

The Book of
HOPE



Solutions to Systemic Problems of Africa

CHIDI OKEKE

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Dedication

To Nigeria and her heroes—past, present and yet to come.

Epigraph

The information pertinent to populations is history. And what is history but information about the past? Yet, so many view history as a bore. However, it remains—and will remain—the sole panacea for the problems of Africa and Nigeria, in particular.

—Chidi Okeke

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Preface

For many years I wondered why my parents sent me from Nigeria to the United Kingdom for my undergraduate studies. This question being in contrast to why parents from the United Kingdom do not send their children to Nigeria for studies. So, I set out to understand why.

I tried to find out the answer to this question in my own way and I will attempt to lay out the answers I found. Besides the obvious reason for sending me to study abroad, which is to obtain a good education and enhance my career opportunities, I developed an additional reason of my own—to understand.

Of course, the UK is a great country by most measures and in this book, I will make many comparisons between Nigeria and the United Kingdom—because I have lived in both countries for a prolonged period. I will add, however, that I think Nigeria is a great country too.

The essence of writing this book is it appears that the general public of Nigeria does not find Nigeria a great country. Many have no faith in its ability to determine its future and cater to their needs and aspirations.

Equality

Not so long ago, I thought it was highly important the size of one's house or the price of one's car. However, over the years of asking so many questions, I have concluded that these things do not matter as much as they are made out to.

There is no argument that one lives a comparatively comfortable life when one is wealthy than when one is not. However, observations bring me to postulate a general theory of equality between the cumulative condition of all humans which, in my opinion, voids the idea of wealth or lack thereof as we know it.

I believe that like in mathematics, where proportionalities are calculated, we also have an inverse relationship that exists in the conditions of humans.

The happier you are, the less sad you are. The richer you are, the less poor you are. The busier you are, the less idle you are. I believe that the sum total of all endeavours of each man over the conditions of his life is equal to that of any other man.

The sum of fears of one man balanced out, perhaps, by his industry or a loving spirit. Or perhaps, the discomfort of a beggar, balanced out by immense joy felt from little acts of kindness by strangers. Or a man imprisoned for a decade, finally to be set free—priceless freedom felt and greatly cherished.

It begs the question, what is the purpose of life?

I think that the purpose of life is to love. That is, to love every man as though he were your brother or sister and live together as one family.

Warning

I must state clearly at this point that this book and its contents, however controversial they may be, are intended for one purpose only—to improve the life experience of Africans by fostering debate.

With every idea comes criticism and opposition. The purpose of this book, nonetheless, is to put forth ideas, novel or otherwise, and initiate a peaceful debate on ways to improve the lives and livelihoods of people in Africa and to elevate the standing of Africa and its people in the world.

Chapter One - A Brief History of the World

Human beings existed in Africa before they did anywhere else. About 60,000 years ago, early humans migrated out of Africa and kept exploring until they spread to all corners of the earth.

This implies that peoples within and outside Africa are descendants of Africans. Hence, I see no reason for contention of identity among such peoples as we all originate from Africa.

In an earlier book, *The Way Out*, I wrote about the principle of communities.¹ People often want what is best for their community and would aim to degrade and exploit any community which they do not consider as theirs, for the benefit of theirs.

It is evident in many of the historical and present-day challenges faced by Africa that Africa was not and, in many ways, is not considered part of the community.

Slavery and Colonialism

Slavery

I strongly condemn slavery in all its forms but particularly in the form of exploitation for organised labour. As stated in *The Way Out*, slavery was abolished thanks to the British and the shocked conscience of their nation at the time. It is noteworthy that abolition was an act of the British parliament and was enforced strictly by the British navy.

Thanks to the conscience of a nation and, of course, the advent of the industrial revolution—requiring less manual labour—we are free. However, what have we done, and what are we doing, with this freedom?

I hope the act of reminding people that we could otherwise still be slaves, if not for the institution of the British parliament, is a good motivator to improve lives and livelihoods—and I emphasise institution rather than British parliament.

Colonisation

Colonisation, in my opinion, was a continuation of the slave trade—wider-reaching but less severe. It served to exploit indigenous communities and establish their dependence on their colonisers. Slavery was managed at a distance while colonisation required an administrative presence.

