have their field day. It would not matter if more than !00 political parties are formed in Nigeria! When they expel you from one party, take refuge in another and there vie for leadership position.

It is **ONLY IN NIGERIA** that illiterate money-bags get elected as lawmakers. Consequently, they go to the legislature not to make laws but business. These elected lawmakers render insignificant service attached to their high offices to their nation and the electorate. They spend months and years in trifles like **impeachment** of any official they didn't like. **ELSEWHERE, in developed nations** law-making is a serious matter. Lawmakers are revered politicians, whose work truly determines the future of their nation.

Why should more states, local government areas, and autonomous communities not be created to satisfy emerging politicians, chiefs and traditional rulers? They need well-defined

boundaries where they alone should exercise their authority and lord it over a depressed people. There are leaders everywhere, but none who can lead well!

Nigerians are people who thrive in disunity. With a national population of about one hundred and forty million, there are apparently 36 states and the number continues to increase each year. Each new administration endeavours to please the people and agitators by creating new states, local governments, and autonomous communities. Contrast this with the United States, for example, with a population of over 260 million, yet has only 50 states and has not contemplated creation of a new state in many years.

Divisions in Nigeria underline the extent of disunity in the nation. It started long ago. The 1885 Berlin Conference, which heralded the partition of African nations among Europeans, secured Nigeria for Britain. Britain first administered Nigeria as two separate units: the Protectorate of Northern Nigerian, and the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, including Lagos Colony.

Nigeria became a single unit in 1914 when the two protectorates were amalgamated. Nigeria went through a number of Constitutional Conferences, both in Lagos and in London, and achieved political independence on October 1, 1960, with three regions – East, West, and North. Nigeria became a Republic on October 1, 1963, with four regions – North, West, Mid-West, and East.

The army began the disruption of the inherited Westminster arrangement in 1966. Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon (later General Gowon) emerged to lead the country after the assassination of General Ironsi, and further divided Nigeria into **twelve states** in 1967, in the midst of uncertainty over the Biafra political threat to secede.

Murtala Mohammed who took over from Gowon created additional seven states in 1975. Babangida added two more States in 1987, and made it **thirty states** in 1991. Sani Abacha who succeeded Babaginda made the number of States **thirty-six.** No one is sure of the number of new States any successive administrations would add to the existing number. There is an incredible proliferation of local government areas and autonomous communities in the various states of Nigeria.

Nigerians want their local governments to be turned into states overnight and the electoral wards and constituencies turned into local governments. The rationale behind their wish is that such arrangements would bring about rapid grassroots development. Yet there is little or no evidence to substantiate such economic-political theory. The only plausible explanation is that emerging leaders want to carve out individual hamlets, or enclaves where they reign as kings.

Power intoxicates - one man grabs it and does it all! Generally Nigerians who rise to power cling to it tenaciously. They don't easily hand over power to successors and rarely

concede defeat in elections. Losers file lawsuits mainly to destabilise the incoming administration.

The same phenomenon is also found in the **church** circles. People and clerics who clamour for the creation of new parishes and new dioceses believe such institutions would accommodate emerging leaders and possibly their own **"sons of the soil".** Those who support the proliferation of dioceses in Nigeria may have selfish motives. Ethnic interests contribute nothing to the growth and unity of the church. Yet the farce, the ridiculous situation persists.

The agitation for new ecclesiastical entities and particularly dioceses in Nigeria is evenly matched by the number of clerics who contest the **office of the bishop**. The passionate desire of many priests to grab this office is matched by the number of imaginary new dioceses being "created" by such leaders of the people and priests they want to lead. At the rate the agitation for new dioceses continues to mount in Nigeria, many people think that in the next ten to twenty years each viable parish – Catholic or Anglican - will attain a diocesan status.

A perplexing situation in the Nigerian (catholic) church makes some honest members ask questions when, for example a diocese becomes vacant as a result of death or retirement of the incumbent bishop. "Why has Rome or the Pope not appointed a new bishop? Why the long delay? Why is it taking so long taking a decision?"

No one may yet blame Rome or the Pope or other ecclesiastical authorities involved in the task of appointing a new bishop. A possible cause of delay is usually agitation against or for a named successor or preferred candidate. Sometimes to resolve the impasse authorities may impose its on candidate and ignore protests by the people or the ambitious aspirants. But agitators are not easily pacified in Nigeria. They often head to **law courts, ecclesiastical and civil!**

Contenders who lose the battle for the bishopric office often take other drastic actions to protest their defeat. They write calumnious protest letters to Rome to discredit the winner. But most of their frivolous antics have little impact on the Rome's decisions, *"for the Lord does not look on the appearance or on the height of his stature, the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."* (I Samuel: 16.6-13)

When losers discover they have lost the battle some take to their heels to distant lands on sabbatical. After the loss of such a terrific battle it would be time to take a leave of absence. They need a period of cooling-off and time to count their losses. They could also analyze why the fierce campaigns mounted to secure the high office did not succeed. The defeated candidate often despises or rejects any appointment by the new bishop. Nothing, except the office of the bishop is his rightful status. It is a 'do and die' affair in Nigeria; behold the struggle for **leadership**!

Nigerians do not usually pursue elusive dreams. They pursue high ideals. So the revered office of the bishop is a hotly contested one. The power invested in this office is tremendous. Church history confirms that bishops and emperors were powerful political as well as

ecclesiastical leaders in Europe. Not much has changed today as far as their authority is concerned.

Not a few Nigerians and foreigners interested in the future of the nation maintain that the numerous problems which the nation has faced since independence have their roots in **leadership** crisis. As Nigerian patriots were singing freedom songs before 1960 most adults did not fail to express their skepticism on the ability of the black man to lead as a politician and even as a pastor of souls. The older generation had always preferred the white man's administration than that of the native political elite.

No wonder more than 50 years of independence, one still finds among the people a great majority that would be ready to welcome back the white administrators – the British, the French, Italian, Belgians, and the Dutch – the erstwhile colonial masters, if they would agree to take back the reigns of government from the natives. Nigerians have lost hope in the leadership of the nation. There is frustration everywhere. Expressions such as the following point to the heart of the problem: "If our leaders had the right intention." "If they would think about tomorrow." "If they could lead by example." "If they had the fear of God." "If they had believed in after-life." "If they could realise the type of questions God would ask them at the judgement day!"

The wish for God-fearing, unselfish, patriotic leadership seems to be everybody's greatest problem. "If we had good leaders in government...there would be electricity everywhere – 24 hours a day – 7 days a week as one finds in most developed and developing countries. There would be potable water everywhere and people would not suffer from water-borne diseases. Our roads would not be filled with potholes. Perhaps accidents that claim hundreds of innocent lives in Nigeria could have been curtailed. Surely food would be abundant as transportation would be cheap."

If Nigerian leaders ever think about the future of their children and the younger generation, they would not have allowed our schools to remain closed for most part of the year. Teachers would not be engaging in industrial actions – actions that have left a greater part of the population to remain illiterate and jobless. If the Nigeria leadership could live up to expectation, a litany of abundant goodies would extend to infinity. Could it be only a wishful thinking?

Few Nigerians Want to Follow

If Nigeria can be described as one of the most disorderly nations in the world, one of the most corrupt, insensitive, inefficient places under the sun, one of the most expensive countries under the sun, dirty, callous, noisy, ostentatious, dishonest and vulgar and in short, among the most unpleasant places on earth, there is no doubt the masses, the followers have their own contributions. Truly it can be very frustrating leading a chaotic crowd. There is little or no disciple and few are ready to obey and keep laws.

Because greatness for example is measured by the number of titles and academic degrees one accumulates everyone wants to lead and not follow. Nigerians' passion and crave for titles of honor can embarrass foreigners and sons and daughters who are not brought up in this land. In fact the passionate attachment to first place positions and titles is often referred to as a Nigerian 'disease.' And if you fail to address the owners of these borrowed robes correctly you may get into trouble. Name them - Professor, Dr., Engineer, Architect, Chief; (They are too many to mention). **ELSEWHERE** people don't worry about titles. They don't attach titles to their proper and surnames. Humility or simplicity is not valued in Nigeria. It not a revered virtue.

There is no doubt that Nigerians like big titles by which they must be known, addressed even after death. In church and society misplacement of titles or failure to address holders of such titles can always generate controversies. If mistakes are not immediately corrected, a celebration can come to an abrupt close, as an offended title holder abandons his honored position on a high table as a chair person or supporter.

At a public ceremony an invitee may take offence if his proper title is not properly enunciated by the master of ceremonies. As far as tiles and rightful positions in Nigerian society are concerned, masters of ceremonies, organizers of occasions must meticulously adhere to 'protocols' and to the correct titles attached to proper names and surnames. Whether the **names** are on ascending or descending order of magnitude, care must be taken, for Nigerians don't think like other people who usually don't care about titles society imposes on them. The British Prime Minister is **Mr.** White Blare. That of the United States is **Mr**. John Green. Who cares to know if he had other titles, including **'Engineer, Dr., Prof., Chief** and many others? "Mr President or Minister" serves the purpose and does not irritate the revered leader of the nation or state.

No! Not in Nigeria. You are in Nigeria. These things other peoples and nations regard as unimportant, insignificant, unnecessary, and meaningless are highly revered in Nigeria. The often hard-won or underserved title or even a grabbed one must be attached to the proper names. Who should ignore it?

Because they love first-class honors and positions, few Nigerians like to take a second position even where it is clear that some one else around had been honored with *"**Agu na eche mba 1"*** (of Igboland). **(Lion that guards the community).** No one comes second or takes the rear position, name them: **"Ogbu Agu 1", (Lion killer), Ogbu ehi 1"(cow killer), "Ochiri Ozuo 1"(One who feeds the hungry people), "Omere oha 1". (Man of the people)**

Often what worries most Nigerians who don't admire this way of life and thinking is that it is all a misnomer (wrong use of name or word). It is in fact a **misnomer** to name a shanty, (a poorly made hut, shed or cabin), a **first-class hotel**. What may be truly misleading in this 'Nigerian factor', is often what the names and titles portray may actually be the **opposite** of what is meant! In fact the **"Agu na eche mba"** may be the most dreaded man in society, one who must never be trusted and in fact should be avoided! The "**Omere oha 1" or "Ochiri ozua 1"**, is

never known to be a cheerful giver, never a **philanthropist** in any sense. No! He even removes from the poor and enriches himself from what belongs to the community. The names and titles are imposed on holders as signs of **greatness.** But by their fruits you shall know them!

Christ's exhortation on humility and 'common sense' has a perennial relevance **in the civilized world,** in every society and for every people**. "If you are invited to a feast, do not sit down in a place of honor….(Lk 14.8)"**. But that the reverse is true in Nigeria**: "If you are invited to a feast, go straight to the high table, occupy the front seat and first position…."** In Nigeria, at parties and marriage feasts, every guest craves for the high table. Often the number of high table guests exceeds the number of "floor members". Everyone wants to be recognized.

It is **only in Nigeria** that the paradox ***"The first shall be the last"*** assumes its literal meaning. If your number **is 'ONE',** surely the first person expected to enter the bus or airplane, if the number of your seat or ticket is **ONE,** take care to struggle; otherwise you lose both your seat and place! Someone who arrived late, who came last**,** who had no number may grab your position. In Nigeria people (men and women, young and old) struggle for everything. There is little or no 'queue up' in any social interaction. Elsewhere the statement "The first shall be the last" expresses something seemingly absurd and foolish, yet in reality can be true.

The Rat Chase

Insensitivity to the people's predicament seems to offer the proof that in a large measure the Nigerian political leadership is a failure. What are the elected leaders of the people – the senators, members of the house of representatives, ministers with or without portfolios doing while, for example millions of Nigerian citizens live in abject poverty and most of the amenities that give meaning to life are in short supply? What are they discussing in their upper and lower houses when millions of Nigerians live in perpetual fear of armed bandits and hoodlums? Are they not like Nero – the wicked Roman emperor who was enjoying himself – playing music when Rome was burning? Are most of the Nigerian leaders not chasing rats when their houses are burning, when their kit and kin are suffering?

Surely they are not interested in the people's predicaments. Rather they are busy furnishing their houses and offices with millions of tax-payers' money – buying the most expensive overseas' travels, and of course, buying mansions and banking their looted money in foreign banks. The noise they make in their assemblies swallow up the cries of the oppressed of the land. They and their 'town criers' fail to realise that "Charity begins at home." Why on earth do they decide on taking overseas tour so soon without first visiting the local government areas and local communities, and experience, first hand the tragedies and misfortunes of the beleaguered people of this region of the world? They should have paid extensive official visits to villages and towns that had been cut off from the rest of Nigeria by gully erosions and

impassable roads. They would have got firsthand information what it means to be an abandoned people!

In Nigeria today, few traditional institutions exist or function. The village chiefs that in the past cared about security, unity and peace have abandoned their role models. Town unions, where they exist, are nothing but platforms for leaders who want to rise to power to show their heads. Only factions of dangerously opposing political and economic interests exist. The villagers seem to have been abandoned.

It is not only the political leaders of Nigeria that will be judged for the atrocities they have committed against the people. Parents, teachers, pastors of souls and traditional leaders – elders of the people – Ndi Eze, Chiefs and the rest of the titled men and women of our communities should be made to realise that tussles between traditional rulership and town union contribute immensely to disunity and acrimony in various Nigerian communities.

Instead of asking for the gift of wisdom, like that of Solomon to govern and lead their subjects to salvation, most of our traditional rulers ask for wealth and power to ruin those who oppose their poor leadership. Many charge money to settle little disputes among their subjects and they are not honest and truthful.

Many have closed their ears to the cries of the oppressed subjects who are harassed by all sorts of evils, ranging from armed confrontation by bandits to oppression and dispossession of their lands and property by powerful privileged few in our society. Do our traditional rulers fight or abet evil and crime in modern Nigerian society? This is an interesting question and those who feel disturbed by this question should try to investigate.

Pastors of souls as leaders of the people may not be exonerated from the crisis of leadership in Nigeria. There are too many pastors and Churches in Nigeria, in every nook and cranny but little or no impact of the type of evangelisation these “Men and Women of God” carry out. Christ, the Good Shepherd taught in word and example what it means to shepherd the flock. Christ, the Good Shepherd came "so that they may have life and have it abundantly." (John 10.10) There is nothing a good shepherd would not do for his flock to save them from any danger. He offered his life for the salvation of mankind.

Unfortunately most of those entrusted with the spiritual welfare of the people fail to live up to expectations. They do not side with the oppressed. And worst only just a few come out openly to condemn injustice in our society. They sacrifice the gospel message on the altar of human respect, fear of criticism or even persecution. They forget the words of Paul to Timothy:

> Before God and before Christ Jesus who is to be judge of the living and the dead, I charge you, in the name of his appearing and of his kingdom; proclaim the message and, welcome or unwelcome, insist on it. Refute falsehood, correct error,

> give encouragement – but do all with patience and with care to instruct. (2 Timothy, 4.1)

Pastors of souls who feel they are called to preach the word of God in whatever capacity and whichever Church or religious assembly must prove beyond reasonable doubt that they understand the power of the word of God. Like Christ they should 'be going about doing good' in word and action. "By their fruits you shall know them." They are the first "commissioned" teachers of the people and should be seen doing the teaching. They are to instruct the ignorant: "How then are they to call upon him if they have not come to believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard of him? And how will they hear of him unless there is preacher for them. And how will there be preachers if they are not sent? (Romans: 10.14) Someone has to lead.

It is not necessary for all the messengers of God to belong to the same group in order to preach the word effectively. Christ's 'directives' are clear in this regard, namely on using the name of Jesus. John said to him, 'Master we saw someone who is not one of us driving out devils in your name, and because he was not one of us we tried to stop him.' But Jesus said: 'You must not stop him'. No one who works a miracle in my name could soon afterwards speak evil of me. Any one who is not against us is for us." (Mark: 9.38)

Pastors of souls should of course realise that leadership is a vocation. Like Nigerians who seek political office, modern pastors, prophets, healers and founders of Churches must know that spiritual call to apostleship and mission and of course adequate preparation for the high office can never be relegated to the background when the time of reckoning comes, the separation of the ‘true prophets’ from charlatans.

> "No one takes this honour on himself; it need a call from God, as in Aaron's case. And so it was not Christ who gave himself the glory of becoming high priest, but the one who said to him. You are my son; today I have begotten you. And in another place: "You are a priest forever, of the order of Melchizedek." (Hebrews: 5.3)

The above passage from epistle to the Hebrews clearly reminds all who seek public offices, particularly ecclesiastical offices that leadership is an office or position that requires a spiritual authority or mandate from God who is the owner of all authority. The Old Testament is full of accounts of true prophets of God who rejected their call to service on the ground that they were unworthy of the vocation. Jonah tried to dodge the call, but was forced to embrace, of course with assurance from God that he would succeed. Jonah thought he was not capable and so rebelled against the mission: "The word of Yahweh was addressed to Jonah, son of Amittai: 'Up!' he said, go to Nineveh, the great city, and proclaim to them that their wickedness has forced

itself upon me.' Jonah set about running away from Yahweh. But God threw a hindrance at the sea' (Jonah 1,2).

In the case of Jeremiah, the prophet was assured that God had called him even from his mother's womb. "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you came to birth I consecrated you; I appointed you as prophet to the nations." (Jer. 1.4) But Jeremiah would not be 'flattered!' "Lord Yahweh, you see, I do not know how to speak. I am only a child!' Only with great amount of persuasion would the Man of God accept the call. "Do not say, 'I am only a child,' for you must go to all whom I send you. Do not be afraid of confronting them, for I am with you to rescue you." (Jer. 1.7)

The one who has been truly called accepts the 'offer' only reluctantly, but with great humility, and expression of unworthiness. The great prophet of Yahweh, Moses the lawgiver, founder of Israelites religion, the judge and leader of the people of God did not believe he was equal to the task. Summoned by Yahweh, the message was clear: "So now I am sending you to Pharaoh, for you to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses reply was not unexpected of a true messenger of God: "Who am I to go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" (Exodus: 3.10) "I shall be with you," was Yahweh's reply that gave the prophet the courage to embrace his vocation to serve his people.

There are many examples from other parts of the Bible, which clearly show that leadership in whatever aspect of our public life must be seen as a service, a call, and a vocation, which demands great faith in God to accomplish. Those who 'grab' the power to lead must be seen as impostors. They have ulterior motives and in most cases their leadership brings ruin and disaster and not salvation.

In whatever measure – **economically, demographically, politically, spiritually**, name it, Nigeria has become the least of all nations. In development, many Nigerians in their forties and fifties agree that Nigeria twenty or thirty years ago is preferable to Nigeria of the year 2003! Most of the roads built some thirty years ago are today impassable and have not seen any repairs. Gully erosion has devastated the countrysides and there is absolutely no hope that any miracle can save Nigeria from the menace of gully erosion.

Demographically, Nigeria has been depopulated in the past ten years by emigration to other parts of the world. Young and old Nigerians are scattered all over the world in search of greener pastures. Those who fail to make it to the United States and Europe are satisfied with some obscure places like Fernando Po, Guinea-Bissau, even Chad or Niger Republic. Soweto in South Africa is of course a haven for desperate Nigerians wishing to abandon their fatherland in search of better places under the sun.

The Turkish and Greek kingdoms fell many years ago and most of the inhabitants of those ancient and once prosperous nations fled their fatherland for greener pastures elsewhere. Hundreds of thousands of these people – young and old populate many European countries today

where they are guest workers. Like Nigerians, they abandoned their fatherland in time of scarcity and depression. No one should blame them. But the irony is that most Nigerians are ready to settle down in Turkey and Greece or in some poor countries than to return to Nigeria or live in Nigeria.

One young Nigerian graduate who took refuge in Ethiopia but was not finding life comfortable there was offered an option to return to Nigeria. "No. Not Nigeria!' he declared. He preferred any other nation under the sun except Nigeria! It is estimated that over 20% of Nigerians live outside their fatherland and many of these refugees or exiles have no intention of returning to their fatherland. Many have taken foreign wives to stabilise their new status as citizens of their host countries.

Squander Maniacs – Reckless Shoppers

Economically Nigeria has gone down. No industry is working. It is an era of Tukunbo (used-material) trade. Importation of everything possible into the country is the flourishing trade and they come from every part of the world. They include used cars, clothings, cooking utensils, cutlery, shoes, computers, electronic gadgets, and accessories. They are all old, used and thrown-away materials. They come from Asia, Europe and America. Of late a lot of used things are arriving from some African countries which used to be poorer than Nigeria.

Nigerian young business adventurers import all sorts of materials from Gabon, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Cameroon and Senegal. While all sorts of fruit trees grow in Nigeria, Nigerian importers flood our markets and streets with fruits and juices of every kind from all over the world. They come in plastic, and paper packages, in cans and bottles. Nigerians have appetite for foreign drinks and juices while our mangoes, oranges, guava, pawpaw, banana, cashew, pear and others with which Mother Nature has blessed Nigeria rot away in the bushes. No one thinks that any meaningful fruit business could flourish in our land.

Importation of rubbish, obsolete, and even harmful materials into Nigeria has been a stock-in-trade of many Nigerians and their foreign allies. In the early sixties, Nigerian governments and businessmen squandered a lot of money in the importation of mobile toilets for use in our townships. There were no provisions for water and disposal of waste materials. Not one of the mobile toilet homes functioned for one day. Thieves carted away any useful accessories that arrived with the mobile toilets. No one stopped them or asked for accountability.

In the early eighties, technical education was high in the Ministry's programme. A massive importation of obsolete technical equipment, finely packaged in wood crates of various sizes consumed millions of naira. The importers perhaps forgot to include electricity in their budget! After many years of abandonment and neglect these high tech equipment were stolen by thieves and no one cared about them.

The restoration of democracy in the early 2000 did not usher in an era of economic progress and prosperity. Instead, the squander mania recklessly executed through the importation of obsolete and useless hardware in Nigeria has continued unabated. To make sure that Islamic code of moral laws reigned supreme, Governors of Islamic states in Nigeria were ready to suspend any meaningful development project embarked by the earlier administration. Their priority is the implementation of the Shari'a laws drastically executed with 'modern' machines, which are designed for cutting off the condemned limbs. Millions of naira are spent in the importation of machinery for the execution of Shari'a laws.

Lately for reasons best known to Nigerian political leaders, the **National Identity Card** project which had already gulped billions of naira since its inception about 20 years ago must be re-visited. As long as 'importation' business is involved, there is much to be gained by the leaders and their gangs. This time computers must be imported to execute the ID card projects! Who says Nigerians are not squander maniacs and grand masters of useless and unprofitable projects.

While our leaders through dishonest means enrich others nations, Nigerian economy continues to dwindle. No wonder then we have become a beggar nation whose citizens are fed with fouled crumbs that fell from the master's table. Who will argue then that today we are not the 'least of the nations of the world'?

BIG NAMES SYNDROME: CRAZE FOR "SUPERLATIVE QUALITIES"

Both leaders and followers are culprits, terrible offenders in their craze for underserved 'first place and first class' values. This is why it is not easy to separate wheat from the chaff. Everyone thinks they qualify to lead.

Nigerians love big names, but rarely succeed in matching their self-proclaimed-greatness with laudable achievements. For them ***'there is nothing in name'***. Nigerians take the rest of the world for a ride and thus deride, ridicule the universally accepted maxim that ***'there is something in name.***' They forget that adjectives are created to add meaning to given words and expressions, thus reinforcing their importance and position among other words and expressions. Look at how they employ such words and expressions rascally just to sound "**big", "adorable", and "magnificent!"**

"GREAT", "SUPER", "INTERNATIONAL", "ULTRA MODERN". In comparative adjective, the ***superlative degree*** usually connotes the 'highest', 'the biggest', in both positive and negative senses. In its positive and most admirable connotation, it points to striking appearance, excellence, majesty and splendor. The ***German*** translation ("***Prima***" or ***klasse)***, simply means ***"superb", "magnificent", first class".*** The ***Latin*** rendering is "***optima"***, the best, ***"pessima'***, the worst

The ***Super*** Eagles of Nigeria, The ***Super*** Eaglets of Nigeria, The ***Super*** Falcons of Nigeria, are the names of Nigerian national teams, men and women. The most world-class football teams and clubs don't attach ***'super'*** to their names. They use meaningful accolades to denote their groups and teams; in fact what they can do and achieve. Most often they live up to expectations. They don't claim to be ***the greatest*** just with one victory or a trophy, even on a global scene and competition. Many countries, including the Europeans and the Americans have won the World Cup several times, but never claimed to be the greatest. Even ***Muhammad Ali*** only claimed to be the greatest after it was clear that he had beaten many serious challengers.

