

THE CANKERWORM IN US

By Ben Umole:

Africans are peculiar people. Good in few ways, but bad in many ways. Our shortcomings and peccadilloes, outweigh our strong and positive sides. Africa and Africans are not only backward in economy, infrastructure, politics, education, organization in human and material resources, but in human conduct and morals. Our level of debauchery and fraudulence is unparalleled and unprecedented.

Africa as a continent, is one place that is highly endowed with humongous and immense resources. The landscape, vegetation, climate, minerals, are too enormous to be ignored. Take Nigeria as a case study. This is a country that God has endowed with immeasurable and immense human, material and natural resources. In terms of resources, Nigeria, is far, far better and outstanding than many other African and European countries. A supposed giant of Africa, that is a dwarf or tortoise in development. A country vastly blessed by God, but neck deep and profound in corruption.

Corruption! Corruption! Corruption! We sermonize it as a people and as a country, yet we relish it. Like a leech, we all tenaciously hold onto it. Rather than abhor and absolutely detest it, we swim it, like fishes in an ocean. From our good morning to our good night, we adorn and adore corruption like jewelry over our necks. Corruption is our fragrance and perfume that emits and wafts on our clothes. This is not peculiar with Nigerians, but with Africans, as a whole. But what has really gone wrong with us, our country and nay our continent? What is amiss? Where have we gone astray, berserk and bananas? This question is becoming a recurring decimal in our socio-political system. Why do we seem to be deteriorating as a people and country.? Indeed, the cankerworm of multiple malfeasance and misdemeanors are increasing every day in our society. At homes, in schools, in all professions, in politics, in foreign affairs, in churches (house of God), among the elites and commoners, etc, we are purveyors of criminality and corruption. Why? Why and why?

Nigeria's literary giant, Nobel Laureate, Wole Soyinka, recently said that University Professors, now collude with Nigerian Politicians to thwart, distort and rig elections. Ironically, these are the same Professors who will sit on a panel and expel a student for examination malpractice. This is patently ridiculous!

Nigeria's ivory towers, are becoming cesspit and haven of corruption? The plumage of excellence and beauty it used to hold in the past has gone into oblivion and otiose. This is decidedly very sad, appalling, dismal and disheartening. It's a shame that Professors in Nigeria now stoop so low, to collect peanuts as money, for a pot of porridge.

If our Ivory Towers have become relics of their former selves, then where lies the salvation of our country?

Why have our dons thrown away their dignity, honour, integrity, reputation, self-esteem, diligence, courtesy, hard work and discipline, that they have purportedly sweated to get over the years.? Why has everything that has to do with responsibility and accountability thrown overboard? The situation in the Universities is becoming too horrible, horrid, and horrifying.

Where are the future Soyinkas, Achebes, Osutokuns, Awojobis, Jubril Aminus, Osofisans,, Adamu Baikes Osundares, Adebayo Williams, Emeguales, to mention but a few. Some of them are of blessed memory, while the other few who are still alive are of international repute. Professors whose eminence , versatility and ingenuity cannot be impugned. Do we still such Professors in our towers.

Fetishism and material pursuits have taken over the beauty of our University system. In politics, our Governors and legislators, wake in the morning and sleep in the night with corruption. Vote buying and surreptitiously conniving with INEC officials to sabotage the electoral process is the norm rather than the exception. Where is the sanctity of our electoral officers?

Fake men of God emerge every day from the houses of God. The church pulpit is becoming a palpable forum, to emit and vociferate mendacious statements and Propheesies. Nigeria's huge mineral resources are lying fallow untapped. The vast expanse of lands in all the nooks and crannies of this country are indescribable and wasting away. Who will bell the cat?

On the whole and to sum up, Africans and Nigeria in particular lack visionary Leaders. This is our bane and encumbrances over the years. If we can get it right with the Leadership Question, then every other thing will fall in the right places. On the 29th May, 2023, can we have the long awaited messiah?

Photo by Josh Mayer