As communities, we often forget history. Hence, history is bound to reoccur. A secondary aim of this writing is to prevent a reoccurrence of history in whatever guise it may take by serving as a reminder of history.

I recall listening to audio recordings of freed slaves in the United States. The freed slaves said they were clueless about what to do with their freedom after being freed. They had been enslaved for so long that being free, understandably, felt strange.

So too, I believe, was the effect of independence on our country, Nigeria. This is not to say that I do not approve of independence, but to highlight the parallels which are bound to have existed, on some level, between freed people and a freed country.

Freed but Not Free

Although slaves had been freed, they were not truly free—just like Nigeria at independence.

I believe true freedom is being able to set your own goals, interests, methods and criteria of achievement without being pressured in any way.

An aspect of freedom which I believe Nigeria lacked at independence and still lacks to this day is freedom from feeling inferior—in intellect, particularly, but also in any other way possibly imaginable.

Only we can truly set ourselves free—and it is no easy task because it requires a great unlearning of what we believe and hold dear as true. It also requires great understanding and commitment.

In my estimation, it is similar to a man trying to quit smoking cigarettes. He may go through several lapses along the way and experience intense suffering of withdrawal symptoms, as the body tries to adjust to the absence of cigarettes.

Although the smoker knows there will be tribulations and perhaps failure along the way, he commits to the process out of his own God-given free will and reasoning. Therefore, because he commits

to the process, an act that implies trust in the process, he can fulfil his purpose of quitting smoking.

So too, the purpose, distinct from the process, within the minds and hearts of Africans must be to unlearn unhealthy ways of thinking about ourselves and others in relation to ourselves.

Flux

Through recent centuries, man has determined that there is no such thing as a fixed point. All things are constantly in flux on the subatomic scale—at least, according to the leading theory in physics.

In the same vein, one cannot sit on a figurative fence, just as drops of water do not sit on the blade of a razor. They flow to either side.

The razor is the great divider and we humans are the drops of water it so effortlessly divides along its planes.

There are many types of razors—religion, gender, race, social status, etc.—as many razors as there are human beings.

No matter what happens though, all the drops of water divided by the razor will always reunite beneath it.

For millennia, man has sought to oppress other men—physically, economically, socially, psychologically or otherwise—for his own benefit. However, within this framework of oppression, applying the theory of equality, we can postulate that a man, no matter how long in oppression, will always be set free.

When set free, the great joy of his freedom will compensate for the great pains of his oppression. In many instances, the jury which sets men free from unwarranted oppression is the jury of the human conscience.

It is no surprise that Africans were enslaved and colonised for the simple probable reason that our colonisers felt insecure and threatened by our existence, in addition to their desire to benefit economically by exploitation.

However, I see no good reason why after being freed from slavery and subsequent colonisation, Africans were further subjected to segregation, if not to purport a less-than-human campaign against them.

If you think we have scaled the hurdle of injustice, think again.

What Would You Have Done?

Imagine you were a proper middle-aged British lady or gentleman—or further still, an aristocrat. Someone who had either witnessed Britain prevail in every conquest or had been told great inspiring stories of great British history.

You have witnessed, and still do, great levels of peace and prosperity at home. Simply put, yours is regarded as the greatest country on the face of the earth and in line to be the greatest ever.

Everyone around you strongly supports the slave trade, perhaps because slavery has been around for millennia. Or perhaps because the people taken from these lands are said to be barbaric savages with no capacity for independent thought.

What would you have done?

In all likelihood, you would have been an ardent supporter of the slave trade. And why? Well, they are savages, aren't they? More akin to wild beasts than civilised man.

And you would have been both right and wrong to think this way. Right in the sense that slavery initiated the process through which colonisation could be established which changed the way of life of the, indeed, savage man.

However, it was wrong to manipulate Africans, who did not know much better, into engaging in the slave trade by selling their own people to slave merchants and onto transatlantic slave ships.