Arsenal, Manchester United, Real Madrid! They claim superiority over other teams and their opponents, not just in words but in action. Why do some choose names like ***"Elephants", "Tigers", Dolphins?*** There must be something in name! But this does not sound well with Nigerians. They become the greatest and 'super' after one minor victory and soon crash and take a miserable if not the last position in world events. Christ would advise his followers never to take up a first seat when invited to a feast. Let those who invited you take the honor to promote you to an exalted position.

Rangers ***International,*** Enyimba ***International***; are the names of premier football clubs among others in the country called Nigeria. Some local Nigerian ***markets*** are rated ***'International'*** by Nigerian standard: ***Orie Ugwu International Market***, ***Afor Ogidi International Market***. All located at remote shanty villages in Nigeria. ***Orie*** and ***Affor*** are market days in Igbo community of Nigeria.

Some ***institutions of learning, high and low,*** are rated 'international' by Nigerians and not world or global bodies: ***International Nursery, Primary, Secondary Schools, International Day-Care Center, International School for the Lame and Blind, International Acquisition Center, International Computer Center.***

Some ***hospitals and health-care clinics*** are of international standard in Nigeria and are known by their names***: International orthopedic hospital***, ***International Teaching Hospital; International School of Optometry.*** Even some lame-duck and dilapidated industries and corporations go by the name ***'super and international'*** in Nigeria; name them: ***Ajaokuta***

international rolling mills, international paper industry, Itimbuzo, Kakawa State of Nigeria, international Cashew, oil palm, cocoa and cotton wool, shoe, soap, cardboard and weaving industries, all located in various states of Nigeria!

What really makes these structures in Nigeria special among others located all over the world? Perhaps the quantity and quality of products they turn out and are exported to many foreign countries? Or the numbers of employers of all races and languages, who work, study or teach in these places? The answer may really not be ***'any of the above!***' It is a Nigerian ***'factor',*** what Nigeria is known for, their style of doing things, a well-known syndrome, and accepted way of life!

Big Election Promises! Big Billboards! Big Heads! Big Faces! Fresh and Colorful!!!

The **2011 elections** in the most populous nation in Africa are at the corner. There is need to advertise ***loud, clear and big,*** and here is one of the Nigerians' styles of showing ***how big*** their political parties and aspirants to the highest offices in the land can be: ***"Ultra-modern and expensive billboards",*** some huge ones, they say, costing over one million naira each to install. And there are too many of them positioned at all street corners and cross-roads in big towns and villages! Whose billboard and big faces would outshine or cover the other! The search for space at strategic positions in the townships is ever intensive. It is equally costly to pay millions of jobless youth who keep guard over the billboards; otherwise some opponents and their supporters may pull some down or ruin the big heads and faces with graffiti!

Nigerian billboards have little or nothing to tell about ***political power and achievement***. There is usually not much to write home about the advertisers and their products. In deed Nigerians like adverts placed on big billboards and posters. Whether for the **dead or the living**, the adverts are best built with strong and costly materials that can withstand adverse weather conditions and must be placed majestically at strategic positions and squares where all passers-by must see and admire them. The cost of each bill board is immaterial as long as the advertiser and the image are well recognized! The Bible tells us that after they had crucified Jesus, the soldiers positioned the cross at a place where passers-by would see it well. The story did not end there. They also wrote his offence in bold letters and in both Greek and Hebrew, the most important languages of the time. But Nigerians woefully fail to print their achievements and great records in bold and indelible letters. The color may be attractive. The portrait as well may be truly imposing. But there is nothing more to communicate. It is all empty shows, simply practical demonstration of their concept of ***'greatness'.***

Most Nigerian politicians, young and old have little or no significant actions to back up their big names and especially their electoral promises. What are they saying to the passers-by who 'enjoy' and 'admire' their beautiful colors? Should Nigerian politicians who 'litter' our roads and street corners with their images mounted on large and expensive billboards be taken

seriously with whatever they intend to communicate to the passers-by. What are they saying? What reasons have they for coming up for the first, second, third and even the forth tenure? Have they fulfilled the promises they made initially when they received the first mandate? Have they succeeded in tarring even a kilometer of road within their communities? What of water? What of schools and hospitals? What of the promised scholarship for the poor pupils and students? What is new in their party's manifestoes? What are they going to offer that had not been named?

The "Bigger" the Billboards, the "Greater" the Chances of Victory?

Don't be too fast to think that Nigerian political office-seekers don't know what they are doing, when they mount costly billboards, asking the people to vote for them. They are not spending so much for nothing. They know the people so well for Nigerians admire ***'big'*** things. They think ***'big'.*** They like ***'big'*** names. Perhaps, the ***bigger*** the billboards, the better chances of success at the polls! You may believe it or not.

It works in Nigeria. The ***bigger*** and ***longer*** the political leaders' entourage, the ***louder the sirens***, the more admirable are the politicians and their followers. The ***bigger*** the cloud of dust raised or floods, pools of water splashed on passers-by, the more respect the politician attracts; the ***bigger*** his fame grows, at least as a powerful politician and dictator who can punish 'offenders' who fail to stop or clear the road for the master's entourage. Nigerian road users have none of the fundamental human rights their counterparts all over the world have. So, the police or army escort, leading the master's convoy can stop any motorist or pedestrian who fails to clear the road in time, and give him a thorough beating at the road side. Many such road users have received heavy punishment for their ***'disrespect'*** for the great man, passing-by! Few Nigerians get mad at flamboyant politicians who abuse their political 'privileges' and look down on the people who voted and placed them on such high positions in society.

But times are changing. Some Nigerian politicians may this time be in for big disappointments as voters seem to be coming out of their slumber. Many today wish to know why certain politicians, especially those that have been there for sometime and have not shown any accomplishments should continue to put up billboards and ask the people to vote for them. Some common people are asking to know why the one should be voted for. ***Big billboards, long and big entourages, big and expensive flashy cars, big political rallies, expensive political emblems, and big promises*** may no more count as criteria for choosing future political leaders in Nigeria.

"Great" Political Parties, 'Great" Political Leaders

Not only football clubs, markets and institutions of learning, industries are of ***super and international standard*** in Nigeria, political parties are ***great,*** amiable as well as enviable. You

will hear Nigerian politicians and power- seekers address political rallies and supporters, and describe their parties as ***'great***!' Not even the 'once-popular and all-embracive **'Winners Peoples Democratic Party' (WPDP)** has anything reasonable to offer as a **'great party'** to be adored, admired and respected, embraced by all Nigerians and their political leaders! Not a few Nigerians and foreigners wonder why respected Nigerians, especially aspirants to political offices abandon their original parties to join **WPDP.** The answer is not far-fetched. Those who fail to make it while bearing any other party's' flag are usually advised to cross over to WPDP. It is only there you are sure to win an election to any local, state and national office. If you join them you win; the party is sure to clinch all offices, at all local and state levels! If you try any other party you are doomed to failure. So one can understand why Nigeria is becoming a one-party-state; and we all know where our nation is heading to! Consequently every doubting 'Thomas' must understand why 'Our Party is ***Great!***'

If we examine the implications of this ***'greatness marker'***, many true patriots and lovers of our country must weep. A party can assume the status and stature of 'greatness' when it is in the position to use all sinister political tools to intimidate opponents and push the opposition to surrender even before the contests begin. Since the majority of the contestants are truly **'incumbents**,' who will dare to unseat them? The chairman and top members of the so-called INEC (Independent National Electoral Commission), the Supreme Court judges and all important officials of what make politics tick in any nation are all adherents of the ruling party. and owe allegiance to the grand master or president.

Nigerians and peoples of other nations of the world must learn a lesson from **Ivory Coast Elections saga 2010.** The West African nation never once believed in democracy and change of government. Why conduct elections at all when only an incumbent is expected to win. And if he fails really to win, his supporters, young and old, including the military must make sure that the loser is sworn in as a life-president, damn the consequences! Even if civil war erupts! Is Ivory Coast not a ***great nation?***

"International" points to an embracive nature of interests, systems or commodities being expressed. Many nations of the world are involved. If a market is of an international standard, there must be international air ports, and seaports around to make transportation and movement easy. Every available product and goods must be found in the international market. Really the area covered by this ***international market*** must be awesome. Not only that; most racial groups of mankind, Americans, Asians and Europeans must frequent this market. Some of these scenarios and peoples would really point to the nature and international status of the market.

Unfortunately, as far as Nigerians are concerned there is no need to consider qualities and standard while giving names to our local institutions.

Ochi na Nwata – Child Leader

Nigerians' love for mediocrity and their concept of "Greatness" can be seen in the "appellation" (Igbo) "Ochi na Nwata", creating the impression, that though he/she, 'a leader', and yet too young to lead, in fact a toddler, is performing wonders at his/her age! Far from the truth and reality! They tell the world that their young and inexperienced leader had even been chosen from the mothers' womb or made leader of the people, in government and church. While the rest of the world select their leaders from among the **most experienced and aged**, Nigerians prefer young inexperienced fellows and crown them "kings" and "queens". No wonder Nigeria's problems had always been that of leadership. Their criteria for choosing, electing or appointing leaders of their nation and institutions are always different from those of other peoples and nations.

If what one finds on the ground really match with truth and reality, the rest of the world would have learnt to borrow from the Nigerian style and so elect **'kids'** in the highest offices of their land. Alas! It is a way Nigerians seek to console themselves when they find themselves in messy situations their young and immature leaders lead them into. "Ochi na Nwata" is a real "Baby" who finds himself/ herself in an unexpected and unmerited position of leadership. Ill prepared for the "awarded" post, no one may blame the leader since it wasn't his or her own making! So, supporters and friends find reasons to insist that their revered young and inexperienced leaders are performing well and as the case may be must be given further chances to "complete their good work". Such praise-singers really mean that the baby they placed on the throne should be given further chances to improve! He had all along been learning to crawl and speak!

Electoral Litigations: Winners and Losers

The ambition to be at the ***top, the 'number*** one' among fellow contestants brings about the often endless ***electoral litigations*** after declaration of results by the Independent Electoral Commission. Since all contestants enter the arena prepared **only to win**, it is usually difficult for Nigerian politicians to accept defeat at the pools. The battle to succeed must be won and to concede a defeat is an anomaly in Nigerian politics. All roads must lead to the court, from the local to the supreme, no matter the number of years it takes the 'complainant' to turn the table and be declared the winner!

Some Nigerian **con politicians**, knowing full well they have no chances clinching any political office through the ballot box boast they would make the impossible happen, if only the court could accept to mediate! Money can solve all problems no matter how difficult in Nigeria.

The stubborn unwillingness of Nigerian political office contenders to accept defeat at the pools and congratulate their opponents who win simply lies in the 'Nigerian factor', a phenomenon notably peculiar to Nigeria, where no one, practically **no one** accepts the **second place** in society . Nigerian courts play the tune for the 'survival of the fittest.'

If You Can't Beat Them, Join Them, or Decamp!

The ambition always to secure the **first position** in Nigerian political leadership tussles is largely responsible for the formation of new political parties in Nigeria. The disappointed political aspirant to the highest political office in Nigeria has every reason to form his own party after his former party had rejected his bid to contest in the mother party. He founds and forms his own political party where he becomes the sole candidate for the office he seeks. He is equally sure he would emerge victorious.

Elsewhere, a party member may decamp or even vote against his mother party in an important bill or referendum purely on **ideological reasons**. His mother party is not fulfilling some political promises or is actually not living up to expectations. That is true democracy. Where a Nigerian politician decides to join any political party, he is not being guided by the party's manifestoes and stance on rule of law. No! Nigerian political parties are not guided by ideological differences. Their guiding star or attraction is the political office he can possibly grab. If the political office of the governor or its deputy eludes him, he can contest the office of senator, house representative or even Local Government chairman! The driving force is not the services he can render to citizens of the land, but the amount of money, cash that would come under his supervision!

"Modern", "The Ultra Modern", "The Complex" Mania:

The Nigerian 'factor' is not limited to claims to unmerited goals and achievements. Their achievements and records attract not only accolades or compliments like **'super' and 'international'**. Nigerians love to describe their structures, especially **hospitals, health-care centers, industries, and even living quarters** as **complex, and ultra modern** In a good sense which they seem to employ the adjective, **'complex' or 'ultra modern'** would imply **multifaceted, multipart, compounded, multifarious**. In short, as far as beauty or modernity is concerned, the sight of the structure, either on drawing board, or already completed is awesome and beyond imagination! The opposite should be '**simple'**. You will hear expressions like **hospital complex**. "The newly created Umuduru autonomous community has embarked on the building of a **hospital complex**, among other projects to improve the health of the people." Some local governments embark on regional ultra modern water scheme. So you have, many modern and ultra modern industries and factories located here and there; name them**, modern shoe factory, soap industry, cardboard industry, oil mill, palm kernel, sugar, cotton and what have you!**

For any curious inquirer, it may not be surprising to find out the modern shoe factory had closed down a long time ago and the premises has been take over by weeds, rodents and dangerous snakes. The 'modern' cardboard industry closed down about six months after

commissioning by the Commissioner for industry and commerce. The industry was lacking **raw materials, water and electricity!** The management was equally poor right from the beginning. The failed **ultra modern water scheme** did not supply water after the commissioning ceremonies. In fact the water that ran from the taps was supplied from a roving water tanker! The **modern shoe factory**, which was to offer jobs to about 1000 people, was shut down after a short time for **lack of leather and other raw materials**. In fact the management could not lay hands on the promised **modern shoe-machines**! You see how Nigerians count their chicks before they are hatched!

Even the **best broadcasting radio and television station in Africa** is most often off the air for lack of modern broadcasting gadgets. As a result of the epileptic supply of power by the 'Power Holders', TV and Radio broadcasts must be interrupted or completely stopped for minutes and even hours to effect a change in power supply!

Do Nigerians understand what they claim to achieve? **"Complex", "Modern",** in the Nigerian context should actually mean **"difficult, complicated, thorny, involved, dense, archaic, out of use, obsolete!** In other words, the project at hand or the one still on the drawing board will be a difficult one to accomplish. It is of a complicated nature and few expert engineers will understand what the builders mean. It is a thorny project that must cost a lot of sweat, blood as well as frustrations. It will involve a lot of financial and material resources! The end will be a failure, abandonment and dilapidation.

The complicated nature of Nigerian-conceived structures make such structures 'un-complitable'' in a life time. Those who begin them actually don't live to witness the 'commissioning ceremonies' of landmark and ill-conceived projects they started. These include water schemes, cathedrals and churches.

Often Nigerians take **'complex'** to mean that all 'facilities' must be as well situated within the main structure, say, a church. Name them, toilet facilities, church hall, Sunday school classrooms, lounge, bookshops, car garages, and even restaurants. What of water for the toilets? No wonder after a short while the 'complex' structures are abandoned. The question of restructuring or re-drawing the plan is ruled out because the structure right from the beginning was 'complex', complicated if not ***bizarre,*** in other words, strange, odd, weird, fantastic and out of the ordinary!

"International", "Specialist", "Teaching Hospitals": a Misnomer

When Nigerians talk about the "**Hospital or Health-Care Complex**", no one should take them seriously, even when a clinic had been completed and 'commissioned'. Taking a close look at the miserable structures, one would easily find out that the clinic has no decent wards, consulting rooms, laboratories and out-patient department. What they may refer to as an ***"Operating theatre"*** is noting comparable to what one sees elsewhere in any part of the world. What of the

laboratories, one of the busiest departments of any hospital worthy of the name? The doctor or medical consultant usually sends patients to the lab for tests which help to diagnose what the sick fellow is suffering from. Most Nigerian hospitals have no good labs. Even where the labs are found, they are not well equipped. Why? The X-Ray equipment had stopped working for the past one year or more. The needy patients are referred usually to private "Para-medical experts" whose X-Ray, ECG equipments are functioning. The public and government-owned hospitals have little or nothing to offer to hundreds and thousands of sick Nigerians who visit them. When the doctors are not on strike; the nurses must be until the entire hospital services are grounded to a halt!

There are usually no **running taps** in Nigeria's 'hospital complexes'. Patients on admission in such hospitals must fetch or buy **water** for their needs. Regular power supply is a rare commodity in Nigeria's government and teaching hospital complexes. Patients must bring along their ***bush lamps and candles*** when night falls! Patients in most Nigerians' ***"hospital complexes"*** can never receive clean potable water unless they buy from hawkers. Those who bring along rechargeable lanterns can never re-charge them for lack of power supplies. So the woes of patients that find themselves in Nigerian hospitals continue to multiply everyday.

Whether they attach 'international' or not to their names, teaching hospitals all over the world seriously engage in the training of future medical personnel of the nation. The hospitals where medical students train, are among the best equipped institutions of higher learning. No nation can toy with its medical services and personnel and therefore the best 'brains' among young men and women who aspire to medical profession are granted admission into the medical schools.

How does Nigeria's typical **Medical School** or "**Teaching Hospital"** compare with its counterpart elsewhere in other nations? There is not much to write home about. The truth is that a typical Nigerian ***"Teaching Hospital Complex"*** is so just in name. In the first place the learning or the teaching environment is abysmally poor. For all practical purposes a teaching hospital must possess most of the modern medical gadgets for experiments and research. These are 'manned' by experts in the various medical fields and young and future medical doctors and personnel learn to handle sophisticated gadgets for detecting, diagnosing and eradicating diseases that menace lives of people.

What of Nigeria's medical students? These are usually ill-equipped for the job they aspire to. The "teachers" are usually not there for the serious job of training the enthusiastic students. The medical programs in most cases have been crippled by incessant series of strikes by medical staff of teaching hospitals. With such regularly organized strikes one can guess how ill-prepared our future medical doctors can be to exercise their profession in the long un-foreseen future. As a result of strikes most young medical aspirants opt for other professions, as graduation from medical schools takes many years than necessary to accomplish. Those students who find

admissions easily abroad after graduation never return to Nigeria again. What Nigeria loses, other nations grab!

"Big Family Houses" or "Big City Hotels?"

Nigerians' concept of 'greatness' can also be seen in the extraordinary sizes of family houses they build for themselves and their children. Nigerians who have made it; in other words, those who have become extraordinarily opulent, publicly show-off their massive wealth by building family houses that are often described by jesters and comedians as ***"Holiday Inn***" (because the structure is as massive and magnificent as real international hotel). Such massive family homes are also called ***"White House",*** (because it is as big and really 'complex' as the residence of the United States President!

Get inside the rooms; they are lavishly equipped with all sorts of communication gadgets, televisions of all sizes and makes. There are beer parlors on each floor. There may be up to 5 or 6 floors or stories in the massive structure. Visitors' apartments must really be described as 'hotel rooms'. ***"Boys' quarters***" may look like a village of its own. This is where maid servants and security men and vigilantes recreate themselves!

"What is the purpose of embarking on such structures, one may ask when in fact the family house is rarely occupied or visited by the owners and families? They live in the big cities and perhaps have such family houses in most states of the federation! Only guards, house boys and house girls are seen around the locked white house. Soon, rats and other rodents take their share of the family house!

Will the land lord even 'rent' parts of the 'boys' quarters' to the poor relatives who are living in shanties and also dying of hunger? Will the land lord allow the poor villagers to collect water from the borehole? The answer may be in the negative. Whatever the case, the wind-fall, an unexpected fortune, in this case, money has been invested in a multi-million dollar project, a family house. The wind-fall could be part of the excess money realized from shady or dubious business transactions. The big family house stands out there as a sign of affluence, a 'superlative marker!'

Super-Power Nation: Nigeria

A nation can be identified as "Super", "Great", in the sense that it has all the qualities of greatness, name them, good governance, best and most honest and qualified leadership, provision of important amenities for the people. It is great in deed because the unemployment rate is less than 1%, security almost 100%, literacy rate is over 90%. Democratic principles have been firmly established.

Examined from this perspective, Nigeria may not in deed be **great.** It is a lawless nation. Do whatever you like and no law can catch up with you, because the law-makers are the chief

offenders. As the Latin adage puts it "**Captantes capti sumus: We Catchers have been caught**". It is even a more serious tragedy when the desperate, tantalizing and rhetorical question is put forward: **"Quis custodiet ipsos custodies?" : Who will watch the watchers themselves?** And what a catastrophe when we come to realize that **"Corruptio optimi pessima – The corruption of the best is the worst (evil)!"** Every Nigerian, living at home and abroad, agrees that there can never be any **fair, free, and credible elections** in their fatherland even if a neutral body like the **UNO** is mandated to organize it. It (the election) must be rigged by some politicians and stakeholders. Nigeria and Nigerians can be a great nation in their own fashion. But no nation under the sun will like to be identified with such type of 'greatness'.

Houses of Excellence, Cities of Excellence, States of Excellence, Nation of excellence!

For some very 'patriotic' Nigerians, their nation is not only a 'super-power nation, it is as well **'a nation of excellence'**. Its big and small cities and states are identified with the "excellence superlative marker". Nigeria's Lower and Upper Houses of assembly are known by their **'excellent' legislations, 'excellent' and 'responsible' behavior of members of the legislature!**

How and in what sense have Nigerian cities and states achieved **'excellent' status,** one must ask! The bible of course identifies the most important criterion, when it asserts that "By their fruits you shall know them!" In most cities of 'excellence' in Nigeria, does one find 'excellent' multi-lane-roads and streets? Of course not! There are usually no traffic jams as traffic, like in most developed and developing nations, are controlled by numerous ***street lights*** which perpetually shine, day and night. 'Excellent' Nigerians cities are as well the ***'cleanest'*** you find anywhere. Often one finds in these very attractive cities large street television screens that are used to advertise government products and achievements.

No! Nigerian cities can never be described as **'excellent'** in any way. Most are slums and stinking open gutters attract vultures to the so-called cities. There are often more potholes in the city streets and roads than you find in the village roads. Some of the city roads are impassable in the rainy season and in some situations pedestrians may need canoes to cross the floods in Nigeria's cities of 'excellence!' Most Nigerian motorists living in the villages and cities have not seen traffic lights and don't know how they function.

The problems of city dwellers in Nigeria are compounded not only by lack of usual city amenities found all over the world; a lot of problems are created by the uncontrollable influx of migrants into the cities. They have come to search for means of livelihood. The cheapest job in Nigeria is found in the private sector. The popular ***'taxi' or 'okada'*** has become a menacing business in Nigeria that some city and state authorities and governments have banned the 'okada' people from entering the already overcrowded cities and their roads. Most Nigerians find ***okada*** useful and the only option for short-distant travelers. A city of excellence must be able to provide ***shuttle-bus-services*** for city dwellers. ***Metro-services*** (underground railway system) as found in

cities like Paris, London, Frankfurt, and New York help to ease traffic congestion in the big cities. What is Nigeria's Ministry of Transport up to?

Nigerian city dwellers suffer untold hardship as many trek long distances to work. Those who unavoidably must take 'okada' must be prepared for the worst. Fatal road accident cases are ugly scenarios people must put up with everyday in Nigeria. Most accident victims die from injuries of multi-fractured limbs before they are brought to the hospital.

What of ambulance services? ***Cities of 'excellence'*** are known also by the prompt services they render to the sick and accident victims. The **number '911'** is virtually an international 'code', even toddlers can dial '911', to summon emergency services for victims of road accidents, flood and fire disasters. Hospital ambulances and fire service vehicles command attention of road users, especially in crowded cities. By their ***sirens,*** you shall know them!

Not in Nigeria! There are no ambulances in Nigeria's 'cities of excellence'. Often mangled bodies of accident victims are conveyed to hospitals and mortuaries by ***'okada' people!*** Accident victims, who are fortunate to remain alive to the hospital, are usually conveyed to their destination by ***pick-up trucks***. Villagers, who fail to get okada or pick-up people don't mind trying ***bicycles*** or even ***barrows!***

No! In Nigeria's cities of excellence', only ***politicians*** and the ***rich***, in fact those people whose lives are very precious to Nigeria, enjoy emergency service vehicles. Such vehicles are usually deployed by their security men and body guards, when politicians are on campaign rallies or when they are visiting places and peoples, even close relatives. By their sirens, you know they are passing by! The common people in Nigeria do not deserve such services. It is enough to let them know that the status of 'excellence', by which their cities and states is know, exists only in name.

Where then does Nigerians' claim for 'excellence' lie? Perhaps in the painting of round-about-roads, street corners, and hedges? Sometimes big houses found at street corners are repainted to add to the cities' 'splendor. Most often streets leading to government headquarters are painted in variegated colors to reflect the 'excellence' status of the state capitals!