Furthermore, it was wrong to inculcate Africans into the value system and beliefs of the 'civilised world' without carefully considering their collective identity. There is an irony with independence, which is that it has caused great dependence—intellectually and otherwise. Nevertheless, colonisation is to blame for present-day troubles, or isn't it?

Former president of the United States, Barack Obama, points out in his book, *The Audacity of Hope*, that there is no point arguing with the powers that be.² In his opinion, the best thing to do is conform to their whims and desires. That is to say, it's a battle you can't win, so acquiesce.

However, I do not completely agree with this notion.

In *The Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith wrote:³

'Every individual necessarily labours to render the annual revenue of the society as great as he can ... He intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention ... By pursuing his own interests, he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it. I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for the public good.'

No doubt, if left to our devices—not enslaved and, subsequently, colonised—Africans would still be savages.

Not the End

Slavery goes on—in the minds of those who suffer the feeling of being less human than others and dependent on so-called superior human minds to solve their problems.

One of the aims of this book is to call to action all those who knowingly or unknowingly suffer from an inferiority mind-set and let them know that there is hope.

Whence a people previously enslaved embrace their history, however ugly, and totally forgive—but dare not forget—atrocities of the past, such people may begin to unshackle themselves from the invisible chains of their past.

Paul Kagame, the president of Rwanda, in an interview about past conflict, said 'we don't allow ourselves to get lost in our history—in our tragedies—because if you do that, that's where you stay. Yes, we have learnt lessons from these tragedies but the lessons should be able to inform us as to how we shape our future.'

We must not forget that those responsible for slavery and colonisation and their far-reaching and long-lasting effects were themselves historically subject to some form of oppression.

In the United States, for example, they had fought a bloody war of independence from the English crown—‘No taxation without representation’.

In the United Kingdom, they were invaded by the Romans and colonised for centuries and never truly became independent. It is no surprise, therefore, that the British colonised the Americas. They had assimilated the Roman way of life and the Romans, in turn, had learnt from empires gone or existing in that era.

Why, then, would they unleash such similar suffering upon others, if not that they failed to conduct a critical analysis of their own suffering and resolve, as a point of principle, never to inflict such upon others.

The aforementioned is a summary of my philosophy for Nigeria’s moving forward. We must resolve never to act in such a selfish and dehumanising way towards others, no matter how powerful or influential we may become.

One such way of doing this would be to enshrine it into law, applicable domestically and otherwise. Although there are always those who will seek to circumvent such measures, it must be designed in such a way as to prevent manipulation.

Guilty

The British knew exactly what they were doing by not taking the bulk of slaves to their island home. Instead, slaves were taken to their colonies in the Caribbean, North America and South America and other countries.

There are many possible explanations for this. I believe, however, that this was done to keep a safe distance from the obvious powder keg—slave uprisings—which indeed occurred in those colonies many years later.

In my opinion, and to a limited degree, this is a strong indication of a conspiracy to commit wrongdoing against the Africans because it was preconceived.

Let this serve as a warning to those who still suffer the effects of colonisation and to populations at large.

I have spent many years studying and learning about the interactions within and without populations and one of my conclusions is that information is power. The more informed one is, the better one is at a given subject.

The information pertinent to populations is history. And what is history but information about the past? Yet, so many view history

as a bore. However, it remains—and will remain—the sole panacea for the problems of Africa and Nigeria, in particular.

The more information you have about a subject, the more skilled you are at that subject.

For example, a random ten-year-old child from the United Kingdom is likely better able to name Nigeria's neighbouring countries than a ten-year-old from Nigeria and, perhaps, the majority of the adult population in Nigeria.

If this does not frighten you, nothing will.

This child may also be able to give dates and reasons for wars, peace, methods and critical decisions which go back millennia. However, the population of Nigeria is not taught pre-colonial history.

This is not the fault of the Nigerian population just as the child from the United Kingdom, perhaps, has no desire to learn history.

Whose fault is this?

The Columbus Eclipse

Christopher Columbus set off on his fourth and final voyage to America from Cadiz in 1502. Long sea voyages were, at that time, still highly dangerous undertakings and Columbus lost two of his four ships during that expedition, while his other two ships were damaged and barely seaworthy.