Big Churches: Scanty Membership, Little Spirituality

Nigerian Christians and Muslims no doubt like big places of worship, **churches, cathedrals and mosques**. They engage their best architects, from far and wide in architectural drawings and designs, building constructions, most of which take life-time to complete. Some are usually colossal in size and compare well with the ancient ***Roman amphitheatre or coliseum***. Little do the people reckon with **cost and time** when they first draw their budget for the building of a befitting village or station church of a monumental size. They take little note of **membership** which normally should square up with size of the edifice. What of cost and possible fluctuation in prices of building materials? Perhaps, initially planned to cost a few thousand naira to

complete, who ever thought it would now cost tens of millions of naira! Nigerian Christians even take pride in announcing that their village church which may take many decades to complete was started by one man, a philanthropist! Once buoyant in mind and with extensive human and material resources at his command, no one cares to ask whether "the man of the people" would be able to complete the gigantic project and single-handedly!

Most often the bible recounts the inevitable tell-tale as the **"great stadium church**" of an Olympic stature fails to serve its purposes. "Does one who wants to build a house, not sit down first and calculate the cost?" Nigerians like autonomy and big things, surely. Even if eventually completed, the stadium church, or pro-cathedral may become old-fashioned and obsolete in size, design, and usage. The building initially planned to take about ***10,000 worshippers*** may eventually become empty as new parishes and stations spring up here and there and gain autonomy. The 10,000 sitter-church is left with less than ***1,000 members.*** Only few scattered spectators watch the performance in the grand stadium! Not only does the membership continue to dwindle; the big church may equally fail to provoke the expected devotion and spirituality among members. What a great shock for the 'living members?' Everyone has been pushed so far by the ambition to be ***great*** and the chronic love for **great and big** things ultimately fails to achieve the desired goals.

"Express Roads", "Express Highways"! Death Traps!

Having been starved by their political leaders of most 'goodies' of life and social services people all over the world enjoy, Nigerians get hysterical when any small 'crumb' falls from the master's table and they are allowed to pick and lick their fingers with joy! If this is not the right picture of the situation, how then do Nigerians describe some neglected, abandoned, dilapidated, pot-holed roads that pass through their communities as **"Express Highway?"** Surely most Nigerians have not seen or enjoyed an **"Express Highway" or "Road"** in Europe, America or even in African nations like Ghana, Kenya or Ethiopia.

Since maintenance culture is a dead matter in Nigeria, the once-multi-billion-naira roads, constructed by foreign contractors are soon reduced to **'death-trap-jungle-roads'** for motorists who risk their lives taking the **"Express Highway!"** Destroyed by erosion and rendered useless and dangerous by gullies, users who have no option than to continue plying the **'Nigerian Express Roads",** create their own alternative **"Express Highways"** through bushes and thick forests to gain access to much-better village roads, in order to get to their destinations. What a horrendous and unspeakable experience to ply Nigerians **"Express Highways!"**

Most Nigerians who have not really enjoyed real express roads are surprised to be told that such roads elsewhere, in Europe and America, Asia and some parts of the African continent. Such roads are known by some of the following characteristics: At the beginning of construction, such roads are decked with heavy iron rods and special stones that withstand severe weather

conditions; real express roads may have up to 6 lanes or more in either direction; maintenance of such roads is a non-stop operation as all sources of danger are removed within minutes, if not seconds. These are true Super Highways as users enjoy their drive through, every motorist observing and keeping to rules of safe-driving.

Not in Nigeria! Both the so-called Express Roads and local ones are not maintained by authorities in-charge. Ministries responsible for Federal, State and Local Government roads exist only in name. Perhaps they are heard of when huge road contracts are advertised and awarded. They take their percentage contract-profit and face the other way as con men, dupes and interloper-contractors continue the nasty and often unfinished job! Since there is no supervision by the authorities, road contractors may under one pretext or the other abandon their job. The quality of materials used is usually of most inferior nature. Who should be surprised when within months of ***commissioning of a multi-billion-naira Express Way***' gullies had been dug by erosion and bridges had fallen apart!

Big and Wasteful Celebrations

Nigerians find their own unique reasons and occasions to celebrate, and often lavishly. Is it a tragic death of a young man or woman in ghastly motor accident, or that of an elderly person in his or her nineties, Nigerians must find reasons to celebrate **'life' or 'death?'** Posters of both the young and old dead relatives are printed in bold colors and placed on strategic positions in towns and villages, announcing their death as well as extending invitations to all and sundry to funeral ceremonies. At such celebrations **"mourners",** young and elderly dress up in gorgeous and expensive attires to celebrate **'befitting' burials** of their loved ones.

In fact, visitors or foreigners in Nigeria may really find it difficult to distinguish Nigerians in joyful mood from those who should actually be in mournful mood. Should they be expected to express sympathy or really "rejoice' with those on whose shoulders a great misfortune has fallen? Most often, after such expensive celebrations many families go bankrupt. You find statements like this: **"Since the burial of my son, brother, mother or father, I have not been to pay my children's school fees." "It will take me sometime time to recover from huge expenses I incurred after the burial of a relative?"**

Here, some important note must be taken by those who care. The "***complainant"*** is not actually seeking for sympathy from his listeners. No! He wants to show how ***big*** the celebration was! Yes. Nigerians who spend lavishly earn ***great*** admiration from friends and many foolishly copy from those who celebrate big.

They don't only spend **big and lavishly**; Nigerians like also to duplicate such celebrations, for the obvious reasons. Take for instance, **the celebration of marriage in Igboland**. Most of the **initial** traditional ceremonies and rites are usually celebrated months before the actual thing. The initial rites may include 'information' that a family or a suitor is

interested in the daughter of another family. Each occasion or time this information is released to the father of the girl, the mother, an uncle or brother, cartons of wine, kegs of palm wine, kola nuts and other well-known delicacies must bed presented. Then at a 4th or 5th visit a list of other traditional requirements is released on paper. Then arrives the actual wedding day. And here is a picture, the scenario painted by an amateur poet.

> *Oh, poor Igbo people; why complicate matters for yourselves: Beginning at sunrise, Holy Mass in the morning (aka, 'White Wedding'); group photographs thereafter. Grand reception in a church hall (for far-distant and close friends and visitors.) Another 'short' and 'expensive feasting' at the groom's compound, to close around 2.00 pm. Re-assembly of friends and well-wishers at the Bride's family at 4.00 pm. This is "Igba Nkwu" (Traditional weeding): "White Wedding" is reenacted, as the wedding cake is cut. Bride and bridegroom must be in their white wedding gowns and suits. Eating, drinking, dancing and speech making. The real Traditional wedding begins really at sunset. The Bride and Groom change their 'uniform' two or three times, to reflect the mood of the occasion! The flower girls and bridesmaids change also. All in native attire. More important guests arrive. Eating and drinking till dawn*!

Most Distrustful of Their Leaders

"To be forewarned is to be forearmed". "A stitch in time saves nine". These are adages that drive home, right into the hearts and minds of the wise and unwise, a simple message or lesson requiring caution. Any type of mistakes can never be condoned or tolerated. It is best to foresee dangers and nip possible troubles right in the bud stop them from happening, destroy all chances of ugly events taking place.

Weary Nigerians, disappointed and frustrated by the activities of their political leaders, may no more be in the mood to forgive anyone tampering with the election results of 2011! **To 'tamper with' means to meddle with, to make unauthorized changes in submitted results, especially in figures. 'Tinkering', is another word meaning 'to try to mend,' especially in amateurish and inexpert way figures in a document**. Nigerians will not forgive the INEC and anyone said to be tampering or tinkering with the election results to favor even their own privately preferred candidates. Nigerians want nothing but free, fair and credible elections. They have no more sympathy with election fraudsters.

In one polling station I visited during the Federal House elections, I saw two elderly persons challenging the presumed age of a young fellow. **The young person, they maintained, would not yet be 18 and above.** Why should he show up at the polling station? Who got him registered at all? The elderly persons threatened to report the matter to security agents. What a welcome development!

Nigerians may be disappointed and sad to hear that their favored candidate did not after all win. He has been beaten by a more popular candidate. No problem! That may be the will of God; after all, not everyone must win. Some will win and others lose. They may find other reasons to console their loser, his closest family and party members. But these politically educated and awakened Nigerians of today will not take it lightly when someone makes them understand that in one of their polling stations **with exactly 300 registered voters, someone or a party swept the polls in that area with over 1,500 votes!** Damn it! Impossible! They have come again! Nigerians will not like to hear that. That will be a piece of disturbing news! **The right thing must be: 500 registered voters; number of valid votes cast 350. That's okay. After all, some people may not have turned up to vote!**

Let My Vote Count: While most Nigerians would want their preferred candidates to sweep the polls, they will surely be sad to hear that the so-called winner after all rigged the elections or got a helping hand from INEC or their agents. The slogan, the chorus, the refrain of their songs usually reads **"All we are saying…let our votes count!!!"** The INEC and political aspirants should never ignore the wishes of the Nigerian masses. Any tampering with election results will no doubt **stir up the hornets' nests.** These large stinging insects of the wasp family, usually fight whoever or whatever disturbs their peace. **Any tinkering by electoral officers with election results will no doubt cause an outburst of angry feelings among Nigerian voters**. In grave circumstances, they may take to the streets.

In a country where good media reporting is still at its nascent development, no reliable public opinion polls are possible, the people are not, however, entirely ignorant of the possible outcome of election results. They know among the noisy contestants who would eventually emerge an indisputable winner, in a free, fair and credible elections! They protest truly when they sense some foul play at the end.

Always Skeptical and Suspicious: "Once beaten, twice shy". No one may blame them! Having been deceived with huge lies and false promises, Nigerians, young and old don't trust anyone (especially politicians) any more. Those they suspect and distrust are legion! **(1)** They are suspicious, for example, of any movement by **electoral officers** who delay the publication or announcement of election results. **(2)** They are suspicious of the activities of **electoral officers** who arrive late at the polling booths. These may be planning a delay to carry out fraudulent activities late in the night! Who can deny this?

(3) Nigerians don't even trust the so-called **Party Agents,** employed to protect their Masters' interests with the last drop of blood. No! These can be bought over by other party agents who may be offering more rewards and money to these **'traitors'**. These **traitors**, who prefer money and **never honor**, stab their masters at the back for mere **thirty pieces of silver! (4)** Nigerians don't trust **electoral officers who work at the collation centers**. These can do a

lot of funny things at the **collation centers;** things that can change the voters' verdict**. (5)** Nigerians don't trust the **INEC scribes** either. These, they believe or maintain, (offering facts and figures, real and mythical), can use their **pens and pencils** to **alter** the overall results of the multi billion dollar election exercise. Only the 'favored' candidates win! The people's verdict had been dashed to the walls! What a calamity! These **INEC guys** had done it in the previous elections, since Nigeria got independence in 1960. They did it in 2003, and again in 2007. Why not in 2011, too?

(6) Nigerians are always suspicious of **security agents**. Is it possible that the INEC or one **political juggernaut or god father** must have bought over the nation's entire security machinery, **the army, the navy, air force, the SSS, including the regional vigilante groups** to use every available force and means to suppress any uprising, and thus ensure the success of a particular party at the polls? The electoral agents and their god fathers had done it in the past and succeeded. At least many Nigerian adults remember the **Abiola saga**. Didn't the nation's security agents endorse a cancellation of the results of elections believed to have been the most credible in Nigeria's election history? Who will convince the people, armed with facts and figures that such may not after all be possible in a nation called Nigeria today, in April 2011? Nigerians don't trust a very important arm of the security agency, namely the **judiciary.** In fact, in a lawless country like Nigeria, **mobile courts should be erected during these turbulent elections exercises**, precisely to prosecute, try and jail law-breakers. But electoral offenders are not usually prosecuted in Nigeria. Names of big politicians who commit all sorts of electoral atrocities are never publicized or prosecuted for breaking the laws of the land. These big politicians and their god fathers **recruit, train and sponsor hoodlums and bandits who snatch ballot boxes and electoral materials, intimidate electoral officers, sponsor under age voters**.

Many **traditional rulers** are known to have participated in and sponsored many electoral malpractices. All said and done, Nigerians get disillusioned with the agencies empowered to punish convicted offenders. Crimes continue to thrive in Nigeria. Offenders are caught, but never prosecuted and sent to jail, at least to serve as a deterrent to future and hardened criminals. **(7)** The last and not the least; Nigerians don't trust even their **political candidates and leaders,** whom they strongly believe have no political ideologies, policies or principles. They don't trust these politicians who decamp from their 'former parties' and join 'the winning parties', thus abandoning their 'former supporters' in the cold. They change camps when they see no chances of grabbing power if they stood firm in their former positions**. (8)** Nigerians keep wary eye on politicians who try to bribe the people with **material gifts and money**. **Material gifts include bags of rice, bags of fertilizer, cloths, raw and cooked food** during campaign rallies. Many villagers and city dwellers, who flock political campaign grounds, gather really to collect cash and materials gifts from these wealthy and flamboyant politicians. Not in a few gatherings have many young Nigerians lost their lives in stampedes. As uncountable **bundles of clean naira**

notes are sprayed from open vehicles many on-lookers rush for the **manner from heaven**. Many are trampled under foot and die or are seriously maimed and so suffer from deadly injuries! The motives of politicians that distribute money and materials to possible voters can be worrisome and many questions are bound to arise. **Supposing they lose in these elections? What are their sources of income**? **What if people collect the money and gifts and at last refuse to support the candidate?** Of course, many Nigerians can no more be deceived with money and material gifts. Some reject such **'Greek gifts'** out rightly. They instruct the corrupt politicians and agents to go with their money. **"You are a con man. We will not vote for you. You are the type that should be avoided."** While others may collect money and gifts from corrupt politicians, these voters go their way and vote for politicians they trust. **(9)** It is obvious to recall that the **political leaders** have always disappointed the electorate, who had stood with them until 'victory was won!' Only but a tiny few winners of the political trophies remember to fulfill, even 20% of their electoral promises. **What of the promised free education from Primary school to the University? Then, free medical care for all and sundry? What of the 24 hour, non-stop electrical power? What of the express roads that should run from the cities to the remote villages? What of the job opportunities that should be as countless as the sand on the sea shore? What of security, and end to armed robbery and kidnapping?** Empty and unfulfilled promises abound and the people continue to feel disappointed and as well frustrated.

Winners and Losers: Post Election Litigations: Nigerian political leaders and the INEC should be above suspicion. They should not create rooms for **suspicion, skepticism and rumor mongering**. In their utterances and activities, they must live up to expectations and do everything possible to eschew contradictions and controversies. It will be a blunder, for example, if the INEC withdraws already published results and try to effect **'corrections'**. No one will accommodate any explanations, true or false. **Perhaps an outright cancellation of clearly flawed and disputed results may be a right step in a right direction. Such authoritative and prompt action by the electoral body will send the right message to all sundry.** A delay in announcing results may even be a worse tragedy. All sorts of rumors will surely spring up and spread, and damages done to the integrity of the electoral bodies will no doubt be irreparable.

Nigerian politicians are generally **poor losers.** Losers usually go to court to seek redress, even when they are sure they actually lost! An incumbent gubernatorial candidate, a legislator, challenged by his enemies, is ready to carry his case to the highest courts in Nigeria (and even in the Hague), to make sure he retains his seat or at least forces his enemies to surrender by whatever means. Nigerians are bored, listening to election petitions, protracted courts cases (often lasting years!). Many shed tears hearing about huge sums of money spent by politicians in court litigations.

Nigerian masses are usually mad with lawyers and court judges who drag cases to lengthy periods and to all levels of absurdity. Their type of **democracy and independence of the judiciary** cannot be understood by most Nigerian who care to listen to litigants make their cases. "Why can't party officers settle their party squabbles in private, in their backyards instead of exposing their dirty linens in public?" many troubled Nigerians ask? Why can't Nigerian voters be told in clear terms which of the two litigating candidates should be voted for on the Election Day? Why should the courts (Lower, Upper and Supreme) contradict themselves while delivering judgments and issuing orders?

A lot of measures must be taken by authorities concerned to ensure **an impeccable atmosphere of peace and order,** ensuring smooth hand over of power to winners, who must now gear up to business of good governance. These candidates who have received the people's honest mandate in **free, fair and credible elections** should not be distracted by frivolous activities of **poor losers**. In fact, losers should accept defeat with courage and maturity, embrace and congratulate their former opponents and enemies, thereby extending to the winners hands of friendship and cooperation. Majority of peace loving Nigerians will like to see their newly chosen leaders given the much needed opportunity to prove their worth in the various areas of political, social and economic, progress and development.

Law Makers in a Lawless Nation: Most Highly Paid

The business of Law Making has recently become a contentious issue in Nigeria. In the past few Nigerians really cared about the **Legislature** (the law making body), often referred to as the third arm of government. The first arm being the **Executive** (the body that really runs the affairs of government) and the second, the **Judiciary** (the body that actually runs the law courts and delivers judgments). Today, however most Nigerians, young and old, literate and uneducated, are becoming 'politically conscious, and so ask questions about the Law Makers and the business of law making. Who are the law makers that ask us to vote for them? What do they actually accomplish? What are the differences between the so-called **"Lower House" and "Upper House"** of the legislature? They are said to wield a lot of power in the success of any government in power! Where does this power actually lie?

For those who care to know; experts seriously assert that any government in power that loses the support of the legislature could crumble at any moment. This can happen if the Honorable Members refuse to approve the government's budget, especially if they are not happy with the government's spending formula. They can stifle government programs and projects. Law Makers can impeach the president and force new elections. Experts in Political Science confirm that the above 'propositions' are 'realities' and not 'myths' as most Nigerians think. They cite America and European countries whose systems of government Nigeria tries to copy or

mimic. In those countries (mostly in the first world), the **business of Law Making is a serious matter.** Legislators are as honorable and knowledgeable as the president of the country.

What of Nigeria? When will our political scientists and those who took courses in International Strategist Studies educate Nigerians who are so skeptical about the functions and activities of law makers in their country? A lot of questions are asked: **"If our system of government works like that of the Americans and the British, why are coup d'etats (violent and unconstitutional change of government rampart in Nigeria and in some other countries that operate like Nigeria?) No one hears about coups in America or Britain. Why do legislators decamp or abandon their original parties and join opposition or other parties at the least word of provocation. This is rare in America or Britain! When it comes to policies, and principles there are no clear cut distinguishing marks, in terms of policies, principles, ideologies and manifestoes between Nigerian legislators of the ruling party and those of the Opposition.. In America and Britain, for example, it is easy to distinguish Democratic Party legislators from the Republicans; a Labor Party man from the Conservative. In Nigeria the dividing lines are very thin! Why? In fact there are too many other worrying questions**

The above assertion has been made by many highly placed and respected Nigerians, including writers and journalists. As usual the same reason has been given to justify the stance taken by contestants to win elections and make it in fact a 'do and die' affair! How much does a Nigerian legislator earn monthly? Who can tell Nigerians? Or have Nigerians, like their counterparts in other democratic countries no right to know what their political leaders earn? Or is it a confidential and highly classified matter? Why should the principles of the so-called democracy not apply here?

Reckless Law Makers in a Lawless Nation! Double Tragedy!

There is no doubt that most Nigerians today are asking questions about how their country is being run and by whom. They like to know their law makers right to the door steps of their family homes, their qualifications and or course their integrity. For long Nigerians had heard about a Senator or Honorable Member who used to represent their constituency in the Federal or State levels. Few older Nigerians can truly claim to have known or have met such 'Representatives' in life. Many young Nigerians don't know who their representatives at Abuja or at the state capital are. But today they like to know who they are and why these men and women should be voted into office.

We know where the flaws lie. The Bible makes it clear that a banana tree cannot produce an orange fruit, nor can one pick palm nuts under a mango tree. No one can give what he does not posses (Nemo dat quod non habet). Truly, the same Bible states that "By their fruits you shall know them." In a well known and internationally recognized lawless nation like Nigeria, some

sort of serious soul searching reflection must be carried out to identify the ills of the nation. Perhaps a simple examination of Law Making business, can lead to some stunning revelations and thus point to some causes of the anomaly.

Many Nigerians may not in fact be kidding when they question the usefulness of law making in a nation like Nigeria, where the rule of law does not exist. Why in the first place should the serious job of law making be placed in the hands of politicians who don't even believe in the **rule of law**. No doubt, many law makers in Nigeria grab this job through fraudulent means, namely election rigging and other election malpractices.

It is in fact a double tragedy when reckless breakers of the law are appointed law makers; and worse still are paid highly for such a job. It is high time Nigerian tax payers are told what their leaders earn. These figures must be officially published and the truth known by everybody. If they have nothing to hide, the truth must be known. Perhaps the time has come for bitter truth to be told and may be the problem has to be settled by a referendum.

The Question of Integrity: Integrity is an underlining virtue when character of an individual plays a vital role in his performance in an office. It has to do with honor, truth and uprightness. One who makes a law that must be kept, obeyed and cherished must be an impeccable law-abiding citizen. He plays according to the rules of the game, and does not employ any deceitful or fraudulent tools in the realization of his dreams or goals. His guiding principle is rule of law.

Most Nigerians do not trust their law makers, the presumed flag bearers of the constitution that guides the nation, the leaders and the people they lead. In Nigeria, most law makers are seen and known to be the first breakers of the law. In their bid to win elections and grab power, they indulge in all sorts of electoral malpractices, including rigging, use of armed bandits and thugs. They are usually the first to break electoral laws meant to forestall breach of peace. As they practice their so-called law making business, many Nigerians law makers are easily bought over with money and do not vote according to their consciences.

The Question of Qualification*:* Are most Nigerian law makers qualified to handle the sophisticated business of law making? Law is an important profession. Like in the other professional disciplines, (including medicine, engineering, education and religion) there are stringent rules and guidelines that dictate qualifications and qualities of membership of the profession or association.

Are Nigerian law makers lawyers by profession? It may not be necessary to apply stiff rules here. But it no doubt helps where a law maker has ***graduated in law, economics, political science, ethics and even religion.*** He will have an edge on both his opponents and comrades. Surely he will have more commanding respect than "professional" contractors, business men and

secondary school or college drop-outs who accidentally find themselves in the business of law making in Nigeria.

Are Nigerian law makers gentle **linguists** (specialized in other languages including their local ones)? Do they speak average college English and French? Our neighbors, (citizens of Cameroon, Republic of Benin, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Chad, Niger and others) including their law makers speak fluent English and French languages. How many Nigerian law makers have even a smattering knowledge of the major Nigerian languages?

The Question of Representation:

Do Nigerian law makers truly represent their people in the Lower and Upper Houses of the legislature in our fatherland? With great cynicism most Nigerians will respond to such a question or opinion survey with an emphatic No! Never! Not at all! Some questioned Nigerians might add: "He does not represent us. He does not know whether we exist. He is after his private pockets and does not care about the needs of his constituency.

This is why running for the office of the law maker in Nigeria is a free-for-all affair. The people's votes may not actually count, as all sorts of candidates, including 419-ers, fraudsters and con men are accommodated in the race!

Quality, First Consideration*:* Since no country can toy with the business of law making and succeed in achieving good governance, peace and development, it is time Nigerians wake up from slumber and take their law makers to great task. The adage "Tell me who your friends are and I tell you the type of person you are", come into limelight now. Tell me the caliber of people who make your laws and I tell you the type of a nation you belong, and definitely, the type of people you are.

The Application, Meaning of "Superlative Qualities"

For the big African Brother and Daddy, Nigeria and Nigerians should endeavor to convert their present status of **"Greatness", "Internationalism" and "Superman"** qualities into reality. Nigeria, in theory and practice should attract and command the attention, respect and admiration of world community, especially that of the brother African nations. The known **'Giant' of Africa** must walk like a colossus and in all practical terms honorably earn her proper place among the true 'super-power-nations whose greatness is never disputed in terms of military, political, and economic power. When the **'Giant of Africa'** is mentioned, no one is left in doubt which nation of Africa is being referred to. That is an 'axiom, a 'truism'. Like the often unnamed **'Police Man of the World**, Nigeria should be feared and respected by its neighbors, who must desist from troubles that would earn them punishment from the Big Brother. Such punishment may be imposed if the troublesome and small nations should be unjustly attacked by their neighbors; if someone should try to rig an election and impose himself as a dictator, the Big Brother is expected to intervene in times of crises and restore order and tranquility.