He and his crew were forced to land on the northern coast of Jamaica. At first, the natives received them well. However, this state of affairs did not last long. Half of Columbus' crew mutinied and frequently raided, robbed or cheated the natives, who eventually decided to stop giving the Europeans food and supplies.

Threatened with starvation, Columbus knew he had to do something quickly. Luckily for him and his men, he had with him certain astronomical tables, including the almanac *Ephemeris* by the German astronomer Johannes Müller von Königsberg which predicted a total lunar eclipse on 29 February 1504, and even gave an estimated time and duration.

Columbus did some calculations to adapt von Königsberg's estimations to the local time, and then called the chiefs of the nearby tribes to a meeting. He claimed God was angry at them for not giving him supplies, and would make the moon 'inflamed with wrath' as a sign of God's displeasure. Of course, the chiefs refused to believe him, and some even laughed at his claims.

However, Columbus' prediction was correct. When the moon appeared over the horizon, it seemed like something had eaten up its bottom part. As the eclipse continued, the rest of the moon was covered, changing into what appeared to be a dark reddish orb—which must have looked 'inflamed with wrath'.

The natives were so frightened. They begged Columbus to intercede with God and promised to supply him in the future.

Columbus retired to his cabin to 'pray', but actually to consult his hourglass to see how long the eclipse would last. He knew the moon would remain in the earth's shadow for 48 minutes, so he emerged shortly before that time passed, claiming God had forgiven them and would gradually return the moon to normal.

This indeed happened, and Columbus and his crew were able to survive until they were rescued by a ship from Hispaniola on 29 June 1504.

Chapter Two - Wake Up

We must realise that we are a sovereign nation and a sovereign people. The atrocities of the past are behind us but the atrocities of the present are before us.

Why are ethnic-sounding names seven times less likely to be invited for an interview in the United Kingdom?

Why are British Africans up to ten times more likely to be stopped for searches by police than non-British Africans?

Why is it that when a family of African descent moves into a neighbourhood that is predominantly not African, there will be a mass exodus of other residents, even up to this day?

Why is it that when an African sits in a café, the non-Africans perform a disappearing act?

Why is it that when an African sits beside a non-African on a train, the non-African decides to stand for the remainder of the journey?

Why is it that Africa is condescendingly referred to as the third world by everyone outside of Africa and yet, within, Africans are

not even aware of the vitriol which exists towards them? Such vitriol always spoken as a matter of course.

If such dissatisfying actions are taken so freely without cognisance of the disaffected, it is a mere continuation of the motives behind slavery.

Those who perpetrate such actions may do so consciously or unconsciously. However, every man must be held accountable for his own actions whatever the motives.

That is to say, no matter the motives or guiding beliefs—consciously or unconsciously—Africans do not have to endure the vitriol of subjugation and will never be content with continued attempts to make us third-class citizens.

Non-conformity

To me, and I hope many others, Nigeria is already a great nation because it has human beings within it and not classed citizens as some may wish to impose upon themselves or others.

Certain so-called behaviours and mannerisms of Africans are chastised by non-Africans just like they were used as excuses for slavery.

We hear things like Africans eat different food or dance, speak and dress differently or listen to different kinds of music or are too aggressive and perhaps not as intelligent.

In my observation, many of these generalizations are true. However, the last two assertions are proven to be false.

The basis for modern-day discrimination—what is left of the exploitation era—are baseless.

If food choices or music preference are excuses for discrimination, then, by definition, most human being on earth would discriminate against most others.

We know this does not happen. Instead, you have non-Africans discriminating against Africans and vice-versa.

The only peculiar and readily noticeable difference between an African and non-African is the difference in skin colour—which is the real reason for discrimination. It is often obfuscated by asserting the aforementioned excuses.

Nonetheless, Africans should not have to conform to arbitrary expectations which others are not subject to, often termed the double standard. There ought to be freedom to express oneself as one is, not as someone else, African or non-African, wishes them to be.

When a dark-skinned man and a light-skinned man are walking towards each other on the same street, there is a good probability that the light-skinned man will cross over to the opposite side of the street.

He perceives the dark-skinned man as a threat. However, why does he think this?

He thinks this because that is what has been taught by his community and by history—how to oppress others—and because it is socially acceptable to his community. Perhaps the dark-skinned man was wearing a hoodie or walking with a bounce.

Why is it that the dark-skinned man does not cross the same street when he sees a light-skinned man wearing a hoodie or walking with a bounce?

I must highlight that I do not support the crossing of streets by either dark or light-skinned people as a means of discrimination.

I support embracing, not tolerating, the differences which exist between light and dark-skinned man, African and non-African or otherwise. As hard as this may be to do—perhaps the hardest thing to do as a human being—it is necessary.

The Giant

Just like Columbus fooled the Jamaicans into believing he would summon the wrath of his God, Nigerians have been duped of the knowledge and information they need.

As some have pointed out, this may be a deliberate attempt by the so-called ruling class to keep the people in darkness. If we have learnt anything from history, it is that you cannot oppress a people forever. One day, they will rise up and try to claim what is rightfully theirs.

However, I have much sympathy for the so-called ruling class. They are so often depicted as wicked, incompetent, self-serving and corrupt. I often think to myself, if these are the best of us and the worst of us are left bitterly complaining, what would be the effect of replacing the 'good' ruling class with a different, perhaps 'better', ruling class? There would be little to no difference.

The ruling class is a perfect representation of the Nigerian people—dare I say—and they embody the ideals of many Nigerians. It is like the chicken and egg conundrum. Which came first? Does corruption cause the suffering in Nigeria or does the suffering cause corruption?

When we realise that there is corruption present in most countries—to varying degrees—we begin to see that corruption creates suffering and not vice-versa. If we, the people, were not already corrupt, why would we suddenly become corrupt when faced with suffering?

We often criticise the government for corrupt practices but I think we should examine ourselves first. In my opinion, when we urinate openly, feeling perhaps that it is wrong but continue, that is corruption.

When we discard litter out of a moving vehicle or by the roadside when walking, feeling perhaps that it is wrong but continue, that is corruption.

When we drive as though the roads belong to us alone, that is corruption.

When we feel that we are big men or aspire to be big men by any means, that is corruption.

'Bigmanship' is the bane of Nigeria.

Bigmanship

Nigerians are continually sold the idea that their existence is beneath that which exists in so-called developed countries. We are branded as a third-world country by North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) classifications.

Why is America not put as third-world and Nigeria as first-world if, indeed, it is an inconsequential naming convention?

Why do they call Africans third-class world citizens, and not themselves, if it is so insignificant?

Why is Nigeria now the extreme poverty capital of the world—poverty measured relative to the US dollar?



poverty capital of the world






Nigeria

SEATTLE, Washington — Nigeria, a third **world** country in Africa, is known as the **poverty capital of the world**. The nation just exceeded India with the largest rate of people living in extreme **poverty**. In Nigeria, about 86.9 million people live in severe **poverty**, which is about 50% of its entire population. 28 Aug 2020

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The Poverty Capital of the World: NIGERIA - BORGEN

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Which country is the poverty capital of the world? 

We are sold these ideas and, unfortunately, many in both public and private sectors—perhaps with an inferiority mentality—buy into them.

We are indeed poor, monetarily and otherwise. However, even if all the money in the world were dropped in Nigeria's laps and Nigeria were void of corruption, we would still falter—greatly.

This is to say that a great portion of Nigeria's problems are procedural.

Remember it was the African kings and chiefs of the slave trade era who sold their captives as slaves, just as today it is the so-called statesmen who are likely to sell out by being corrupt. They want to be viewed as successful, accomplished and powerful when, in fact, they are not worthy of such characterisations.

In fact, I cannot imagine a less appropriate way to brand oneself as accomplished than enriching oneself off the merits, labour and property of others. Ordinarily, such people would serve a lengthy custodial, social distancing and social condemnation sentence.

On the contrary, we find that they are hailed and looked up to by society as symbols of success. Furthermore, they try to cover their tracks by prolonging their stay in office at all costs—causing even more problems.

How, then, can you tell me that the people of Nigeria are not corrupt?