As the most populous nation in Africa, Nigeria should use her size and human resources to help her neighbors. A military power to reckon with, Nigeria should always stand ready, in military combat and in the position to send peace-keeping force. As a powerful and truly the richest nation in Africa, the Big Brother stands to help the poorer nations of Africa in times of economic crises. So her ***"Greatness"*** shines out and no darkness can cover it! To be able to accomplish such continental and global tasks, Nigeria must of course be ready to supply all the needs of her own citizens! When the God-given wealth is evenly and equitably distributed among the people, behold it will be time to extend hands of friendship and love to the neighbors and poorer nations!

To be able to accomplish all the above tasks and many more, the Big Brother must, **like Caesar's wife be above suspicion!** So, evils and crimes like **military coup, civil war, election malpractice, bribery and corruption, fraudulent activities** may never be found within Nigerian borders and among Nigerians everywhere. Transparent democratic principles must reign supreme in Nigeria.

In post electoral litigations, Nigerians political aspirants must be ready to concede victory to the winner and never go to war to grab victory. Losers at the pools must show maturity and accept defeat with dignity. Losers should congratulate their opponents who succeed in free, fair and credibly conducted elections. That is one important mark of 'greatness'.

Nigerians should try to cut their cloths according to size and may be too, hang their clothes on places they can reach out to collect them. Humility is never a sign of weakness. Nigerians should learn to use **"Superlative Markers"** in their proper places and never exaggerate when there is no cause for it.

Where "Greatness" Lies

Nigeria's ***"Greatness Syndrome"*** may actually cease to be a misnomer if these "superlative markers" can really be measured in action and not merely in words or wishes. Periods of elections, when well organized, free and fair, are the times to identify ***"greatness"*** with individual leaders who prove their worth in action. If a politician contesting for an office for the second time can prove what he had been up to during the first tenure, he stands a good chance of being returned un-opposed!

Here **personalities, in**dividuals (no more political parties) play a vital role in the selection of best leaders for a country. Although the face of this aspirant is new in politics, he can still be identified by his works elsewhere. Did the Bible not make it clear that faith is not enough to win salvation? **"Faith without good works is barren". "Do you want to be shown, you foolish fellow, that faith apart from works is barren" (James 2.20).** For Nigerians seeking for political offices, it may be necessary at this point in time to remind them to shown 'signs' of their greatness if them have to succeed.

The educated Nigerian electorate of today has by experience learnt to pick and choose. Days are gone when party banners and slogans point to possible winners at elections. Having been deceived by big billboards, party slogans, and predestined-winner-party-emblems for years, most Nigerians have learnt their lessons at the polls. They ask questions and they take wise decisions. Then they vote for **persons, individuals and not parties.** It is therefore crucial to know who a politician is, his accomplishments in his local community before he can aspire to any office of importance on a national level.

Greatness has come to be identified by **"achievements"** and not by the weight of the "father-sponsors", "god-fathers" and the amount of money he invests in the political business. Nigerians like to see as many faces of politicians who want to contest for political posts on magnificent billboards at the busy intersecting roads. Nigerians will like to summon the big names to political discussions at community halls to tell the world what greatness means and how leaders actually become great. A lot of work has to be done on the drawing board.

What is actually in name? Days are gone when people should be indoctrinated and told where to place the finger print. (**Olee ebe aga ebinye aka? Where do you thumb-print? Ebe esere mmadu – Right where a picture stands!**). No! One must be directed to look for possible achievers, no mater their political parties! Only the best fits a **great** nation!

Where Greatness Does Not Lie

Greatness is not found in big and awesome loots**!** Nigerians, politicians, business men, contractors, when they decide to ransack government treasury, do it **in billions** these days. About few years ago, they used to plunder the nation **in millions**. Troubled citizens should understand and check their blood pressure. It can be frightening and unimaginable. They never allow any single opportunity to loot to pass without opening and establishing avenues to milk the people and nation dry!

It is no big news these days to hear that an 'officer' in the local government, state or federal level carted away a whooping sum of 120 billion naira and was being trailed by the **EFCC.** The sum could even be in dollars or euro. Perhaps he was caught by some vigilant guardsmen and was being investigated. He may be prosecuted. But no one hears about the results of the investigations! **Greatness does not lie in the ability to steal and loot government treasuries!**

Greatness is not found in big and awesome contract spending: Nigerians know how to spend and award contracts **in billions and trillions!** They take delight in investing in useless ventures. It could be in the supply of **automatic voting machines** that would bring to fulfilment the people's wish for **free, fair and credible election** in Nigeria! The amount spent on purchasing **obsolete machines** they claim are **modern** and **ultra modern**, may not worry the suppliers as long as they gain and the nation loses. It must be someone's opportunity to enrich

himself and family. It does not matter whether the machines work or not. It does not matter whether the set goals are achieved or not. What would happen to the voting machines after use? Have they any second-hand value? Will they be simply discarded after the exercise? Squander mania! Suppliers and operators may not care to know.

Greatness is not found in big commissions and emoluments. There are no criteria for fixing salaries of workers and employers in the great country called Nigeria. While top political leaders, including local government councilors, legislators of all grades and houses earn awesome salaries and emoluments monthly counted in millions, ordinary workers in the lowest rung of the ladder earn miserable sums measured in 3 or 4 digits. This is precisely why people fight to grab positions in government where as law makers and brokers, are free to fix their salaries and entitlements as they like. Who can question their methods and styles?

No Place like Nigeria: Incontestable Truth!

Can the devil speak the truth? **"No place like Nigeria"** is a familiar radio and television ad, a promotional cliché, employed by officials to attract investors and tourists to Nigeria. These foreigners should come and enjoy all the goodies Nigeria can provide in all sectors of life: The ***most populous*** nation in Africa, the ***richest*** nation in Africa; the ***most peaceful***, ***most*** friendly, ***most*** hardworking, ***most*** trustworthy and reliable, ***most*** lovely, ***most*** honest, ***most*** religious and what have you? Could such assertions be true or self deception or a misnomer? Many concerned citizens and patriotic Nigerians would wish it was true and such accolades could be bestowed on our fatherland. Blessed will be the people and nation whose admirers would approach so closely and embrace without fear or doubt!

CHAPTER FOUR
LEADERSHIP CRISIS – THE AFRICAN DILEMMA

One of the greatest tragedies that has befallen most African nations is the failure of the political systems that were set in motion before and after the colonial masters left the political scene. Political independence was expected to usher in an era of prosperity for the long-oppressed and exploited Africans. Those who fought to expel the British, French, Belgians, Italians, Portuguese, and Spaniards from African soil were, naturally, the first politicians to take over political leadership from their erstwhile colonial masters. Most of the African nationalists and freedom fighters had hitherto suffered untold hardship during the struggle for independence and black majority rule.

Freedom-fighters like Nelson Mandela served long and tortuous prison sentences in South Africa on account of their love for their fatherland and the liberation of their countrymen from colonialism. In some situations such as in Angola, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe the

struggle was long and bitter. In other cases the intervention of the superpowers as well as ethnic rivalries raised serious questions about the motives of the colonial masters and those African leaders who had taken over leadership in their various countries. In most cases signs of trouble loomed only a few years after the independence celebrations. The assassination of Patrice Lumumba of the Congo shocked Africans. Few Africans saw any need for the death of that illustrious African son.

There came Kwame Nkrumah (1909-1972), the black leader of Ghana, the former British colony of the Gold Coast and the first of the European colonies in Africa to gain independence with majority rule. Until he was deposed by a coup d'état in 1966, he was an advocate of *Pan-Africanism,* a major spokesman for modern Africa.

Unfortunately what seemed like a future pattern of African leadership ruined Nkrumah's career, as he became increasingly remote, preferring to focus on grand schemes of African unity than on running the country. Nkrumah **turned Ghana into a one-party state in 1964, and took to indulging in a sordid cult of personality, dubbing himself Osagyefo, "the Redeemer.**" It did not take long for resentment to set in as army officers intervened and took power. ***"The myth surrounding Kwame Nkrumah has been broken***," announced an army colonel on the radio.As one critic sadly put it. ***The "political kingdom" had crumbled as fast as it had been built. "The Redeemer," who had once inspired a continent, had fallen far from grace.***

Eventually, it became obvious that the western powers were behind Nkrumah's exit from African Pan-African independence struggles and liberation. The same was true about Lumumba's assassination. A promising, great black political leader, who was thought to represent true black aspirations, had been eliminated from the face of the earth. African youths expressed their sorrow at the death of Patrice Lumumba and the Congo/Katanga tragedy was recorded in music and songs. Some of the songs condemned the enemies of black people as well as blacks who had become tools in the hands of Africa's enemies.

African youths everywhere yearned for another true leader of the Kingdom of the Congo who would stand out boldly for the black cause. But in the Congo such was not to be. A leader according to colonial standards took over the reins of government. His name was Mobutu Sese Seko. He reigned for more than 30 years and became an embodiment of oppression and corruption in African rulership.

The Obote/Idi Amin saga in Uganda marked another sad chapter in the post-independence political history of the black continent. African children consciously have been taught to hate tribal conflict, genocide, pogroms, and everything associated with a discredited African leadership as epitomised in the reign of Idi Amin Dada of Uganda. Generations unborn will repeatedly learn the details of that drama through the movie "*Idi Amin, the African*

dictator." In the words of one Igbo musician, the Idi Amin drama "was a shameful catastrophe that all nations of the world witnessed and lamented over."

Unfortunately such drama is repeated everywhere in modern Africa. The players go by various names and titles. Not much seems to have been learned from the past tragedies! But whether or not all evils attributed to him were true, most African schoolchildren everywhere know what Idi Amin stands for.

The songs of liberation from colonialism gradually turned into lamentation, as post colonial African political leaders turned into dictators and unleashed reigns of terror on the opposition and countrymen. They would eventually event schemes to change the constitution and make themselves life-presidents. Where elections have been organized to pick a democratic political candidate in any African country, no satisfactory results would emerge. The incumbent self-proclaimed life president would use a possible chaotic situation in the country to perpetuate his dictatorial rule. The present political scenario has not changed in Africa and not easily change in the nearest future

SEARCH FOR CREDIBLE LEADERSHIP, A CLEAN AND JUST SOCIETY

Search for a clean and just society has often been the ultimate goal of many honest and peace loving people all over the world. In fact very few nations, communities and peoples can claim that all is well in their societies. But the search for better conditions of living, peace and justice will never cease. As Igbo and Nigerians join most peoples all over the world in such a search, we think it necessary to expose some of the evils of the modern times that hinder people from achieving self-fulfilment. With some major obstacles on the way to man's search for fulfilment removed, it is obvious that a brighter future awaits all.

The Igbo and Nigerian situation can be best exposed or appreciated if we refer to an address by an elder statesman and Igbo traditional ruler, Eze P.I. Acholonu, on the 60th anniversary of his reign celebrated in October 1999. The address was delivered before a large crowd of Igbo and Nigerians. There was no sector of the Nigerian society that was not there - Federal and state military administrators and members of executive councils, local government administrators and councillors, Justices of court of appeal and other judges, commissioners of police and other security officers, directors-general, traditional rulers, spiritual leaders of the nation, gentlemen and women of the news media and a staggering number of distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

On this occasion replete with reminiscences, the traditional ruler stood shoulder high above his guests as one of the most qualified leaders of the people to address the issues worrying every Igboman, every Nigerian at home or living abroad. Any one present could be as bold as he was or could have challenged him if he had not spoken the truth. Most heads were surely bent low, in sorrow or shame. Honest and repentant listeners have reported their stories wisely and courageously and as well acknowledged that he spoke with authority, and his wisdom compared well with that of King Solomon. The Eze reminded, not only his listeners present at that memorable occasion, but all Igbo and Nigerians everywhere, that it was common knowledge that *whatever a man soweth, that man reapeth. If we sow truth and love, we reap truth and love. If we sow corruption and discord, we reap corruption and discord.* What are Nigerians sowing? What are they reaping? The traditional ruler did not miss citing the happy and nostalgic memories of the past.

> In the ancient times, our fathers maintained a considerably just and clean society in the belief that anybody who committed evil would be accordingly punished for his evil deeds. Those days, there were no high walls, barbed wires, security guards and security gadgets to assure maximum security for lives and properties, yet people never worried much about insecurity. People traveled long distances on foot, through thick jungles and narrow footpaths in search of daily bread. Their safety was simply guaranteed by their faithfulness to the oaths they made with other people, and particularly with the owners of the land where they sojourned.

As the Eze recounted, those were better days when compared with the modern times. It was rare those days finding people who cheated or committed atrocities against their friends. People valued honesty and uprightness. The poor did not fear oppression by the rich and the powerful. Justice and truth reigned supreme. Disputes were easily settled among friends and communities. But alas! Those were the so-called days of idol-worship and primitivity. The modern man, as the

Eze sees him is not better than the so-called primitive man. He has nothing to show for his great civilisation as long he does not cherish and pursue those values that give life meaning in a peaceful and just society. He laments:

> With modernity where are we today? With a million and more Churches, Mosques, and other religious establishments that teach the law of God, with copious quotations and stories from their sacred books, alas, our country is sinking under corruption, immorality, and scandals even in the highest quarters of society. Armed robbers, assassins and other terrorist gangs make life unsafe for everybody in our country. On top of that worrisome situation, notorious fraudsters and tricksters that go by the infamous designation 419 have continued to make life unbearable for both the poor and the rich.

It is quite easy for the Eze and every honest Nigerian to identify these wicked and evil men and women whose nefarious activities are contributing to the downfall of the nation, as the panic-stricken people scatter in fear and misery. They are everywhere. The road *contractor* who does not do the job he is paid for, the *government official* who approves payment for an un-executed project, o*fficials* who collect salaries of their *ghost workers* are among the evil men and women.

Teachers, lecturers, and university professors who promote or fail students who buy or do not buy their handouts or hurriedly produced books are among the crooks. *Teachers* who organise special classes for money, at the detriment of the official and public classes for which they are paid from public coffers are corrupt citizens who have joined the rogues in betraying public trust placed on them. *Teachers, examiners, and members of examination boards* who encourage examination malpractice among students are among the worst enemies of the country.

The *auto mechanic* who fixes a fake or old motor part in the place of a new one is a thief. These people are in one way or the other members of the 419 gang.

The activities of some Nigerians who rob their fatherland and deposit their loot in European banks are very disturbing. These unpatriotic Nigerians who collaborate with foreign nationals and companies to defraud their fatherland have inflicted irreparable damage on the image of the country and are really the most corrupt and heartless human beings. If the wealth of the nation which these individuals have wasted abroad were put into proper use for the benefit of the masses; surely, Nigeria would be in the position to compete with the richer nations of the world. What worried the traditional ruler most is the future of the nation and its younger ones. So as the little bird has learnt from the mother to fly, so the younger generation, regrettably has followed the evil ways of their elders:

> This tragedy has erupted into a plague of drug addiction and drug trafficking, armed robbery, sexual promiscuity, examination malpractice and dangerous secret cults now

> rampant in most of the tertiary institutions of learning." There is general breakdown of order as well as misplacement of priorities. This is as a result of greed and selfishness. "This disruptive life-style can only emanate from spiritual bankruptcy. Everybody wants to run before crawling. Nobody wants to cut his coat according to his cloth or even size. Everybody wants to lead; but nobody wants to follow.

The Eze did not fail to point to measures that must be taken to bring back sanity to our troubled land. Much lies on the leadership in every level of society. Leaders must of course lead by example. "Things will get worse if we continue on our crooked paths. Let us not continue wasting our time pointing accusing fingers at one another. Rather should we boldly and humbly face the truth. Everybody's attention must be turned toward these glaring problems, which as yet look like sparks of light that will burn down the house if neglected." It is indeed the presence of these glaring problems that perturbs Nigerians wherever they are. A renowned traditional ruler of Igboland has boldly spoken and every worried Igbo and Nigerian would have wished that his fellow traditional rulers and other civil and military authorities had spoken like him. Unfortunately most of those leaders of the people have been chasing rats while their houses were burning. It is most remarkable that the Eze ended his address with a very passionate appeal for action and change of heart from all and sundry:

> At this juncture, it is important to shed tears before our highly placed government officials. The deplorable state of our rural and urban roads is a sad part of our history. Most of our rural and urban communities must be declared disaster areas as most have been cut off by erosion. It is a shameful catastrophe. For years we have been crying over the deteriorating state of our economy as well as over the state of insecurity. But alas! Our weeping has always fallen on deaf ears.

One would only wish, however that this old man’s cry this time will not again fall on deaf ears, but that his appeals would be considered by government authorities with compassion.

It is not only Igbo and Nigerians remaining in the fatherland who are making the fatherland a distasteful habitation for all and sundry. No! Those who have escaped from the fatherland and settled overseas are part of the black man’s problem. In fact most of those Igbo and Nigerians that have fled their fatherland have little or no reason to complain about the poor situation of things back home. They have no reason to point accusing fingers at the leaders at home when they themselves are no better even in their new homes overseas.

The poor image of Africa being painted in Europe and America is part of the handiwork of some discredited sons and daughters of Africa. These people indulge in nefarious activities, including trafficking in drugs and other illegal business dealings. Surely these people who have

no respect for law and order in the land of their temporary sojourn will not make better leaders in their countries in Africa. The question about who would lead Africa to salvation will remain a perplexing one for long!

Will Nigeria Survive?
Where is Nigeria heading to?

Some optimists say 'yes.' Others have no stomach to discuss the issue. Some agnostics offer one option - National Sovereign Conference. There, a decision must be taken to divide Nigeria into small manageable groups. There are some other patriotic Nigerians who like to take a last serious look at what this nation could become after all. They call on Nigerian leaders to look into their own backyard for equitable solutions to our political problems.

A serious study of Africa's interminable and innumerable crises reveals that they all share a similar evolution. Each crisis begins when an "educated" buffoon, civilian or military assumes power through an election or a coup de'etat. He then proceeds to entrench himself in office by amassing power and surreptitiously debauching all key government institutions: the military, the civil service, the judiciary, and the banking system.

With all powers in his hands, he transforms the state into his personal property – to benefit himself, his cronies and tribesmen, who all then proceed to plunder the treasury. All others who do not belong to this privileged class are excluded, as the politics of exclusion is practised.

The tyrant employs a variety of tactics to decimate opposition to his rule: co-optation, bribery, infiltration, intimidation, and "divide and conquer." Opposition leaders compound their weakness by their constant bickering. Out of frustration, a rebel group emerges from the excluded class and mounts a guerrilla campaign to oust the despot and his cohorts from power, or to secede, as in the Biafra War in 1967. In the course of the insurgency, the guerrilla movement splits into several factions, often along tribal lines. If the campaign to overthrow the regime is unsuccessful, the war drags on for years, even decades, as in Angola, Mozambique, and Sudan. If the head of state is ousted or killed, a power vacuum emerges and factional leaders battle ferociously to fill the void, as in Somalia and Liberia.

Chaos and carnage ensue. Infrastructure is destroyed. Food production and delivery are disrupted. Thousands are dislocated and flee, becoming internal refugees and placing severe strains on the social systems of the resident population. Food supplies run out. Starvation looms. The Western media bombard the international community with horrific pictures of massacred populations, rain-thin famine victims as in Rwanda/Burundi, Tutsi/Huti tragedies.

Unable to bear the horror, the international community is stirred to mount eleventh-hour humanitarian rescue missions. Food, tents, blankets, portable toilets, high-protein biscuits, and other relief supplies are airlifted to the refugees.

Factional leaders, who initially welcomed the humanitarian mission to feed refugees, turn against the mission and refuse to cooperate with it, because its presence accords some legitimacy and recognition to the hated regime. Factional leaders thus demand that relief organization deal with them and not the regime. The demands soon turn into extortion. At some point, relief supplies are attacked and aid workers are taken hostage or killed.

The mission loses public support and is terminated; relief workers are pulled out and the starving refugees are left to fend for themselves. That is, until another African country blows up and the whole macabre ritual is repeated. Nothing – absolutely nothing, it seems – has been learned.

More maddening is that the solution to all these crises lies internally – in each African country. It entails the modernization of an indigenous African political tradition – the village assembly, the chief and his council of elders would summon a village meeting – similar to New England's town hall meetings. There, the issue would be debated by the people until a consensus was reached. Once a decision was made, everyone in the village, including the chief would be required to abide by it.

This indigenous tradition was revived, modernized as a "sovereign national conference," and used to resolve political crisis and make peaceful transition to democratic rule in Benin, Mali, Zambia and South Africa. By contrast, the national conference convened by Mobutu in 1992 was not sovereign. The conference was packed with delegates from more than 200 political parties that Mobutu created himself, leading Zairians to scorn multi-partisyism as "multi-Mobutuism." Nor were the decisions of the conference binding upon Mobutu. In fact, he repeatedly sabotaged the conference.

Successful resolution of disputes must have three key features. First, the forum must be recognized by all as the place to take disputes to. Second, the adjudication process must be transparent; that is, judges must be impartial and the process open, with no back-room deals struck. Third, the rulings must be accepted by all. If not, an appeal must be allowed, but a limit should be placed by establishing a final court of appeal.

In much of Africa, these structures are woefully lacking. Thus, a trivial political dispute can easily escalate into a full-blown civil war that sends refugees streaming in all directions.

Homegrown solutions can be found in Africa's own indigenous systems, almost everywhere castigated as backward and primitive. A hierarchical system of jurisprudence existed in many traditional African societies, including Igboland and other ethnic groups in Nigeria.

After independence, African nationalists and elites abjured their own native institutions and rushed to blindly copy foreign systems they did not understand. Had they looked in their

own backyard, they would have found the solutions to many of Africa's recurrent crises. There is need to go back to the roots, that may lead to rediscovery of solutions that can lead to a better future for the younger generations that roam about the streets of cities – home and abroad.

Will Nigeria survive? That is a big question that the leaders of this troubled nation have to answer. Optimists are not many. At least the events of the last 'democratic' organized by our leaders point to the direction we are moving. 'Democratic' elections in which winners were declared before the votes cast by patriotic Nigerians were counted are surely worthless.

The hydra-headed ills of the nation, including - bribery and corruption, thuggery, intimidation, fraud, and all sorts of frivolous political antics have not disappeared from the Nigerian scenario. Rather they are taking deep roots and in most cases are accepted as part of our everyday lifestyle.

Poor Nigerian 'followers' have to put up with the burden of leadership which has continued to worsen since the military started to dominate the politics of the nation. Even after the military claimed it had handed over to the civilians, military men in civilian uniform still lead the way. They, too like their counterparts have continued to mislead the poor masses. The yoke is too big to bear.

More than forty years after independence, there are no signs that the nation has made any progress. There is little or no electricity. Water is not available. Most of the young people are jobless. The roads are still impassable and most Nigerians believe that our roads were much better 40 years ago!

The 2003 'democratic' elections have come and gone. And as disillusioned Nigerians try to put the mess behind them, our political leaders are already busy completing talks on the 2007 political arrangements! Those who were not favored in the last elections would in 2007 get their turn. How such arrangements would affect the fortunes and lives of millions of impoverished Nigerians is within anybody's guess.

A German Company representative who visited Nigeria recently was unimpressed by the poor state of the economy and basic infrastructure. A rhetorical question he put to an associate summarized his thoughts: **"Wohin steuert Nigeria?"** Where is Nigeria heading to? You too, can equally guess!

CHAPTER FIVE

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

LEADERSHIP AND THE CRUMBLING WALLS OF DICTATORS

Nigerians aspiring to leadership positions in the modern times may be wise to learn from the aftermaths of the **Arab Spring**. The strong walls they constructed for themselves, their closest friends and families are crumbling everywhere, from the East to the West, North to the South. The walls have been made with hardest stones, irons, and barbed wires. All unauthorized intruders must be caught and crushed to ashes. The walls were in most cases made to serve both for security of the ruling monarch or political dictator, and as well preserve the perpetuity of his reign, his dominance over his enemies and subjects. His unquestionable authority has even some foundation in the Christian Bible; maybe too, in the Koran or in the Book of Mormons! **"O Lord, your strength gives joy to the king; how your saving help makes him glad! You have granted him his heart's desires…….You have set on his head a crown of pure gold. He asked for life and this you have given him, days will last from age to age……!**

This dictator king and often a tyrant is the grand master and his subjects are his slaves and must pray for his 'success' and reign. **O God, give your judgment to the king, to a king's son your justice, that he may judge your people in justice, and your poor in right judgment…..He shall endure like sun and the moon from age to age…….He shall rule from sea to sea, from the Great River to earth's bounds. Before him his enemies shall fall; his foes lick the dust….(Pss 71).**

This dictator king, Chief, Traditional Ruler, Eze, Oba, Obong, Obi, Emir, Shah, Ayotallah, Alhaji; in modern nomenclature, President, Governor, Mayor or Local Government Chair Person, Senator, Honorable House Leader, Councilor, Assembly Man or Law Maker, or whatever title, temporal or spiritual is very sure of one thing; he shall reign forever! If he dies (of course), his son shall take over automatically. If he had no son, any of his daughters would become the 'Queen!' He was sure there would be no elections for any vacant post. How could elections be conducted, when there had been no political parties, political ideologues or opposition? If any of the above had ever existed in that part of the world, they must have been wiped out of existence through violent executions and ethnic cleansing!

Like the biblical ***'wise man'*** they never imagined that the walls they constructed with hardest steel structures (never in deed with ***straw or light materials!***) would ever fall apart. "The rains came, tornadoes came, the earth quaked and hurricanes blew and the walls stood still and unshakeable" The underground and specious bunkers, tunnels of escape roots had for years remained impenetrable, and not even the violent revolts and armed struggles put up by rebels and oppressed citizens could weaken the dictator's will to remain in power for ever.

THEIR DIMINISHING WORLD AND CRUMBLING WALLS

The strong, impenetrable walls of wicked and callous leaders may eventually have started crumbling as these leaders and their leadership ideologies have little or no more relevance in the modern world as 'signs of the times' stare glaringly at them. The iron stones and structures they set up with friends of like minds, families, in-laws, relations, and generations of sycophants and praise singers are truly crumbling. The world truly continues to shrink in size.

A new generation of youthful minds has come up to question the meaning and relevance of one-man-rule in a multi-faceted society in a global village, no more separated by huge mountains and rivers, deserts and huge forests. No, the world is no more 'big' and separated as before. People of the global village, black and white, red and yellow are so closely connected by easy transportation services, the Internet and modern audio and video gadgets. There is no need to cross mountains and rivers and fly distant spaces to attend a global conference. You can connect with the rest of the world with your ear phone and tiny video camera. So revolutions can now be carried out without any gathering of people. No! Watch what has been taking place in Tunis, Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Ivory Coast, Sudan, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Syria Nigeria, Cameroon, Zimbabwe, China, and Chechnya, and make up your mind. Before you know it a 'revolution' has started! Is it possible?

THE REVOLT: A REJECTION OF THE STATUS QUO (ANTE)

The bottom line of the ***revolt*** is ***'hunger for change'***. It is an unstoppable revolution. It is natural. It is a revolt against tyranny and injustice, against corruption, deceit and 'business as usual'. It is ***rejection*** of many years of misrule, oppression and corruption. It is a call for change, accountability, hard work, right leadership, and honest administration, and way of life. It is a call for the dethronement of evil and corrupt leadership. It is principally a rejection of evil, and throw ing away of an obsolete system of governance, a dumping of rubbish and garbage into a refuse bin. The Italians would say ***"buttare via", "gettare via, fuori"*** The nearest English rendering of the expression would be ***'expunge' (wipe out, obliterate, erase, delete, cut and remove…). Buttare via, gettare via*** implies removing from the roots, from the foundation, so that no traces of the evil can be seen again. The future generation of young citizens should not be allowed to remember or know about it, except for the sake of history. The thing to be thrown away is intrinsically evil!

One dumps, throws away what is useless and evil and setting up in its place what is good, enviable and godly! Not armored tanks of the presidential guard, the jet fighters, and the bomb could frighten the people. They troupe out in thousands, in millions. They bring along to the Liberation Squares their sucking babies and toddlers. They are ready for the worst. Only a total 'surrender of the dictator, with his entire household would soften the hearts of the aggrieved people. Total vacation of office and flight into exile would be the only option. The demand is not negotiable!

"NO! BUT WE WILL HAVE A 'KING' OVER US!"

Vox Populi, (public opinion) often expressed in an uncompromising and aggressive tone of the masses is as old as the history of leadership and kingship. The voice of the people or public opinion against a particular ruling class of any age or epoch is in short clear signs of rejection of dictatorship and oppressive rule. It is a popular revolt which most often can never be suppressed with the strongest army and weapons or mere intimidation. It is a deafening cry of the people for democracy and liberation from a decadent rulership.

When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel. Yet his sons did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after gain; they took bribes and perverted justice. Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah and said to him. "Behold you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint for us a king to govern us like all the nations."

It was a futile attempt for old Samuel to appease, convince, or intimidate the people. They were emphatic in their demands: ***"No! But we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles."***

After consultation with God, who advised him to hearken to the people's voice and to give them a king, Samuel at last succumbed to the popular demand for democracy and said to the men of Israel, ***"Go every man to his city!" (1 Sam. 8).*** He has yielded to the people's popular demand; the pacification of an aggrieved people!

The people of old Israel, like the people of Nigeria, Tunisia, Syria Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Ivory Coast and many others have often gathered at their city squares, Tahir and Eagle squares, Liberation squares and ***voting booths*** to express their displeasure with the ruling class. They must have made tents and slept at open squares in thousands and millions to show that they meant business and could not be turned away or dispersed with bullets and water canons or even treats of death by hanging. They had trouped out en masse to polling stations to cast their votes, precisely to remove bad leaders, including unworthy ***House Members, Senators and Governors.*** Their weapon was their ***voting card***. It was a popular uprising by an oppressed people who had carried the unbearable, the choking yoke of oppression and slavery for long.

The leaders of the people of old Israel did not mince words. They were asking for the ***democratization of the political institution of their land***. They were fed up with the antics of the ruling class, and thought it was time for change, to bring down the defiant dictators by simple request for a change or if not possible by a violent revolt. It was a popular revolt against autocracy, hereditary rulership, and concentration of power on one man.

In ***Nigeria, and particularly in Imo State***, it was a true revolution carried out by the people who had suffered terrible hardships in the hands of their heartless political leaders for long. Armed with their voting cards, they ceased the opportunity offered by the **INEC** to effect a change in their government.

CHOICE OF LEADERSHIP: THE NIGERIAN DILEMMA

"Vote for Personalities", Not Parties! The handwriting on the walls tracing this wind of change can be read from the emerging voting patterns during the 2011 polls. The new generation of Nigerian youths may no longer think or decide on 'party' lines and forms, but the merits of individual candidates. Christian or Moslem, they may not want to know. The handwriting is even clearer when it becomes evident that a one time 'popular politician' can be rejected at the polls, right there, right in his home constituency! What the people are saying in a simply language is clear: "We do not like your tactics any more". So far you have not represented us well. You are not a man of the people. What are your great contributions towards the dreams of a New Nigeria, where though tribe, tongue, religion and culture may differ, but Nigeria marches ahead in terms of development, peace and unity?"

The ferocious wind of change of leadership blowing across the Arab world in the recent times may after all not stop in that region. It is likely to spread across regions where the people's economic, social, political and religious problems and upheavals have roots in poor and incompetent leadership that has no room for opposition and change. And there are many leaders all over the developed, underdeveloped and developing world that are the main architects of their people's perpetual state of poverty, unemployment, insecurity and so many problems associated with backwardness and misery.

REVOLT AGAINST BAD LEADERSHIP!

Revolt against oppression, injustice, domination, and intolerance may be the big headlines to check. ***Demand for*** fairness, change, accountability and service may be found on the other side of the coin.

In Nigeria, for example, the masses, including the electorate have been ***demanding for free, fair and credible elections*** for long now, even since the country gained independence from the colonial masters and taken over political power. Most of the elections organized since 1960s have been violent and in fact disastrous and the political leaders have not lived up to expectations; hence the first military coup. The only 'fair and free' election organized in Nigeria since independence, meant to produce a credible leader of the people…'who would fight our battles' like the old Israelites ended in a disaster. It was hoped that the winner, ***Moshood Abiola*** would become a credible leader, a 'Moses', who would bring the people out of slavery and lead them to the promised land**.** No! the dream was unrealizable. It rather set ***Abiola and Babangida*** on the center stage. It was a ridiculous drama, and the people of Nigeria were not happy in any way. They were told that the election had been annulled! Stop! Mute! Their consciences were

wounded and they continued to lick their wounds in agony for many years until ***1999,*** when another election was conducted to remove the military and usher in a new era of democracy. There was another attempt in ***2003.***

Most Nigerians were not however satisfied since old faces re-appeared, some still military personnel, but in civilian garb! But some patriotic Nigerians accepted the results for the sake of peace, since they say 'half bread in better than none'. But would completely new faces appear in ***2007?*** How can? The old faces remained and sought to change the constitution to make way for a system of ***'life presidency and aristocracy!'*** It nearly worked, but for Allah's intervention.

The results of ***2007 polls*** were truly disturbing. Most Nigerians as well as local observers agreed that the whole exercise was a sham. Foreign observes confirmed the obvious. Nigerian political elite simply succeeded in squandering billions of naira in a useless and disgraceful exercise. They had once again failed the Nigerian masses and there was a near revolt. Unfortunately the oppressed Nigerians had not taken the first steps calling for mass uprising against injustice!

In the year ***2011,*** Nigerians would once again troupe out to exercise their civic right and duty to elect their leaders who will pilot the affairs of the fatherland for the next four to eight years. Most of the, adults, and youths above 18 years did actually register and were ready to vote for candidates of their choice. Would their dreams of ***fair, free and credible elections*** be realized this time or will such dreams be dashed to the rocks again? No! Politicians were careful this time not to provoke mass protests and possibly popular uprising. No! No Nigerian, young and old would tolerate or accommodate any excuses and mistakes either from the INEC or politicians. Every one's vote must count, must be accounted for. That was the only possible option. That was what the people demanded and they could never be disappointed.

DEMAND FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Nigerians know that their fatherland is blessed with natural resources and those who control the oil and other revenues know too that if the revenue is equitably shared there will be no poor Nigerians. But many Nigerians are poor and unemployed. Many families cannot afford one square meal a day.

Nigerians who listen to the news are aware of billions of naira they are told are shared out to government ministries and state governments as ***'excess revenue'*** from oil sales. What are the political leaders doing with such excess revenues? What of the main capital revenue?

Nigerians are aware that university dons regularly embark on indefinite strikes because of non-payment of appropriate salaries. Teachers are not paid in time. Many retired workers have never received one kobo since their retirement. Government hospitals are under lock and key

because doctors and nurses have not been paid for sometime now. What is happening to us? Who should be held responsible for these anomalies?

All the above not withstanding; Nigerians hear that some of their leaders are among the richest men in the world. Some are grouped into the first 10! Some are caught in money laundering scandals regularly as they stack away billions of naira, dollars and Euro into foreign banks. Some own big houses and hotels in most European, American, African and Asian cities. What is happening to us? There are many other astonishing revelations concerning the activities of corrupt Nigerian leaders and their collaborators caught at the borders, sea ports and airports in their attempts to transport and hide away their ill-gotten wealth in 'safer parts of the world'.

Nigerian masses listen to news, local and foreign. Many read newspapers and take note of reports about their leaders caught in corrupt practices, including embezzlement of public funds, shoddy business transactions said to count in billions of naira or dollars freely move about the country unmolested by our security agents. No law courts prosecute and sentence them to various jail terms.

On local and state levels no meaningful development projects are seen going on. Nigerians are meant to understand that the money that should has been used for such projects have been hijacked by some authorities in power and most of the revenue has gone into private pockets. No one is held accountable for these atrocities. Surely one day the aggrieved people will take to the streets to protest this recklessness and total lack of accountability in the so-called government of the people, by the people and for the people!

THE PEOPLE'S VOTES MUST COUNT!

Demand for good governance and accountability on the part of their political leaders, who wished to be voted into office by the people, would in April 2011 need to be confirmed in the polling booths! Since independence, Nigerians have always been called out to troupe out ***en masse*** and vote for credible leaders who would wipe away their tears and lead them to the Promised Land! Under rain and often scotching heat, Nigerians actually trouped out to register and collect their voting cards to enable them vote on the D-day. Arrived the election day, most enthusiastic Nigerians queued up to vote for candidates of their choice. In many unfortunate and uncomfortable situations, Nigerians exercised incredible patience with many lousy electoral officers to cast their votes. Happily moving back to their homes they felt satisfied that their honest votes truly would help bring sanity to the corrupt leadership they had known for long. The exercise was a huge success. The people have spoken through the ballot box. Many heads rolled, as some corrupt politicians were voted out of office!

DEMAND FOR TOTAL SURRENDER OR BE VOTED OUT!

At the appropriate time, Nigerians who have been disappointed by their leaders would rise in protest and demand for resignation of political leaders who have performed below expectations. They may not protest just against single and unworthy individuals; they would demand for the entire removal of a generation of political leaders that had always seen the political leadership in this nation as their birthright. The dictators, their entire households and institutions they have set up may have to go too. The demand for a complete set of new faces and actors in Nigeria's political arena and scenario has become irresistible. No rigging. No distribution of money to entice voters would work this time.

Who are the politicians that were called up to resign and surrender or be voted out? They are the leaders who had ***not been elected by the people.*** They are the leaders who ***have been imposed on the people by godfathers and their party stalwarts.*** They are the arrogant and poor performers on the stage, but have high jacked the public news media that sing their praises and claim to be the best of political leaders.

Who should be called upon to replace the discredited leaders? They are the "men of the people!" They are detribalized political leaders who shun ethnic politics. A detribalized Nigerian politician is one who can win the heart of the people whether in the North, South, East or Western parts of this multi-ethnic and multi-language nation, called Nigeria. A ***'Man of the people'*** suitable for a high office in modern Nigerian state must be able to canvass for votes anywhere in Nigeria and attract supporters.

He may no more rely on ethnic politics which divides and never unites Nigerians. ***Zoning formula*** will become a thing of the past. Such systems and 'agreements' have been invented by greedy politicians who have always believed that power should be 'shared' among power-seekers, no matter the qualifications and merits of the one to be 'installed' as the leader. Honest leadership positions ***should be decided by merits and qualities of the one who wishes to serve the people.***

The people's voice must be heard. Their wishes must be respected. The people have always condemned imposition of leaders on them; hence the slogan ***"Election, not selection!***' This is why they want to participate in the electoral process, fair, free and credible.

Nigerians and Africans in general don't resign, abdicate, or relinquish posts, when the situation calls for such inevitable steps. No! They cling to power till death or are butted out of power through brute force.

But in the present global circumstances, in face of the crumbling walls built by dictators to enable them perpetuate their oppressive rule, there is need to recognize the 'signs of the times', the changing face of politics in the developing world. As a result of mounting pressures for change, both the old generation political leaders and emerging younger ones must be ready always to succumb to the wishes of the people in popular uprising, to resign, abdicate posts and retire peacefully.

THE PEOPLE'S VERDICT: THE PEOPLE'S COURT

When the oppressed people of our times rise in protest again their leaders, march to liberation squares and major capital cities of their states, they are bound to posit a lot questions that must be answered by their monarchs, kings and queens, presidents and prime ministers, governors, senators and mayors, house of assembly men and women, local government chair persons and their councilors.

Without any big preparations for protracted lawsuits, the people's court of justice has been established with no special or appointed Supreme Court judges and lawyers. A simple system for finding out the truth and fixing jail sentences for offenders has been set in motion! It is system of "Objective Questions and Answers". The students, now the political leaders on trial have to choose from the set up "Options!" There will be no room for rhetorics. In fact there will be little room for specifics. A similar scenario one finds in the Christian Bible on the "Day of Judgment". And the Lord will separate the goats from the sheep. Those at the right side will be set free from punishment, but those at the left will receive adequate punishment for their misdeeds. "Disappear from my presence for you are no more worthy, for I was hungry you did not give me to eat; I was tasty you did not give me to drink…..

SENTENCING OF THE UNWORTHY POLITICAL LEADERS – THE VERDICT

When their votes have counted, see how the sentences were framed. The people have spoken and will continue to speak out at the polls. Those political crooks that maneuvered their way into the winners' camp by rigging the elections may no more be lucky in the future. The eyes of the people have opened!

HON. MEMBER 'HOUSE OF REP': More than 80% of our people you claim to represent are not even aware of your presence in the Lower House. Most of our children don't know you and can't even identify you in pictures and videos. The massive billboards you mounted at street corners did not impress us. We are not aware of any contribution you have made towards the development of this region.

Verdict: The people are not interested in your candidature. You may step aside. Nobody has any doubt, too, that it is greed that is pushing you to the extremes in the pursuit of power. Having tasted the goodies and incredible financial remunerations for Honorable Members, you will surely wish to have a permanent seat in the house. The ridiculous promises you made are unrealizable. We don't trust you.

THE SENATOR: You have served our senatorial zone for two consecutive tenures. Now you want our votes for the third time. We don't know of any single federal project you have helped establish in your zone. We are not aware of any speeches you have made in reference to the problems of your senatorial zone. We have no good schools in our villages, no good roads, no water. What can you claim you have done for us?

Verdict: You must step down. You are not going to represent us anymore! Moreover we know quite well that it is not out of patriotism to serve our interests and those of your fatherland that you are fighting tooth and nail to grab or retain this senatorial seat. No! It is out of greed. The fat packages of salaries, talk less of the huge allowances and remunerations, counting in millions of naira or dollars you collect every month, are your true motivations. The people and many concerned citizens of our country question the rationale behind such scandalous pay packages for lawmakers, when professors and other highly qualified academics in both private and public sectors earn as little as one-tenth of your monthly salaries. We will no more support you.

GOVERNOR: There are many reasons why we will not vote for you The people have heard all your stories and promises repeated times without number and are bored. Even your counterparts in the neighboring states repeat the same 'poems'. ***You will tar all the roads in our villages, construct highways in our cities. Portable water will be in abundance. You will offer free education, from nursery schools to the universities; you will provide free medical care for all our people in villages and cities. You will provide jobs for every adult in our state. You will increase food production in our state and hunger will disappear from families.*** You will not stop at these. ***If vote into power, every large city in our state will have an international airport and every village will be turned into urban city. A lot of false promises have been made towards the so-called empowerment of the youth and creation of employment opportunities for youth and school leavers.*** You may step aside. We will not vote for you in spite of huge amounts of money you are sharing out to those who care to accept. We are not interested in you any more. We need a new face. We need a new government with a human face!

THE PRESIDENT: ***(The People's 'Sermon', addressing presidential candidates):*** "Remember that this office is a challenging one. The president of the nation is the father of the nation, a monarch, and an international figure. The president must be a very kind and tolerant leader. His '***kingdom', 'area of jurisdiction' is the entire nation and not his tribe, ethnic, religious or language group.***

As a very tolerant and accommodating politician in a multi-nation land like Nigeria, the president may ***not hate any governor or state*** that does not share his political views or belong to the ruling party. No! The president should uphold the people's verdict at the polls and

accommodate all the parties representing other political views and programs. A multi-party system may be the best for a truly democratic nation in any part of the world.

A ***one-party system*** is another name for ***dictatorial regime*** and such systems are rejected everywhere. Dictatorship is an oppressive system that does not tolerate democracy and has become an obsolete political system in the modern world.

Religion is a very sensitive issue in politics today. Not only being a detribalized leader, the president of the nation can never be ***a religious bigot or fanatic, allowing his religious faith, ideas and convictions to influence his political decisions***. The president should shun religious politics and advise his people, politicians, all and sundry to give up religious politics"

The father of the nation should carry out a relentless crusade against ***corruption*** and should warn his officers to desist from corrupt practices. The president should in word and action be seen carrying out anti-corruption campaigns into nooks and crannies of the nation's political and economic life. To convince the people that he is a serious presidential contender, the would-be father of the nation should shun all ***ostentatious living and flamboyant lifestyle***. He cannot be described as a very rich man. The people should see him sharing in their poverty!

("The People observe"): "But you are an old face in this race. We know your past activities and don't believe you have anything good to offer the oppressed citizens of this nation. We know you have even contributed in a large measure to the woes of this nation. You have been part of past governments that had squandered and looted the treasuries of our fatherland. There can be no assurances that if voted into power you can do anything to reverse the fortunes of this nation. Things may get worse.

Worse for you, your actions and utterances have ***never*** identified you as a ***detribalized leader.*** You play ethnic politics that help to divide, rather than unite the people of this nation. We, Nigerians will not vote for you. You may step aside. We want a new face!

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CHAIR PERSON: ***Sir, the people never voted you into this office. We didn't even know when you took this mantle of office from you predecessor. We are not sure even whether there were elections conducted for the office of Local Government Chair Person in our area. Surely, you must have been selected by your godfathers. You are accountable to them and we really have no business with.***

This truly is the reason why you have ignored the people of this local government area. Many families in this local government area have been chased away by gully erosion. There are no roads in our communities to transport our agricultural products to markets and other communities. Structures which can still identify our community schools and health centers are all dilapidated. We don't know what we have gained from your administration, and like your other counterparts elsewhere, we ask you to step aside. Perhaps when sanity returns to our

nation's political arena, free, fair and credible elections will be conducted and the people will be in the position to choose those who will lead them in government.

REJECTION OF EVIL

Peoples of all nations, East and West, North and South of the earth; peoples of the world, ***Christians and Muslims, Buddhists and Hinduisms, as well as Animists and other religious adherents***, have come to an agreement, without summoning any ***'International World Conference'*** to discuss the evils of leadership, that most political leaders must be sent on trial and sentenced. It is an outright rejection of the oppressive rule of some self-proclaimed life-presidents or monarchs. Bored by endless years of dictatorship, worsening economic situations and global poverty, there is option for the people to rise and ask for change. It is the people's revolution. In Nigeria it has started and must be sustained.

'Great' Politicians, Independent Achievers

The era of hiding under a 'well-known' party (aka, **"WINNERS PEOPLE' DEMOCRATIC PARTY-WPDP**) is fading and in fact should be a thing of the past now in Nigeria. Nigerians having learnt from bitter experiences from the past electoral records and history should be wiser now and vote for 'Independent Candidates' who have already proved their worth or if given the chance would perform well. The Latin adage puts it down succinctly ***"Empta dolore experientia docet" ("Experience teaches when bought with pain")***. Nigerians should no more be deceived by large billboards and big faces on them. Are the bitter and painful experiences of the past not yet enough to learn better! On account of our mistakes and sad experiences has development not eluded Nigeria; once a giant in the sun? Has the psalmist not recorded the ***Lamentation*** loud? ***"You are just in all that you have done to us, for we have sinned, and lawlessly departed from you, and have sinned in all things…..For we have become fewer than any nation and are brought low this day in all the world because of our sins, and at this time, there is no prince, or prophet, or leader……."(Daniel 3: 3ff)***

Will the numerous Nigerian modern prophets, pastors, evangelists, and Church leaders not join their counterparts of the old dispensation and add their voices to the Lamentation? "Through our own idiosyncrasies and short-sightedness we have for long allowed undeserving leaders, in military and civilian uniform to 'lead' us. These have been 'rulers' and never 'leaders'. They grabbed power through force, deceit and treachery. They plundered the vineyard, looted and emptied government treasuries while the people remained poor and helpless….. ***Even today there is no political institution to rely on, but there are many who still want to rule the devastated and impoverished nation, Nigeria….Most of those who hate us and haven't our interest at heart have appeared again with loud promises of salivation. We can't trust them and have remained the more confused."***

But however precarious the situation is, Nigerians need to continue to confess their sins; they need to plead for forgiveness; they need to plead with the Lord for leniency: ***"Have you utterly rejected Judah? Does your soul loathe Zion? Why have you smitten us, so that there is no healing for us? We looked for peace, but no good came; for a time of healing, but behold terror. We acknowledge our wickedness, O Lord and the iniquity of our fathers, for we have sinned against you: (Jer14:17 – 21).***

BY THEIR FRUITS YOU SHALL KNOW THEM

Nigerians have for long looked for a leader, a man of the people who can show, in word and deed, that "he is not like the rest". The people only need to decipher an iota of truth in what he is telling them. He can be trusted. He can govern them, no matter the shortness of his tenure in office. Nigeria would not care to know his religious leaning, ethnic background or language. Even in army uniform, a dictator or a radical intellectual, Nigerians want to identify with him and judge him by his exemplary leadership!

Nigerians often go wild with joy and excitement whenever they discover a leader who acts differently from his counterparts and predecessors. They cheer up. The ovation is wild and they don't mind crowning him a king to rule over them, forever! A little show of understanding of their predicament or a simple promise to bring about change sets communities ablaze with joy. They take to the streets and sing songs of joy. "A prophet has risen among us. God has visited his people!" Can we identify such figures in Africa and Nigeria (past and present), that can raise our hopes and encourage us to persevere.

As a source of contemporary thinking on leadership in Nigeria Chinua Achebe's little book **"The Trouble with Nigeria**," can perhaps be compared in impact to **Mao Tse Tung's little Red Book or Muammar Gaddafi's Green Book** of political engineering. Achebe asserts – and many agree – that "the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership". He talks about the enthronement of mediocrity in leadership positions which is a tragic paradox for a country that has a surfeit of the best and brightest but prefers time and again to put forward not its best or second eleven but its fifth or even eleventh eleven for a major league. Mediocre people when thrust into any office that exceeds their level of mediocrity are likely to swim in the big oversize boots of that office like the baby in his father's shoes. The shoes do not fit so they simply cut them (or the office) to suit their puny size.

Part of the reason for the failure of leadership in Nigeria is the lack of adequate or completely no preparation for the high office. To be an electrician, a mechanic, a tailor, a hairdresser, a barber or a plumber one must enrol in a school, formal or informal and go through a period of apprenticeship. At the end of the training, one would under the keen supervision of an

expert, have acquired enough skill in the chosen trade to be able to set up a shop or take up paid employment.

To be a doctor, a lawyer, an engineer or a pharmacist one must undergo a course of training and serve time as a pupil practitioner or its equivalent. The theoretical and practical programs would have, by the end of the day, invested with enough knowledge and cognate experience for practice. This rigorous process of knowledge acquisition is even more necessary for the highest office in the land.

Not so in Nigeria! The crisis of leadership in Nigeria stems from a system of 'free race for all.' No serious qualification requirements for **political leadership** aspirants are set up. An aspirant who fails to possess even the basic education can 'buy' the papers and degrees, or if he still has the desire to learn to read and write, he could still enrol in any high school, college or university after winning an election.

The absolute ignorance of what governance is all about has its consequences. A former businessman could vie for the office of president, governor, senator, house of representatives and so on in Nigeria; a pastor turned musician, a former custom's officer, a welder turned millionaire. What of a retired army officer? A Malam who visits Mecca and becomes 'Alhaji' can vie for the highest leadership position in Nigeria. What the country invests, it reaps. Nigerians don't care to learn from other countries.

To become America's President, **John F. Kennedy** schooled himself in the art of oratory and fast reading. He was reputed to be able to read 500 words per minute. Jimmy Carter, the 39th President of the United States spent a considerable part of his life preparing for the exalted office of president. He was a farmer, a naval officer, an engineer, a businessman, a planner, a nuclear physicist and a politician. He had been Governor of Georgia State before he stepped out for the ultimate political trophy of president.

During his campaign for presidency**, Jimmy Carter** wrote the book, "Why not the best." In it he asked two questions; questions that were relevant to America as much as they were to the rest of the world. "Can our government be honest, decent, open, fair, and compassionate? Can our government be competent?" He thought he could through his work in the presidency get the American people to answer both questions in the affirmative.

Bill Clinton had nursed presidential ambition right from his teenage years when he had the good fortune of shaking hands with President John Kennedy. He went to school in two continents, devoured every literature in sight and thus sharpened his oratorical skills. From the excellent manner in which he performed his job (forget about the Monica Lewinsky distraction), it is evident that he thought long and hard about how to bring the American Dream to reality.

What of the (black) president **Barrack Obama**? From the book **"Obama and the Secret Revealed"** we learn about the ***Nine Secret Tools*** Obama consciously applied during the 2008 presidential election to shape his destiny. These Nine Secret Tools or Obama's **Nine Secret**

Tools for Success freed him from frustration, anger, self-doubt and other negative emotions associated with politics, campaigning, and success. During his presidency he demonstrated knowledge and preparedness that helped him survive the onslaught of his white arch-rivals' dogged resolve to unseat him and relegate his achievements to nothingness.

Attila the Hun, a well known military tactician, has a long list of leadership qualities which include courage, decisiveness, anticipation, empathy, accountability, responsibility, credibility, tenacity, dependability, and stewardship among others. No single leader may possess all of these but it is certain that any great leader or one that seeks to be great must possess a sense of stewardship that is the quality of a caretaker, a trustee of the public patrimony. From this will flow public confidence, trust, patriotism and loyalty.

What can we say about Nigerian political leaders? Do our politicians running round with billowing *babariga* have these qualities or virtues in them? Or do they seek election or re-election with the full intention of coming back to the scene with the same old bags of tricks, iniquities and corruption? Do they have the charisma?

As a demonstration of the difference that a charismatic leader can make, many Nigerians attested to the successes of Nigeria's one-time military leader, **Murtala Muhammed**, the no-nonsense leader who was assassinated, February 13, 1976, how he cured Lagos of its teeming and steaming traffic and Lagos civil servants of their penchant for lateness at work on the thread-bare excuse that the slow-moving traffic was often the culprit. It was Muhammed's reputation for ruthlessness and the mythical ubiquitousness with which his fame was invested that did the magic. The route to their offices had not shortened; the traffic had not mellowed. It was just that Muhammed's personal example and the desire of every civil servant not to be found on the wrong side of the man that cured Lagos of its bad tempered traffic and Lagosians of their indolent work habits.

Many have asked why Nigeria, abundantly blessed with so many resources, minerals and manpower, is so abundantly cursed to the extent that nothing, almost nothing works here (except corruption). Small countries in Africa and elsewhere – with virtually no resources except their energy and their commitment have managed to improve the living standards of their people, but Nigeria which we fondly call the 'giant of Africa' is still limping along. With a daily haul of millions of dollar into our treasury Nigeria still remains in the leadership bracket of the world's poorest countries. With a large pool of intellectual and professional elite educated in some of the best schools in the world, Nigeria is still groping about, looking for its lost soul and making endless experiments in the search for a democratic political arrangement that can endure.

To be sure, the crisis of Nigerian nationhood is the crisis of leadership failure, a disease that manifested itself since independence. It has its roots in the people's rejection of "what is the best." The crisis of leadership has manifested itself in an entrenched system of gross failure, mediocrity, insensitivity to what is decent, recklessness, as well as shamelessness. There are no

role models. Chinua Achebe, also cited enviable examples. A phenomenon on two occasions in **Tanzania** in 1960s illustrates our point here. The first was when the news got around (not from the Ministry of Education but on street corners) that **President Nyerere** after paying his children's school fees, had begged his bank to give him a few months' grace on the repayment of the mortgage on his personal house.

The second occasion was when Nyerere insisted that anyone in his cabinet or party hierarchy who had any kind of business interests must either relinquish them or leave his official or party position. This was no mere technicality of putting the business interest in the escrow but giving it up entirely. As Achebe rightly observed:

> On these occasions ordinary Tanzanians seemed to walk around, six feet tall. They did not need sermons on patriotism; nor a committee of bishops and emirs to inaugurate a season of ethical revolution for them (P. 17).

Muammar Gaddafi of Libya demonstrated in the face of stiff opposition and hostility from the West that he was truly committed to the interests of his people. Although most of his detractors saw his regime as tyrannical, he used the vast resources of his oil-rich country in pursuing people-oriented friendly agenda and thus earned the undiluted loyalty of his people until the Arab Revolution of 2011. Since he took over power in 1969, he refused to be promoted beyond the rank of colonel, a practice that is rare in Nigeria or elsewhere in Africa. For him the trappings of office meant little when compared with the well being of his people.

No. Not in Nigeria! This kind of strange story can only make headlines in other countries of the world, not in Nigeria. How can the president of Nigeria, a Nigerian governor, chairman of local government, any minister of state claim to be poor or make his people know that he is in need of anything? It will be a shame to hear such report.

Even where possibly his personal savings, savings earned from the sweat of his brow are gone, does he not see the government coffers where he could dip his hands to refill his empty pocket? The minister only needs to give a command and his wishes will be carried out. And very few people will ever complain or even feel that the criminal was doing anything wrong.

A Nigerian government official, no matter his grade and qualifications cannot be poor. He is expected to donate fabulously to party coffers and get reimbursement afterwards. There are contracts to be awarded later to generous donors and they can make up for lost revenues.

The Nigerian civil war was in progress when the death of an illustrious black leader was announced. The assassination of **Martin Luther King Jr**. in 1968 was a blow to the black people's hope for a befitting leader, a messiah. The hopes of the African youths who thought blacks in America would come to the rescue of black Africa were dashed to the rocks. Once again Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. became a household name in Africa.

The murder of **Steve Biko,** (the founder of the Black Consciousness Movement in 1977 in South Africa) by white police while in custody horrified African youths and confirmed their fear that the rise of a worthy African leader would take long. It would bring about a disaster to allow other emerging African nationalist leaders and possibly an **African Messiah -** to die in the manner of Martin Luther King Jr. **or Patrice Lumumba**. Such a saviour will live to lead his people and the whole black race to freedom; hence the "**Free Mandela"** songs! Both young and old people were caught by "Free Mandela fever."

All over Africa the campaign for freedom in South Africa and the abolition of the apartheid policy intensified as ecstatic youths including, college and university students were caught up in a crescendo of **Free Mandela** disco extravaganza. Nigerian youths everywhere were possessed by the spirit of freedom, and there was hope that the spirit of African liberation had reincarnated in Mandela. Would he live up to expectations, to usher in the messianic age for the black people? The youths were looking for role-model leader.

Like Martin Luther King Jr. in America, Nelson Mandela was expected to emerge as the awaited **messiah** at this point in time. The black voices and protests could no more be swallowed up by white police intimidation and the international white conspiracy to relegate black Africans to a perpetual second-class citizenship in the land of their forefathers

Indeed Mandela would not be allowed to die in prison like Steve Biko and other black leaders. No wonder, then, that after 26 years this illustrious son of black Africa was released from prison and was on May 10, 1994 inaugurated as South Africa's first black president since the apartheid policy was instituted in 1910.

The expectations were high. The release of Mandela from prison thus ushered in the new dawn of the **"Day of Yahweh**". The arrival of the **Black Messiah** would mark the beginning of liberation for Africans from the long and painful oppression by their bitter enemies. There was no need for any further proof that an international conspiracy inspired by the most powerful nations of the world had as its goal the subjugation of black people to the perpetual status of slavery.

But the search for credible leadership continued. In the chequered history of Nigerian politics, Nigerians have compromised their longing for quality leadership out of frustration. Although democratically elected, civilian politicians were tyrannical and corrupt. Disillusionment with poor performance of civilian government paved the way each time for military overthrow. Military boys seized power and assumed the posture of redeemers who would cleanse the nation.

Unfortunately the military never performed better than politicians they overthrow. Having been betrayed by the political class, most Nigerians care little about the calibre of each in-coming military administration. Many are simply contented to oust the erstwhile political leaders who have brought misery and untold hardship on the people.

In fact at the present times some Nigerians would welcome back with open arms the erstwhile colonial masters from Europe who offered more honest and competent leadership than the current sons of the soil!

This last example sounds strange. But that such an option is possible among a misruled, oppressed and impoverished people points to the level of frustration Nigerians have suffered in the hands of heartless, corrupt and ineptitude leadership since it gained independence from Britain in 1960. It is therefore on account of these continued frustrations and misrule that the debate on the **quality of leadership** in Nigerian will ever remain paramount in any meaningful project embarked upon to return the country to sanity.

For brief moments in Nigeria's political history the people have seen and identified few leaders worth following and listening to. They saw the "hand of God" in the leadership of **Murtla Mohammed** at that point in time. When the enemies of the possible 'messiah' eliminated the charismatic military leader, the masses lamented: "Who hired Dimka?" They questioned in despair. He was the assassin hired to eliminate the leader. Again there arose briefly someone called **Mohammed Buhari.** He performed like the "people's messiah". He had some leadership qualities the people had not witnessed since independence .These included, promptness, action, sincerity, strictness, hard work, and of course discipline. Nigerians, including Christians cheered and wished him well. They didn't care about his arch Muslim ideologies and possible religious excesses. His regime, however did not last. The people were sad.

The Nigerian masses never cared about these leaders' religious affiliations or ethnic backgrounds. They were not worried about their military uniform, and worst still, they were not trained in politics, did not undertake political studies in any political institutions. They of course belonged to no political parties.

The long marginalized, hard oppressed **Igbos of Nigeria**, defeated and humiliated in war cried loudest at the demise of **Murtala Mohammed**, the arch enemy of their short-lived Republic of Biafra. They, like many other Nigerians had thought that "a great leader had arisen among us and that "God had visited his people". I still vividly remember the frustrations of an elderly Igbo man, who at hearing the assassination of Murtala Muhammed exclaimed: 'Yes they have killed him. Good things never last. Was the General loved by everybody? Was he different from his predecessors? What is today the judgment of rivals and critics and murderers? There is still need to find out if he left any legacies. The problem of Nigeria still remains to date and that of leadership!

Then there arose during the **NPN/NPP** political experiment an **Igbo "weeping governor"** called **Samuel Onunaka Mbakwe**. He came from Okikwe zone, precisely a small city called Avutu Obowo. Did he achieve anything during his administration? Did he bulldoze decadent structures to put in place good roads, government owned hotels Imo people could be proud of in the three zones of the state? The Imo hotel Mbakwe sited at Orlu was never completed. It was

later auctioned by the military administration that replaced the **NPN/NPP** government. What of Avutu modern poultry farm? Was Mbakwe a good political leader of Ndigbo of Imo state? Did he lead by example? Did he leave any legacy? Why was he nicknamed "a weeping governor"?

Then we arrive at another milestone, **not the least nor may he be the last** figure to consider in the leadership phenomenon surrounding the political history of Imo, Ndigbo and Nigeria. We take a short look at **Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu**, addressed as Biafra rebel leader or warlord by detractors. Who is in the best place to assess Ojukwu's legacy? The story which began in 1966 extended to March 2nd 2012, some 46 years ago as Ojukwu's remains were committed to the mother earth. Surely the vast majority of Ndigbo who honor Ojukwu today did not witness the **Biafra** saga that gave meaning to the person of Ikemba of Nnewi! Did Ojukwu lead by example? The problem is honestly that of leadership. Who will lead us? Who will go for us? Who will lead by example and we follow? Who has nothing to hide? Who has no skeletons in the cabinet? There is nowhere to hide any more. Any officer entrusted with authority whether in the private or public sector carries a lot of responsibilities. He is expected to lead by example and should be seen just doing that.

Rawlings Leadership in Ghana: In search of a peculiar type of leadership that could salvage their country, the sweeping changes that characterized the **Rawlings** military government in Ghana attracted the attention of most Nigerian youths as they hailed the leader's style. Nigerians never cared if Rawlings wore military uniform and took over power ten times in Ghana. They were interested in the things he did **differently.** Many Nigerians wished 'a Rawlings' would emerge in Nigeria, who would take drastic actions to restored order to leadership in Nigeria! Till today, most Nigerians believe it was Rawlings administration that made Ghana what the country is today, the pride of Africa.

In Ghana, the new government that took power on December 31, 1981, was the eighth in the fifteen years since the fall of Nkrumah. Calling itself the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC), its membership included Rawlings as chairman, Brigadier Joseph Nunoo-Mensah (whom Limann had dismissed as army commander), two other officers, and three civilians. Despite its military connections, the PNDC made it clear that it was **unlike other soldier-led governments.** This was immediately proved by the appointment of fifteen civilians to cabinet positions.

In a radio broadcast on January 5, 1982, Rawlings presented a detailed statement explaining the factors that had necessitated termination of the Third Republic. The PNDC chairman assured the people that he had no intention of imposing himself on Ghanaians. Rather, he **"wanted a chance for the people, farmers, workers, soldiers, the rich and the poor, to be part of the decision-making process."** The ultimate purpose for the return of Rawlings was,

therefore, to **"restore human dignity to Ghanaians."** In the chairman's words, the dedication of the PNDC to achieving its goals was **different from any the country had ever known**. It was a **radical** way of finding solutions to man's intractable problems. It was for that reason that the takeover was not a military coup, but rather a **"holy war"** that would involve the people in the **transformation of the socioeconomic structure of the society.**

By barring candidates associated with **corruption and mismanagement of national resources** from running for district assembly positions, the holy war took a dramatic turn. Rawlings 'holy war' or 'jihad' had no Islamic overtones. It was war on those evils that had kept Ghana, Nigeria and other Africa nations in a state of perpetual bondage and we know the litany. To a large measure the 'holy war' succeeded in Rawlings Ghana.

CHAPTER SIX

LEADERSHIP BY EXAMPLE: THE ROCHAS BLUEPRINT

Every (patriotic) Nigerian, from top to bottom, from the most sophisticated intellectual, business man and politician to the most downtrodden, East, West, North and South of this nation has always without equivocation) identified Nigerian problem as that of **leadership.** Good leadership implies good governance. Nigerians as a whole have never sought redemption, liberation and rescue from politicians or political parties. They have always identified the political institution with the nation's tragedies (economic, social and religious). Not a good percentage of Nigerians understand the political messages of the numerous political parties that emerge from nowhere during elections in Nigeria. What is **PDP?** What is **PDF?** What is **NNPP?** What is **PAF** up to?

Most political parties and their founders, supporters in Nigeria of course know from the bottom of their hearts that they have nothing to offer the Nigerian masses. They have nothing in common with the Conservatives and Democrats in the United States of America; nothing to compare with the Labor and Conservatives in Great Britain. Nigerians know equally and so have always equated Nigerian political parties and their affiliates with deception, fraud and corruption. They are plunderers of the nation's economic resources and have left the nation in perpetual bondage.

The problem is that of leadership. And Nigerians no matter their ethnic backgrounds have always cherished good governance and leadership. It has been a yearning that has never become a reality, only but for brief moments so far in the Nigerian turbulent history of disappointments and pain. The question has always been: "Who will go for us?" Listen to this story: **When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel. Yet his sons did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after gain; they took bribes and perverted justice. Then**

all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah and said to him. "Behold you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint for us a king to govern us like all the nations."

It was a futile attempt for old Samuel to appease, convince, or intimidate the people. They were emphatic in their demands: **"No! But we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles."**

After consultation with God, who advised him to hearken to the people's voice and to give them a king, Samuel at last succumbed to the popular demand for democracy and freedom and said to the men of Israel, **"Go every man to his city!" (1 Sam. 8).** He has yielded to the people's popular demand; the pacification of an aggrieved people!

In the United States of America and some European nations, political ideologies and manifestoes define the status of a political system and aspirant. Still the electorate judge and choose their leaders based on the qualities of leadership the aspirants claim to embrace. There is something in name. The man Senator **Mitt Romney**, who is projected to win the Conservative Party nomination to challenge President **Barrack Obama** in the November 2012 presidential elections, is a committed adherent and a 'minister' of the **Mormon Church**! His rank in the church hierarchy is compared to that of a cardinal (next to the pope) in the Catholic Church. Mormon 'church', founded by one Joseph Smith in 1894 can't even be described as a church or religion. It is a cultic organization. But most United States voters, Christians, including Catholics don't care.

Many Catholics in the United States even prefer Mitt Romney to Senator **Rick Santorum,** an arch Catholic conservative. Why? They prefer Romney, whom they judge has better leadership qualities. A multi billion dollar successful business man and politician, they believe he is the right man who has the correct vision, their political, economic, and social aspirations at heart. Even many **democrats** and the so-called **'Independents'** like him, too!

Need for a Revolution: Many believe a revolution in Nigeria is long overdue. But which type will favor us? Should we try the **East European, Napoleonic or Bolshevik type?** What of the **"Arab Spring'** formula? It was not only Cardinal Okogie and Professor Wole Soyinka who have called for one. One Charles Kumolu, reporting for a Nigerian Newspaper of January 4, 2012, informed Nigerians that the nation's problems have continued to escalate. And when highly placed Nigerians, especially the clergy speak out, there is real need to panic.

But Wait! It is easy to take to the streets and protest the deplorable economic, social and political situation in Nigeria. It is easy to cast aspersions on the leaders of the nations and call for their heads and call for a sovereign national conference. No. There is need to stop a while and search our hearts, everyone, from the most highly placed Nigerian to the smallest toddler, and find out what has really gone wrong.

There are a lot of factors that must be in place before a true and successful revolution can take place, otherwise the movement will be counter-productive and can even lead to more disastrous situation. The **Biafran Revolution** did not succeed. It was a total disaster! Why? There are many reasons that led to its failure. A revolution that will usher in a "New Nigeria" must NOT fail to reckon with some important factors:

Need not be a bloody uprising! It doesn't need to be necessarily bloody. Biafra Revolution was too bloody and the cost in human resources was enormous. Do we need to count the number of very important leaders and personalities killed during the January and July coup d'etat of 1966! Can we truly arrive at a rough estimate of innocent civilians killed during the series of pogroms and massacres of easterners living then in the Northern parts of Nigeria? What of innocent civilians, the main targets of the air raids? The number of kwashiorkor kids that died of starvation had always been measured in hundreds of thousands! No. A revolution of that type may after all not worth all the pains any more.

A Mass Movement of the People: A revolution that will capture the interest of all Nigerians can never be seen as "ethnic" or "sectional" in nature. No. The Biafra revolution failed because it was tagged "Igbo". All the rest of Nigerian ethnic groups that count in hundreds never caught the fever and showed little understanding of what was at stake. Their brothers and sisters living then in Northern Nigerians were not among those targeted for extermination or 'ethnic cleansing' .Their members were safe and well protected in the Nigerian enclave. Most of the "other Nigerians" never tested hunger or mortal danger from warfare and homelessness.

The **Arab revolution,** still going on, has been a momentum, a rare opportunity for mass protest against corruption and dictatorship. When corruption with its attendant evils reaches scorching and intolerable levels, a mass revolt takes place. When the rich and privileged few grow richer, the masses grow poorer a situation of uncontrollable restlessness and disaffection must naturally arise.

The unbearable burden: In Nigeria, the burden of corrupt leadership has become excessive and there is little or no more room for tolerance on the part of the oppressed masses. The Nigerian masses, North and South, East and West have borne this burden for long. The Hausa/Fulani, The Igbo, The Yoruba, The Efik, The Itshekiri, name the more than 250 big and smaller ethnic groups have not had it fine since the days of the colonial masters and their successors. None of the people can claim they have had an **uninterrupted power supply, clean drinking water, good roads** or any such social amenities people all over the world enjoy in abundance. No!

In search of a Leader: Rochas Revolution

QUALITIES OF A "GREAT" POLITICAL REDEEMER

Nigerians know what quality leadership implies. They are not even too demanding. They don't demand extraordinary heroic virtues for one to qualify to rule over them. They need in fact 'signs' that the emerging leader, political or traditional, would look different from those they have seen and heard of. They easily get excited at the least sign of progress, honesty and goodwill. That is why the ovation is loud as they throw their full support behind the merging leaders.

No one should therefore be surprised that the Imo State Governor, Owelle, Rochas Okorocha (at the time of this writing) was becoming the people's governor and possible 'redeemer'. News about his achievements, few months after popular election as Governor of Imo State has really attracted attention within and outside Nigeria. It may not be necessary to 'wait and see' (for four years of his tenure) if he would succeed and then take a stand. No! As far as Imo people are concerned Rochas' name has already gone down in Nigerian history as the type of leader they people have been searching for. They insist that the 'much he had done so far' has qualified his candidature. This is why are examining Rochas Revolution at this final part of this book.

Where 'greatness' lies and does not lie:

Nigerians easily claim to be great people and as well accomplish great deeds**,** when such claims cannot be sustained, examining the realities surrounding them. **In** the first place, let us say 'where greatness does not lie'. **Greatness** can ***never*** lie in the ability of a leader to cling to power by all means, and even rule till death. In Nigeria, to be great, one must be able to muster all powers within reach to destroy opponents. One must have the financial and human resources to rise high and silence any one that looks like an enemy. In the struggle for political power, all sorts of electoral malpractices, including rigging', manipulation of election results, intimidation of opponents and their supporters, and of course thuggery are employed. Politicians who want to win elections and grab power often commission violent criminals and murderous ruffians to cause havoc in society, especially when they see no chances of winning through legal process.

The implications of allowing such leaders and dictators grab power can never be underestimated. Immediately he finds himself in position of ***'power' and 'greatness'***, he knows he must compensate his aids, as ruffians and evil men and women take control of the country's economic resources. Thugs have ceased power and lawlessness reigns supreme. Birds of the same feather flock together!

Where true 'greatness' lies:

At this point in time, Nigeria truly needs a 'redeemer' or 'redeemers', ***great*** politicians who can win the heart of the people and wipe away their tears. These must be **"Men of the People",**

people of honor, right from the grassroots. Their virtues must shine out no matter the political party they belong, because whatever is hidden must be revealed and made open. Some of these qualities of a "political redeemer" are universally acknowledged: Man of i**ntegrity** and **transparent** honesty. He has not looted the treasury and has no such intention if voted into power. The "Man of the people" does not lie or deceive his people and nation. He is a **knowledgeable** politician.

He is **not a tribalist** and **religious fanatic**, who must split the nation under religious communities, laws and maxims. The virtues of a most desired political redeemer must radiate through all nooks and crannies of the nation, Nigeria, and must include the following, too: **Humility and tolerance**. He must not see political ambition as a do and die affair. The late **Yar-adua** exhibited such attitude. Even right from the beginning of his presidency, the late president was not known to be a great 'achiever', but many Nigerians will continue to remember him for his humility and tolerance. He was ready to step down for the right man if the court ever nullified his election. He did not vow to fight his opponents to the last man!

A Nigerian politician who must occupy any office in Nigerian politics must not be a **corrupt** man. Nigerian politicians and most of their god fathers and supporters are known to be corrupt. Any Nigerian who seriously vies for political office must courageously and publicly and privately condemn **bribery and corruption** He must equally live by his words and actions. He will surely be voted for by all and well-meaning Nigerians. And having been found honorable in this singular issue he may be returned unopposed to any office if he wishes to continue. Fighting ***corruption***, defeating or even putting it under guard should be an undisputable criterion for distinguishing true political leaders from charlatans. A serious Nigerian leader who puts up fight against ***bribery and corruption*** must like late **Yar-adua** be ready to declare his assets at the assumption of office, be it at the local, state or national level. This true **comrade** and **"man of the people"** must consequently be ready to part ways with some of his best friends and even close family members, including party stalwarts known to be corrupt, 419'ers and fraudsters

The man who seeks top position in modern Nigerian politics and wants to show he is different from many others must not be a **greedy** and **avaricious** person. In fact he should not be *a* **rich *man.*** Latin people put it correctly: **"Crecitur amor numini quantum ipsa pecunia crevit." (The richer you become, the more you love money).** The same thought is clearer in the following adage: **"Radix omnium malorum est cupiditas". The love of money is the root of all evil. Avarice, (cupiditas)** is the real problem; money itself is not evil. A politician counted as one of the richest fellows in the world or Africa should not be allowed to grab political power in Nigeria. Most Nigerian rich leaders, who had really made it (usually by fraudulent means) before grabbing a top political post used to bow out by force or persuasion, leaving the nation most impoverished than ever!

Nigerians should count their teeth with your tongues and vote always only for **honest,** humble**, loving, considerate** and **less violent** and **less frivolous** candidates! **Flamboyan**t and **frivolous** Nigerian politicians spend recklessly and most of the time for selfish reasons. They don't care about development and the people who live in abject poverty. They don't care about millions of unemployed youths. Their political mission is to dispossess the people and nation, loot and cart away whatever they can at the end of their political journey.

The **vices** with which Nigeria's bad leadership are identified with include, ethnicism, tribalism, sectionalism, religious fanaticism and brigandism. **Political immaturity** and *inability* to accept defeat must also be reckoned among the evils that should be shunned by true lovers of Nigeria. It leads to endless political litigation. Election rigging makes mockery of the entire electoral process and goals. It destroys trust and encourages apathy. Nigerians are told to go and register and obtain voters' cards. They are told their cards are their most dangerous weapons they use to fight bad leadership. They are told to come out en masse to vote for the right candidates. There are many other 'sermons' and words of encouragement, religiously delivered to motivate millions of Nigerians to help choose the best political leaders.

Alas! Most often Nigerians turn deaf ears to such political sermons. Why their apathy? It is not hard to find answers. Once bitten, twice shy! Nigerians had been deceived so many times. They had trooped out ***en masse*** to voting stations; they had stood out hours and even days under sun and rain to cast their votes. But what a disappointment after learning that their votes were never collated or counted! Ballot boxes were carried away, destroyed or burnt by hired thugs and criminals; who should blame their apathy, indifference, lack of concern and interest when the sermons are repeated today and now? Will INEC and their men and women, including politicians and their godfathers convince Nigerian voters that stories will not be same again?

Nigerians are still in search of a leader who can fight for them, understand and address their aspirations. This is why the present **"Rochas Revolution"** must command the interest of all Imolites in spite of their party affiliations and zonal leanings. Nigeria is still in bondage and in need of a revolution and revolutionary leadership. This leader can never be described as 'ordinary'. He must possess rare qualities of a visionary. There must be something attractive in him and Nigerians know exactly well what they are looking for. I bet you. The one to emerge will be declared a "king to rule over us forever!" Record it somewhere.

A New Imo, A new Nigeria: There is need to start somewhere, precisely now in Imo state. At the end of the 'experiment' other states can come and copy from Imo. It can't be a dream, a mirage. No! A New Imo may be in sight. Yes! From the ashes of the burnt debris a new era of sanity and order may emerge and like the Israelites of the old, many mouths will be full of praises. **"When the Lord delivered Zion from bondage, it looked like a dream and our mouths were full of laughter!"** From a chaotic scenario and long feelings of abandonment,

a New Nigeria will regain an enviable stature of prosperity and peace among all nations of the world.

Nigeria in bondage: Situations that will create room for a New Nigeria are evident in the present **Rochas administration and leadership.** Nigeria is still despised by its sons and daughters, home and in Diaspora. Not only Nigerians have fled their fatherland in large numbers; foreigners, white and black, including the so called investors have fled the land, too. As if scared to death by terrifying pythons Nigerians and their former friends and admirers have fled the land by land, sea and air without a glance behind. It has been terrible experience.

The Exodus did not begin in 2012. No! "Search for greener pastures" started decades ago and main reasons were economic, better opportunities for economic survival. Citizens of many European countries migrated to the United States and still do so today for similar reasons. Such are the aspirations of people all over the world. The struggle for self-fulfillment and up-liftment continues till date, But Nigerians have many other reasons to flee the fatherland. Perhaps some may return, together with their children and a new generation of Nigerians may emerge. But not until the broken infrastructures have been repaired or replaced. Many factors that leave large number of Nigeria in a state of bondage must be dismantled before peace and tranquility can be restored. These factors include **state of insecurity, uncontrollable corruption, yawning gap between the rich and the poor, religious turbulence, state of war and leadership problems** have compound the already sore situation in the country called Nigeria.

The Problem of Leadership – Rochas Revolution: The Church, particularly, the Catholic Church in Nigeria has never shown fanatic interest in Nigerian partisan politics. It has always advocated a visionary political leadership that serves the interest of the masses and not even the church. This is the line Imolites may have to toe as we struggle with the "Rochas Revolution". There is need to support the rescue mission of Owelle and see whether the people will live to re-tell a success story.

This is no time for political bickering, sectional sentiments to cause disruptions and chaos. There is need to cross fingers and pray that the revolution succeeds. It is truly a 'revolution', because what the masses are saying, the majority of Imolites from Owerri, Orlu and Okigwe zones is, "we have not seen the like before!" Can it be true? The bible recounts the people's impression**. "The crowd wondered when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel.** "(Matthew 15:31). It was wonderful in their eyes. What a miracle of compassion and love!

As a result of our experiences in the political governance of our fatherland, Nigeria since independence, it may sound funny and incredible that a charismatic leadership can emerge in the Nigerian polity without fanfare. Who will blame the praise singers? They have not seen the like before. How can a true Nigerian forfeit his personal salary and huge allowances to the state and people? How can a true Nigerian engage in a contract or project that will not benefit him

financially? Is it possible to find a selfless, committed leader in Nigeria? Enough! Let us watch and pray.

Truly this is not time for 'politics'. Where should the Imo state university find a permanent home? Why not leave the matter for Owelle and his lawmakers to decide? Owelle has demolished all structures in Imo state, embarked on the tarring of all roads in every nook and cranny of Imo state and has not even gone half way towards their completion? Even some contractors have abandoned their projects on the way. The rains are with us and all the roads are in chaotic condition! Is it possible to accomplish that which only Napoleon can do? Rochas may after all not be a crazy man. Why not pray that the momentum continues. Why take the side of a spoiler, dear Imolites?

At last if the revolution succeeds, there is no doubt we all, with party affiliation thrown to the dust bins will sing songs of joy. When the people come to the polls to vote again they will surely look for that great leader of our people and count his accomplishments; the more reason why he may even be truly forced **to "rule over us forever".** Anyone who can do as much and even better can take over the challenge, from whatever zone or political divide. It is not yet time to draw conclusions, but there is need to take records and read the signs of the times.

Rescue Mission in Progress: Time for Prayers and Support

Imolites need to pray and urge Owelle Rochas in his relentless efforts to rescue Ndi Imo from the chronic diseases of **mass illiteracy, poverty, corruption and underdevelopment.** He is not to relent in efforts to convince the people of Imo state, skeptics and admirers that there is no going back on those promises. The die is cast! Those were no mere election promises. The rescue mission, the **revolution** is in progress.

He must be ready to absorb shocks from critics who may see only "destruction" and never the goal, painful decisions, plans, and success at last. With indomitable and in fact stubborn courage, many visionaries, freedom fighters and messiahs succeed. They take blames when the 'going' gets tough. They usually laugh best!

Owelle and his men should remain undaunted, undisturbed and undistracted by possible 'obstacles', human and material. Revolutionaries, namely, visionary leaders who try to remove debris or garbage blocking the way to success often step on 'sore toes'. Opposition may come from certain 'ruling classes' or groups that may feel recalcitrant, noncompliant and obstinate because they have not been duly consulted, settled or compensated.

Imolites who have joined the rescue mission should always put on the coat of 'incorruptibility' and make sure that those who abandon theirs at the least opportunity to grab illicit wealth are closely watched. There are many corrupt persons in our society. They can do a

lot of harm. They include our closest associates, even brothers and sisters. They can use "our names" to make money. And the cheated masses will accuse the Grand Master!

Not everybody, even closest colleagues will agree with a visionary in a hurry to accomplish a mission. Igbo people succinctly put it this way**: Oso ndi; Owe ndi" (Some are well pleased and applaud; others are languishing in suppressed anger and bitterness).** The only option is to exercise patience with such people and not lose temper. Disenchanted and embittered people, even colleagues who fail to gain from the peoples' oriented projects can easily muster sinister forces and turn a popular leader into a monster. O! Yes! They gang up disloyal groups and unions who turn against a popular leader and before you know it a great havoc has been wrecked. What we are saying is that Governor Rochas must continue to be 'in a hurry'. Ndigbo put it this way, too: **"Emee osiso, emeghara odachi." (A stitch in time saves nine)**

Christ, the Savior serves an eternal example. "Seeing all his good works the people wanted to crown him king" But he did not want that sort of thing. The glorious moments did not last anyway. In the midst of all unimaginable accusations, his enemies also wanted him dead**. 'Crucify him! Crucify him"** But the revolution had taken root. It was too late to stop it. The masses, the downtrodden, the blind, the deaf and even former bitter enemies were ready to acknowledge that the messiah's way of life was different, **"for he taught them not like the Scribes and the Pharisees**. Besides, **he taught with authority."**

Imolites should stand with Rochas and encourage him to remain convinced that the time the servant of the people on a rescue mission spends at construction sites is worth more than thousands of hours spent in the offices and in government houses. Often un-inspected, unwatched, unmonitored and unkempt contractors and their allies execute miserable jobs in Nigeria and escape with their loot.

Anayo Rochas, instead of running out of gas, should be heartened by the 'People's Verdict' so far. From all the senatorial zones of Owerri, Orlu and Okigwe, the masses of Imolites seem to be cheering up. There seems to be a consensus that "Owelle is God sent". The Action Governor will no doubt speed up the transformation of Imo state and its people. They are saying Owelle is doing a nice job. He cannot afford to stop letting in gas continuously.

With the **election's litigations** over now the people of Imo state should urge Owelle Okorocha to shun all distractions that had emanated from **Election Petitions.** Owelle should go on with the business of his rescue mission unruffled. Nigerians are usually poor losers. They find it painful to accept defeat and embrace the winner. They file frivolous petitions, hoping one day and at one stage to be declared the winner. Such 'miracles' often happen **only in Nigeria.** Losers fight tooth and nail to turn the hands of the clock back in spite of failures at various courts of appeal. Morbid and insatiable lust for power together with the associated vices of greed and despair can sometimes eat deep into the human psyche and take the soul prisoner.

A rescue mission is often faced with obstacles and dangers. For planners and executors, **every minute and second in the lightening operation counts!** Planners usually hold their breath and pray until their mission is accomplished! A possible rescue mission's collapse often have disastrous consequences and indelible nightmarish memories on governments, planners and undertakers of such missions including hostage rescue missions and radical attempts by visionary leaders to bring changes in governance of state and nation.

Future Imo political aspirants, (including those who claim their chances had been usurped by the present administration), whatever their party affiliation and zonal enclave, **Owerri, Okigwe and Orlu**, must be gearing up to take over the mantle of leadership from Rochas Okorocha, when the time comes, and be ready to perform well and even better. Imolites be ready to troupe out en masse again to give your verdict. No more rhetorics. The Rochas Revolution must succeed. The thought of its failure must not cross our minds.

So Far So Good……Facts are Sacred

The people maintain that Governor Rochas is on the right track and has recorded some achievements so far. We examine these records and see why the Imo people are excited and ready to crown Rochas king!

There is need to understand the personality, purpose and programmes of Owelle Anayo Rochas Okorocha, the governor of Imo State. Tthe Supreme Court verdict affirming the election of Okorocha as the fifth civilian governor of Imo State simply put into records the people choice.

Most Nigerians know Okorocha as a selfless philanthropist whose Rochas Foundation and schools have empowered millions of Nigerian with qualitative but free education, Imo people have in the last eight months beheld a first class administrator who has re-defined governance, demystified bureaucracy and eliminated corruption and sycophancy in government.

The presence of Okorocha electrifies the audiences and brings charm and charisma in the atmosphere where he appears. Not many Nigerians leaders receive such attention nowadays. This is a great lesson that the popularity of Okorocha across Igboland grows at a time some of his colleagues are being booed and pelted with water sachets in their home states. It is a proof that Igbos are yearning for inspirational leadership reminiscent of that provided by a few African and Nigerians leaders we have already encountered in this study. They want a self-less leader who uses his wealth and the wealth of the people for the welfare of the people. They abhor pseudo leaders who embark upon primitive acquisition of wealth for themselves and family members.

Governor Okorocha aroused national consciousness when on assumption of office, he offered to cut his security vote from N6billion to N2billion. In an unprecedented move, he also offered his salary for the education of Imo children. As the apostle of free education, he made education free and compulsory from primary to university levels. He swore that no Imo child

shall remain uneducated so long as he remains governor. He has kept faith by upgrading the infrastructures in the schools, and the prompt payment of teachers' salaries.

Apart from education, he has revamped the health sector. The former General Hospital, Owerri has been upgraded to a Specialist Hospital and a major referral centre for the management of complicated health challenges. The people need not travel to India again for renal and other high profile treatments. Construction of roads in the state is at a jet-speed making Imo one huge construction site. The people continue asking , where is all the money coming from?

Through the blockage of leakages, the governor has conserved enough funds to develop Imo State. Even some wealthy and even middle class Nigerians who share Okorocha's philosophy of frugal financial management and transparent governance are spending their personal money to assist the governor realize his vision for the state.

The practical lesson here is that the people are prepared to follow a leader who is selfless, sensitive and transparent. Igbos have for long been seeking renaissance since the end of the Biafra war and it is therefore refreshing that Okorocha is ready to rebuild the confidence of the people and renew their faith in government.

It is regrettable that Igbos who were in the commanding heights of the military, civil service and commerce when the British left Nigeria have found themselves as second class citizens, groveling for tokenism in appointments because of selfish leaders. Igbos are being humiliated, suppressed and annihilated in Nigeria today because those who claim to be leaders are in an unholy alliance with reactionary elements who want to perpetually put down the people of the South East. In their delusion, they accept any crumb from the masters' table who consistently engineers a theatre of the absurd to paint the Igboman as unfit to hold a responsible position.

The South East continues to lack any federal presence apart from universities and federal medical centres that are under-funded and ill-equipped. This mental siege has resulted in low-self esteem among Igbos who appear to have resigned themselves to their second class statues in Nigeria . It was in a bid to liberate them from that awful status that APGA came into being. And this is the vehicle Okorocha chose to rescue not just Imo people but the entire South East. His mission is to help the Igboman rediscover himself preparatory to claiming his pride of place in Nigeria. The restoration of confidence, rejuvenation of his innate capabilities and ingenuity are at the heart of Okorocha's revolution. The Igbo identity must be stamped again in national consciousness. Okorocha is leading the way forward through good governance which attracts and inspires confidence, trust and follower-ship.

The truth of the matter is that Okorocha has done so much for Owerri zone than all previous governors put together. It is even doubtful if an Owerri indigene as governor can equal

the records. Our sons abroad have attested to this, telling me that the only good news that comes from Nigeria emanates from Okorocha's Imo State.

A Divine Mandate!

Most bewildered people of Imo state and beyond claim that the Rochas Revolution is a "Divine Mandate". This is the first time many of us are hearing people talk about divine mandate. Surely Rochas is not an ordained minister of God. Perhaps an ordinary Christian believer he has never claimed to have been divinely inspired in the past or presently. The State Commissioner Dr. Duruji once had this to say about the governor's divine mandate:

> **His mandate was ordained by God and delivered on the planet earth. It is not our own making. Imo citizens are expressing their wishes and aspirations in the mandate delivered to the Governor. It was not their making, it was ordained in heaven. So what we saw on earth was the manifestation of the heavenly intervention. So, the governor is loved by his people.**

The divine concept surely emanates from the personality of Rochas and the way he does his things, once a private philanthropist, but now a public servant of the people. The other concept that rhymes with the divine mission is self-less, borrowed from Christian tradition of Christ mission and sacrifice. *" Greater love has no one than this, that someone would lay down his life for his friends….(John: 15.13)* .

Laying down one's life means a total surrender and readiness to carry out tasks no matter how tough, just to make friends feel happy and good. It entails denying one's self some of the pleasures at one's disposal, just to help improve friends' social and economic conditions.

That is precisely what the people of Imo state are saying that their governor is doing for them. "It is great in our eyes and cherish it". The divine mandate is to rescue not just Imo State but the entire South East from economic and social woes.

The divine mandate is no doubt a confirmation of the people's mandate. On the outcome of the Supreme Court ruling at Abuja, the commissioner had this to add:

> **Owelle's victory at the Court of Appeal in Abuja is a further manifestation of its divine origin and a revalidation of Imo people's mandate. The judgment has also rekindled our faith and confidence in the Nigerian judiciary. Imo people applaud the judges for remaining resolute in their determination to uphold Imo people's mandate despite pressure to the contrary.**

Facts and Figures

Nigerians don't like "Hearsay", what some people also refer to as idle gossip, "idle talk", conversation about the personal details of other people's lives and events whether rumor or fact, especially when malicious. They want raw facts that can be verified, here and now. You cannot blame a people that have been deceived by their leaders, times without number. They have grown to be ever skeptical and bored with unfulfilled electoral promises.

So Nigerians have come to believe in and accept the slogan (Igbo); **"Ana ekwu ekwu; ana eme eme",** namely "as you talk, let's see you in action". Therefore, it is faster and easier to grab the sense of the issue at stake. "Action speaks louder than voice." When the talk is followed by immediate action, most Nigerians are carried away by excitement and admiration.

They can even exaggerate, right and left. **Rightwards,** they can praise the action man and tell tales of heroic deeds, he was up to. Thank your God if you are someone that can be trusted, someone that matches his words with action. **Leftwards,** woe betide you, if you have lied or deceived them, even once, they will like to see your eventual downfall. They construct imaginary or real coffins and organize mock burials for the evil man! If there were billboards and statues honoring the fellow, these will be torn apart and destroyed in a twinkle of an eye. This is how Nigerians and people all over the world vent their anger on self-proclaimed hero, who never lived up to expectations.

Rochas "Miracles" and Testimonies

Nigerians are fond of giving testimonies about what the Lord has done for them. Families in great need, especially women in search of fruits of the womb frequent Prayer Houses, consult prophet healers. When the Lord answers their prayers, they don't fail to get back and thank the Man of God through whom, they claim such miracles wrought were possible. They don't only bring gifts; they testify before large crowds and congregations what marvels the Lord has done for them.

Part of the testimonies include their difficult journey to the place where they arrived, the number of rivers and mountains crossed, the numerous temptations they passed through. But thanks be to God; it is all over. Every praise and honor belong to the Almighty God?

To testify means to give evidence, bear witness, (in word and deed), even state the living truth under oath so that every doubting Thomas would believe. So Imo people who testify that Rochas' political stature had not only grown in leaps but also in bounds – out of his own making do not fail to prove their case.

Imo people and Nigerians as whole have continued to suffer a lot of deprivations arising from mismanagement of the country's huge economic resources. They have watched helplessly as politicians and con men plundered the country's wealth and misused them. They haved even been forced to accept the status quo in vogue: "When it is your turn, take your share as you feel" (Onye ube ryru ya raa).

So a little gesture of goodwill from the "commander-in-chief", just a little regard for the masses' needs soon generates excitement. The general feeling is that a miracle has taken place. But often

it is wonderful to discover the 'gestures' are real. That's when the applause is louder. We continue to discover some of the "Rochas Miracles". Some of his achievements can be summed up thus:

1. The governor on assumption of office declared free and compulsory education in both primary and secondary levels in Imo State which his predecessors had told Imo people was impossible. Sooner he started implementing his plans for free education program.
2. The governor also ordered the payment of backlog of pension arrears owed for over 12 years by the past administrations, establishment of Imo Pension/Senior Citizens' Club and donation of vehicles to the club, release of N450 million bailout fund to missionary schools in Imo State, increase of government monthly subvention to Imo State University from N57m to N100m, revived the decaying Imo State University Teaching Hospital abandoned by former administration.
3. He has begun the construction of 405 rural roads at 15km per L.G.A, introduced Health-at-your-door-steps programme in Imo State, the first of its kind in Africa, upgrading Umuguma General Hospital to a Specialist Hospital, reformed the State Civil Service Local Government System.
4. He has almost succeeded in the blockage of revenue leakages thus saving billions of naira for capital projects in Imo State. He revived the construction of International Conference Centre at Oguta Blue Lake of Treasure (formerly known as Oguta Wonder Lake). It is worthy of note that the Oguta Wonder Lake project only existed in the internet during Ohakim's regime.

Rescue Mission in less than one year

These are some of the tremendous achievements of His Excellency, Owelle Rochas Okorocha in less than one year of his administration, which is an eloquent testimony that Imo Rescue Mission has come to stay. Testimonies continue to flow at gatherings and papers.

One admirer by name Offoaro articulates his own testimony this way:

He (Rochas) had wiped out the entire unpaid pension debts particularly those owed to teachers in the state.

He had paid 20 thousand instead of 18,000 naira as minimum wage.

He had instituted lunch monies for primary and secondary school pupils and had abolished the payment of tuition by Imo indigenes in tertiary institutions owned by the state!

Behold what Rochas is doing at Owerri, Orlu and Okigwe. Take a closer look at Rochas' Owerri municipal; he had opened up a road link from Orlu Road junction to connect Nekede. He had entered Aladinma and the prefab area of town and even Ikenegbu and Works layout. At the World Bank and

Federal Housing Estate area, too. He had opened a road that ran through the Government House to Works Layout - a road I never knew existed. He had brought down the old multipurpose hall and in its place an edifice with all amenities that spell modernity.

He had moved into the new Owerri area where the bulldozers groaned day in day out, tearing down old edifices and replacing them with modernity. He had changed the face of the commissioners' quarters. He had cleaned up all the dirt hidden in the nooks and crannies of Owerri. He had transformed the almost abandoned Imo Newspapers complex. There, a chain of modern buildings has sprung up. I hear he wants to turn the place into Imo Science Academy.

Rochas! In seven months! If this is happening only after seven months in office, what will happen in four years?

Now, come let's take you to the Heroes Square in Owerri. It is an entirely new Rochas Innovation. The square is directly opposite the Imo Concorde Hotel. As we write, work is still in progress, day and night. But from the little I could make of his intentions, looks like the man wants to create his own Eagle Square or its imitation, where parades and anniversary events like the Independence celebration would hold.

Then simultaneously he converted the multi-million Naira multi-apartment complexes that lay directly opposite the Concorde Hotel, which at a point became a sorry site. I hear he wants to make the building an extension of the Concorde Hotel. Talk of Concorde Hotel, which was rodent-infested in recent past but which has now been fully conceded to a private concern. It has been refurbished to look like what it really ought to be.

The Imo Transport Corporation too! I learnt reliably that that outfit, which received Rochas' concession shot in the arm, now, pays the sum of twenty million Naira every month into the coffers of the state government.

The man, Rochas has conceded Adapalm – the hitherto drain pipe Imo palm plantation. The concessionaires now pay up to 200 million Naira into the coffers of the state every month.

Are Rochas achievements bloated? …….

At this Rate…..The accredited leader?

The testimonies, no doubt point not only to Rochas' achievements, but also to his **popularity.** Popularity means that the masses are attracted to him, pray for him and wish his success. Those who can afford the cash join the rescue mission. They forfeit their salaries and allowances,which are channeled to the development of Imo state. Those who have no cash donate their goodwill and are ready to 'fight' detractors, saboteurs and enemies haven't the interest of the people at heart.

At this rate, therefore it may become difficult for aspirants to dislodge Rochas from the Government House come 2015! The endorsed leader of the people may "rule over us forever", unless one better or mightier than he is could come up.

Truly Imo people voted for Rochas, not caring strictly about party affiliation. They voted for Owelle, and perhaps taking note too of the **APGA** symbol – **A COCK**. They know what the symbol stands for today and in the olden days. Surely Owelle should not fail to capitalize on present popularity and prove his ability to lead the Igbo people.

Most Igbo people are saying: "We want Owelle to remain a frontline Igbo leader, in the footsteps of **Ikemba Nnewi, Chief Odimegwu Ojukwu and Nnamdi Azikiwe, Owelle of Onitsha!"** He, Rochas should make APGA a formidable party in the South East, like ACN in the West and CPC in the North. Owelle should gradually get his counterparts in ENUGU, ABIA, ANAMBRA AND EBONYI to embrace APGA, the party of their political forebears**.**" Most enlightened Nigerians, North and South, East and West don't like **ONE PARTY SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT IN NIGERIA**, where political aspirants always join the Winning Party! They want to see democracy in action.

Anti-corruption Crusader

Most Nigerians of all walks of life know that the weakest attribute of their leaders is corruption and all sorts of corrupt practices. It is also clear to Nigerian masses that only few of their leaders really condemn corrupt publics in unequivocal terms, because they cannot try to extricate themselves from this moral imbroglio even by a sacred oath, private or public. Nemesis will descend on such people who commit perjury. Perjury is a detestable offence everywhere and God of vengeance, people believe, will always descend on those who lie under oath. So corrupt official no matter the level of their commitment to church and religion find it tough to dabble into speeches and discussion on ways of eradicating corrupt practices in Nigeria.

The anti-corruption organization, Transparency International (TI), the world's leading non-governmental organization fighting corruption releases rearly the results of an annual survey that ranks countries based on perceived levels of official corruption. Nigeria has never faired well in this annual survey. Nigerian is usually ranked on the lowest rung of the ladders with nations like Bangladesh Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Paraguay, and some other Middle East nations. Political elites and cronies along with corrupt business people are trapping whole nations in poverty and hampering sustainable development.

It is noted that 70 countries scored less than five out of a possible ten with a high score indicating low perceived corruption on the CPI scale, which is based on surveys of business executives and defines corruption as the abuse of public office for private gain. Countries with a score of higher than nine were predominantly rich countries, namely Finland, Denmark, New Zealand, Iceland, Singapore and Sweden.

According to TI, political elites and their cronies continue to take kickbacks at every opportunity. Hand in glove with corrupt business people, they are trapping whole nations in poverty and hampering sustainable development. Politicians increasingly pay lip service to the fight against corruption but they fail to act on the clear message of the organization, namely, that they must clamp down on corruption to break the vicious circle of poverty and graft.

In Nigeria the Winner Grabs All.

When the economy of a nation 'booms,' people rarely think of any political change, because the leadership is doing well. But when there is trouble – economic slump, unemployment, war and poverty, the incumbent leadership receives scorching criticisms from the masses. In civilised nations of the world, most of the leaders responsible for the nation's handicaps even resign their posts before any impeachment threats from the lawmakers.

At the same time fewer politicians rush to grab political offices when the economy is in shambles. Not so in Nigeria! In times of plenty, in times of crisis, slimmer harvests, and political instability, Nigerian politicians rush to grab power. Surely they rush to grab power not to set things right, but to loot what remains of the treasury. Whether workers are paid or not, schools and universities are in session or not, there is hunger and starvation, no roads or water supply, they care less. Their intentions are unmistakable when they get into power.

Nigerian history shows the leadership has always been responsible for the people's rejection and agitation for change. Having been misruled, exploited, impoverished, and pushed to an extreme corner by the corrupt leadership, the people seek salvation from a son of the land. Perhaps their own son would be sympathetic and hearken to their cries.

"Sharing the national cake," is a well-known political slogan in Nigeria euphemism for reckless looting of national treasury as opportunists reap where they never sowed. It plays a major role in the leadership struggle. Nigeria is a large country in both population and landmass. It is also a rich nation, blessed with numerous mineral resources. But the multi-ethnic nature of the country makes it imperative for the government to adopt a system of representation, which minimises economic and political domination by one single ethnic group.

In spite of efforts to stay together as one nation, "sharing of the national cake" – according to the so-called "Federal Character" - has never been an easy task for any new administration. The primary preoccupation of the people is a candidate from among their own sons who would bring home a good chunk of the "booty " – the community's share of the National Cake.

A son of the soil is preferred to a non-indigene. While a non-indigene pays more attention to the development of his own family, home community, the son of the soil would not entirely neglect his community. No matter how corrupt, greedy, and selfish he might be, the son of the soil would usually leave some crumbs for his people. As long as he brings some part of the "booty" home and makes its available to his community no one questions the sources of his wealth.

The attractive economic advantages identified with offices in Nigeria are tremendous. Much energy is devoted to lobbying who grabs political and ecclesiastical office. Nigerians - lay persons and clerics alike - love power. Being in the corridors of power translates automatically into access to the highest levels. It is equally prestigious, good for the individual ego and the ego of the sponsoring families and communities.

Due to the nature of Nigerian politics government or ecclesiastical appointment is coterminous with wealth. After all members of the state and ecclesial community are bound to dispense patronage, and enjoy the special privilege of becoming "contractors" to the state and church either by proxy, or directly.

Unfortunately leadership is not determined by honesty, hard work, accountability, fair play, and service. Greed, fraudulent practices, and selfishness are considered the best qualities of the popular leader of a community. This is shameful and embarrassing.

One whose bread has been buttered by the gods...

"Onye ube ruru ya raa." (One whose bread has been buttered by the gods should take the advantage of the opportunity), is Igbo apothegm, an idiosyncrasy of speech summarising the people's attitude toward a corrupt system in which the "winner" grabs, accumulates, and dispenses public wealth without accountability to the people. It expresses the magnitude of good luck, jackpot, and rare fortune bound to change one's life forever - from pauper to billionaire. Not only the winner of this bonanza benefits. His entire family, friends, and peers share the cake.

There is nothing wrong in winning a fortune in sweepstakes and distributing wealth as it pleases the winner. In Nigeria the implications of a member of a family or community rising to influence in society - whether government or church - are many. Few people hold the officer accountable for any financial mess and impropriety. Anyone who raises a voice in protest against abuses is thought to be out of his senses. The "agitator" or "critic" is made to understand that the office holder who embezzles public funds and spends such funds as recklessly as possible should not be accountable to anyone.

The general understanding is that the officer is taking his time doing his thing in his own way. It is simply his turn and choice to run the "business" as he likes. He is not bound to observe any rules. When his tenure of office ends any other person could step in and continue the fraud. A vicious cycle is thus created whereby office holders are not held accountable for their misuse of public funds and power. The message the public leaves to agitators for accountability is simple: "Wait for your turn. Your opportunity has not arrived. Be patient."

The winner grabs all. Close families, extended families, in-laws, old friends, schoolmates, and club members get their shares of the public funds. Lifestyles change dramatically. The heretofore street-cleaner turns a contractor overnight and a former peddler becomes importer and exporter of foreign and local merchandise. Old village shanties are knocked down and in their places rise incredible mansions with swimming pools and entertainment facilities like those in world-renowned hotels.

These abuses rather than the responsibilities involved, make determined contestants so desperate to win a public office. Public service as an opportunity to contribute to society's

development is a dead idea. The absence of public audits and reprisals grants the fraternity extraordinary power and membership in a special club, a Mafia.

The church and holders of exalted church offices in Nigeria are not immune to corruption, fraudulent practices, and financial impropriety as found in government. Here all clerics are vulnerable. Their families and closest friends urge them to defraud the public. These friends and families do not raise voices in condemnation of evil as long as they benefit from the loot.

Except where Rome decides to intervene, there is no higher authority to question the bishop. The clergy and the people are completely intimidated. There is nothing they can do to force their bishop and the diocesan finance committee (where one exists) to render an account. In a few cases aggrieved priests have taken action by exposing fraudulent activities they see ruining their church.

There is poverty involved: poverty in its classical sense, poverty of character as well as the poverty of ideas. The basis of public service, which ought to be ethical, becomes selfish, acquisitive rather than transformative. This is the dilemma that faces government - whether civil and ecclesiastical.

From Nigerian perspective it is easy to understand why the public office holder is not always the most capable. In government and church, ethnic interests becloud the people's moral judgement. Often a crook that indulges in fraudulent practices is preferred to an honest person. In the village the popularity of this son of the soil who succeeds in looting the government's coffers – part of the "national cake" - grows like wild fire in the harmattan. He receives countless number of titles. His honesty, character, or competence in office are rarely questioned.

In church, priests who think they should be made bishops fight the great battle to win. Often they succeed. Those who know the winner – schoolmates, townspeople, parishioners, comrades, and other – are often stunned to learn the bitter truth. They were better qualified. Why on earth was this fellow the best choice of the kingmakers? Perhaps the only extraordinary quality he possessed was his greed, the ability to grab power by fair and foul means to make his dreams come true.

There is no better way to lead by example than being in the position to condemn evil and to stay in control of the officials under the leadership. Followers rise in support of their leaders who are described as 'ruthless' in the way they sack, dismiss, and fire corrupt officials.

It is not enough to set up commissions of enquiries into allegations of corruption and similar atrocities committed daily by highly placed officials. Results of such enquiries must be published and punishments meted on those found guilty. Unless heavy punishments are meted out to corrupt officials, it is unlikely that things would change for the better in this country.

Anti-Corruption Crusader to the core

This is where Governor Rochas raises his head in Nigeria. Critics trying to play down the Rochas anti corruption stance claim that Owelle has been a wealthy man and was only disbursing from his excesses! But no one has told Nigerians or Imo people that their governor has once won a prominent position in the millionaire (billionaire) club of Nigeria or the world. We have not heard he ever belonged to any such club from where trophies are donated to the richest or first richest ten members.

Nigerians rather have heard about Rochas, the philanthropist, and philanthropic philosophy truly has not much to do with lavish wealth or money. It points to a disposition of the mind, to share what one has with other, especially the downtrodden. That is where Rochas excels. He has the large heart to give out no matter what remains in purse for him and family.

Wealthy people derive much interest and satisfactory taking look at they accumulate and store in barns and banks and stocks. It is difficult to remove from what has been stored and recorded. Rather, taking from elsewhere to fatten their stores is paramount; hence the adage: **"The love having increases by having".**

Free Education Crusader

Educational System in Shambles - Scandals and Consequences

The Free education policy of Rochas administration is the first to be highlighted by Imo citizens. Igbo elders regret with the gnashing of the teeth that as far as education is concerned that the present generation of Igbo youths have failed the Igbo people and nation. They remember the days when education was rated high as a ***sine qua non*** in any bid to count as a developed nation and people. Things have fallen apart. Struggle for quick wealth has overshadowed the importance of education in modern times.

There isn't any argument about it. Everyone agrees that Free Education can never end with free tuition, free meals, free textbooks and uniforms, schools sandals and bags; even free meals and poacket money. No! What is involved is mighty and legion. The damageds to be repaired count in millions. The gateway to success is no doubt the Free Education. It is the first hurdle to cross, namely the financial obstacles which have prevented so many poor families and kids from realizing their ambitions and goals. The moral and ethical aspects must be carefully examined and adequately addressed.

The dog has eaten the bone hung on its neck and the cat has eaten the fish it is asked to guard. This is an Igbo adage stressing the evil of hypocrisy and scandal. And another adage highlights the consequences: "The little bird learns from the mother to fly." So the younger generation, regrettably has followed the evil ways of their elders.

The endemic crisis today associated with Nigeria's educational system is as a result of the failure of the accredited teachers of our institutions of learning to lead by example. Teachers and parents have become the proverbial dog that has eaten the bone on its neck.

Our schools – from nursery to the universities - are in shambles because teachers have abandoned their profession and are chasing illegal wealth. Every avenue, which can help one get richer, must be explored – from admission to promotion of pupils and students.

Pupils and students who gain admission into federal colleges and institutions are no more the brightest ones. Those whose parents have the money and good connections grab positions of the qualified ones whose parents are unable to press the right buttons and pay the stipulated fee.

Supervisors and invigilators of school and national examinations have continued to make fortune out of the job of organising and supervising examinations. Students are allowed to steal, copy, and even write their exams at home provided they paid the stipulated fee for each paper. Examination halls are no more quiet places where serious competitive examinations are done. These halls have been turned into auction arenas where the highest bidders get the best marks and grades.

No one catches or punishes student-thieves who copy from textbooks. No! The reverse is the case. The supervisor encourages students to indulge in all sorts of examination malpractice, as long as he receives nice fee from the culprit. In some well-organised scenarios hired teachers and senior students sit and write examinations for their friends who pay generously for such gestures.

No doubt the collaboration of custodians of question papers is most essential. These custodians of questions papers – school administrators, principals, and teachers, like the mischievous cat, have eaten the fish they are asked to guard. The police, bank managers, their clerks, together with the gate-men and other security agents do not guard the strong room any more. Rather they have broken the strong rooms open, stolen question papers and as well sold them to their agents who make fortune out of the dirty business. At the end, the booty is shared by those who organised and executed the nefarious activities.

One of the obvious consequences of this scandal is that students have virtually relaxed efforts to study in order to qualify for higher education or job. Their primary reason for pursuing "success without tears" is that their counterparts and schoolmates in every level of education in the country have made without burning the midnight oil or losing sweat. Many have been helped to make it and so why not join them and get on top without any struggle. Simply pay the person in-charge and get what you want!

Educational standards have fallen and it is no longer easy to separate the wheat from the cockle – knowledgeable students from mediocre! It is a tragedy. Most students who claim to have got complete papers – including A2 or A3 in English Language and Mathematics are really

not qualified for admission into Junior Secondary school. But everyone is carrying big certificates that are worth nothing.

It is a Herculean task restoring sanity to a school system devastated by apathy to work on part of Nigerian operators of the system, students and their teachers, and even by parents.

It is still impossible convincing our students that they should work hard and therefore could pass their examinations without "outside help" or **EXPO.** It is impossible to convince Nigerian students that they need textbooks for their studies. Certainly too, it has become almost unthinkable to convince students that they need good learning environment in order to achieve success. Most secondary school environments in Nigeria are littered with bunches of dilapidated buildings and these are in lamentable situations. Some are like war fronts.

Some of the schools are located in uncompleted buildings that have no doors and windows. Others are run under shades of trees and makeshift batchers. In these so-called schools every subject under the sun is taught by one or two teachers. The students put on gorgeous uniforms and play games and jokes for most of the days and weeks. There, too, students pay fees that are ridiculously very low. Examinations are never done or when any is conducted students get obviously all "Passes" and "Distinctions" including "A"s in English Language, Mathematics, and the Sciences!

Serious minded educationists and good managers of schools have to contend with this ugly situation, where students look for "schools whose results are always good," and never "Schools where teaching and learning process is done!" There we are.

In Nigeria every dunce qualifies for university education. So you may not be surprised to see even students in Junior Secondary Schools sit for **G.C.E, WAEC, JAMB** and other examinations. No one should be surprised if they were offered admission into higher institutions of learning when those students who really qualified are denied admission.

Perhaps it is not good performance that matters any more. Those who are able to pay the "qualification fees" to the authorities and their collaborators get places in the universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education.

As students who were never prepared for higher education fill the campuses, how do we expect order and tranquillity? No! It is not possible. These students prefer disorder and chaos. Riots are the order of the day. And sooner universities are closed down and students – good and bad ones - are sent home. Universities may reopen again after parents had paid for damages and repairs affected. Perhaps peace might reign again for only a short while until another period of chaos erupts.

No-Nonsense Man – A Radical Governor

During the era of good schooling and education in Nigeria, parents and guardians appreciated good teachers usually referred to as "No-nonsense-teacher". "He does not tolerate any

nonsense". "No nonsense" implies 'strictness, thorough, meticulous, detailed, and painstaking.' Those of us who jammed no-nonsense teachers have been proud to point at them as heroes worthy of emulation, our mentors, embodiment of everything good. As for severity in punishment, who cares? That is even what can make a no-nonsense teacher, husband, mother parent, administrator, head of department, feared, but loved by students and others. A no-nonsense husband or wife, administrator and politician is in fact hard to come by. No wonder when one emerges, people rise and remove their caps in adoration.

This is what Rochas Okorocha is to the Imo people. He means business and doesn't like distraction. He has a focus, a vision, goals that few people may see the chances of succeeding. He doesn't' seem to pay attention to the screaming, to stop the 'destruction', the flattening of standing edifices and infrastructures. Infatuated with zeal to accomplish the unthinkable he may look crazy or out of his senses. That is where Rochas radicalism comes in.

We can best hear it from the governor himself who once stated the raw fact, **"I am on a mission. I am not a conventional governor; I am a radical governor who has come to effect a radical change in Imo State."** Why do we need soothsayers and critical writers to confirm the obvious? We can only analyse his personal statements and draw out conclusion, the truth, because as the Bible tells us, "It is only the truth that will make the people free. (John)

Rochas himself has stated that only persons of impeccable character and foresight in the art of governance would now be allowed to occupy public offices in Nigeria. People with impeccable character and foresight will now lead Nigerians. Therefore "evil people" will no more be given the chance.

A radical leader with vision has mentors, home and abroad, national and international. Rochas tries to emulate successful Nigerians statesmen and leaders who have contributed to the growth of the nation. He can do better, It is natural that a son should out do his father. The passage of the Biafran leader, Odumegwu Ojukwu did not mean the end of the Igbo race, Ndigbo can produce another worthy replacement. There is no better assurance that the future remains bright for generations of Imo people and Nigeria. Rochas made this statement **'verbatim'**

> **Today, the bar of governance and leadership in Nigeria has been raised. Men and women who must govern our country or our states must now be men of vision, integrity and repute. After and when I must have become your governor and left that office, before anybody would be governor again, he has to think twice, because of what I will leave on ground."**

Rochas have mentors. He may cite **John F. Kennedy**. Didn't Kennedy challenge American people to "thank about what they can do for their country and not what the country can do for you. So for Rochas it is no more what one can grab from the 'national cake' and government treasury, but what one can contribute to fatten the government treasury, cut unnecessary

expenses. **Harry Truman** (1945 – 1953), the 33rd President of the United States of America made many crucial decisions in history including the dropping of Atomic bomb on Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. His reform work and achievements as a senator in 1934 are still remembered in American history. During World War II he headed the Senate investigation committee checking into **waste and corruption** and saving perhaps much as 15 billion dollars. Nigeria needs fearless crusaders what can help plug holes through which billions if not trillions of naira are wasted in useless projects or as well stolen by waiting thieves and con men.

That was why Rochas went on rampage plugging such holes though which millions of naira have been lost to ghost workers, ghost contractors and reckless looters of government coffers everywhere. Government investments, instead of gulping large portions of dwindling revenue have started yielding balances and excesses which go direct into government coffers and no more into private pockets of citizens.

Simplicity:

> **" I was shocked when I came from the tribunal and I saw him at the gate of the Government House in shorts, addressing the crowd and I was curious and I said your Excellency are you addressing Imo citizens on shorts; he said it didn't matter and that he was coming from the project sites. " (Duruji, Imo State Commissioner for Information)**

Not only Duruji and a few other close associates had seen Governor Rochas on 'shorts'. Many Imo citizens, poor and rich, young and old bear witness to the simplicity of their governor, a virtue and lifestyle them cherish very much. They have seen the governor arrive at construction sites unannounced and mingled with ordinary citizens in society. Often, hungry he had shared snacks with the people he serves. He has served food to his visitors and helped the elderly rise or sit down comfortably. He has often joined in the clean-up exercises. These are not 'ordinary things' in the eyes of the watchful and referent Imo People. Such Governor's gestures will surely not go unnoticed and unrewarded. The people will continue to discuss and ponder over them. They will say: **"We have not seen the like before. Our eyes have seen our ears." Others will add: "It is God's work; a marvel in our eyes!"**

That is really what ordinary Nigerians should understand about the personality of Rochas Okorocha. He is not a conventional governor. Conventional means, the normal, traditional, the usual, typical personality one expects to meet. Surely Rochas remains convinced that the time the servant of the people on a rescue mission spends at construction sites is worth more than thousands of hours spent in the offices and in government houses. Often un-inspected,

unwatched, unmonitored and unkempt contractors and their allies execute miserable jobs in Nigeria and escape with their loot.

Rochas, the contractor-inspector know how serious European and American contractors inspect work and direct their workers at construction sites. These on their jeans and rough clothes direct their worker sunder sun and rain. They take the responsibility of mistakes and failures.

That is why Rochas is 'not ordinary Nigerian minister'. Most Nigerian construction site overseers may not know where construction sites are located. They usually leave their air-conditioned offices to be beaten by rain or the scotching sun. But even the Lebanese, Indian, Pakistani and Chinese engineers who have taken over our construction works do better job than our own people. May be they have to learn a bit from the Imo State Governor.

In the olden days kings and princes were carried on kingly stretcher-beds, on human shoulders. Their legs never touched the ground. In the present times (to avoid incidents of assassination attempts), their security men and entourage walk in front, behind and beside motorized cubicle protecting the president/king.

The president, governor, minister, pope, and king can never mix up with the people. At least as a sign of respect the president must be allowed free passage when he is to join in a procession.

Security procedures apart, unconventional, extraordinary statesmen don't worry about traditional protocols. They are always in a hurry and have no time to waste. They like the people to come nearer to them. They like to talk and listen to them. They are approachable leaders.

All these unusual qualities exhibited by statesmen like Governor Rochas make him unconventional and therefore point to his simplicity. This lifestyle can attract both criticism as well as admiration; The Pharisees, when they saw he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners," (Mark: 17.16)

Nigerians admire simple hearted and humble leaders. They keep away from the flamboyant and sophisticated, unapproachable one, those the common man can't approach or touch their cars. They fear and hate those leaders and governors whose security police must punish motorists and pedestrians who fail to clear the way for governor's entourage.

Democratic : *The governor is accused of formulating policies in the state without due process; they cited as example the creation of community speakers without the input of the house of assembly. What is your reaction to this?*

He didn't have to. What people don't understand is that the only constant thing in life is change. This is a man who is a change agent; he is a catalyst, a facilitator for change and

development. He is not going to be held hostage by protocol and mundane understanding of the rule of law.

Law trails development, development does not trail laws unnecessarily, and law trails development all over the world. I am a senior advocate in the Unites States and I do know that law follows development, development does not follow law; otherwise society will not move forward.

As events are happening, law catches up, you don't wait to make the law for the average human thinking before you can implement, it is only as you evolve that the law trails behind, and all over the world, the due process is a twin sister or brother of democracy.

So the two are not mutually exclusive, they are mutually inclusive. Once you see democracy, the government of the people, for the people and by the people, you are talking about rule of law.

So once he envisions, he conceptualizes and then the legal process takes place. If he does not envision, conceptualize, articulate the polices before the implementation, how can the Legislative house formulate. The House formulates based on the fine prints of articulation of the policies and programmes that emanate from the executive arm whenever necessary.

It is only then that the policy is transmitted to the house for articulation of an enabling law. It cannot be the other way round; otherwise the House will be dictating to the executive. So there is no violation of the rule of law, I challenge any opponent of this administration to come up with a clear indication of where we have violated the law.

Community speakers

He introduced fourth tier Government and appointment of community speakers, which have brought governance closer to the grassroots, reformation of the vigilante outfits by restricting their operations in the communities rather than using them to fight political opponents, establishment of General Security Council and Local Government Security Council and Local Government Security Council in the 27 LGAs, reconstruction of Commissioners' Quarters abandoned by Ohakim's administration.

Conclusion:

“A great prophet has risen among us…God has visited his people..