Agbada Diplomacy

The general consensus among scholars is that the Agbada originated in the Middle East and was introduced to Africa by the Berber and Arab merchants from the Maghreb during the trans-Saharan trade that began in the pre-Christian era and lasted until the late nineteenth century.

While the exact date of its introduction to West Africa is uncertain, reports by visiting Arab geographers indicate that the attire was very popular in the area from the eleventh century onward, most especially in the ancient kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, Songhay, Bornu, and Kanem, as well as in the Hausa states of northern Nigeria.

Because of its costly fabrics and elaborate embroidery, the attire was once symbolic of wealth and high status. Hence, by the early nineteenth century, the attire had been adopted by many in sub-Saharan Africa, most especially kings, chiefs, and elites, who not only modified it to reflect local dress aesthetics but also replaced the turban with indigenous headgears.

The bigger the robe and the more elaborate its embroidery, the higher the prestige and authority associated with it.

Today, many public officials are prolific Agbada wearers, to the point of discomfort, because of what they believe it represents—bigmanship.

Beware of Agbada diplomacy by public officials in Nigeria. They are either pandering to your perception of culture by wearing these bogus robes or trying to persuade you that they are part of the so-called ruling class and to be tolerated.

Would you routinely wear an Agbada to work? If you are not permitted to wear it, or perhaps think it inappropriate for work, why then are they?

It is implied, therefore, that they are either not working or believe that their work avails them special privileges which the rest of the country is not entitled to.

Clothing as Technology

The warning about Agbada diplomacy is not meant to imply that Agbadas, in themselves, are bad. Like many things which ought not to bear social or 'cultural' meaning, it does.

In the real sense, clothing is classified as technology—and what is technology? It is the application of scientific knowledge for

practical purposes. The scientific knowledge here is the textiles and their production methods evolving over millennia.

According to archaeologists and anthropologists, the earliest clothing likely consisted of fur, leather, leaves or grass that were draped, wrapped or tied around the body. Today's clothing is more sophisticated and may consist of fasteners such as zippers and buttons.

Fasteners

In 1851, Elias Howe, an American inventor, received a patent for an 'Automatic, Continuous Clothing Closure'—now called zippers—but did not try seriously to market it. Howe's device was more like an elaborate drawstring than a true slide fastener.

It was improved upon by different individuals and companies over the years and by the 1930s, a sales campaign began for children's clothing featuring zippers. The campaign praised zippers for promoting self-reliance in young children by making it possible for them to dress in self-help clothing.

The practical purpose of clothing as technology is for protection from cold, heat and rain. It was historically important as humans migrated to new climates millennia ago and it remains so to this day.

Chapter Three - A New Identity

There must be a new identity—cultural, economic, social, political and, most importantly, ideological—of the African, put forth by the African himself.

To emphasise, the purpose of this book is to put forth ideas on ways to improve the lives and livelihoods of Africans and Nigerians, in particular.

There, in my estimation, must be a great number of alternatives already in existence to the bulky Agbada—and that is not to suggest a three-piece suit either.

In so many ways, the Agbada is a euphemism for where we fall short as Nigerians.

I strongly believe that Nigeria is the hope for all Africans, everywhere in the world, owing to our large population and economy. What we get right is an example to others for positive change and what we get wrong signals the opposite. By virtue of our economy and population, we are looked up to by others around us.

The guiding principle here is to take proud ownership of whatever new identity we create and nurture it. No one will be proud of us if we are not proud of ourselves and our identity.

This could mean, for example, prioritising products made within Nigeria over products made elsewhere. The British are not likely to prioritise goods produced in Nigeria over those produced in the United Kingdom or the European Union.

Historically, and from an economics perspective, people purchase goods from the nearest possible vendor rather than go far away. That is, of course, not the case with Nigerians or Africans.

From tales and narrations which I have come across, Nigerians are more likely to purchase an imported product than an equivalent local product. The word 'local' even carries with it a negative connotation meaning not foreign or exotic.

However, in the foreign countries from which those products originate, the word 'local' carries the opposite meaning and buyers actively seek out local products and not foreign ones.

Why is this the case?

This happens because of the lack of trust—not only in the products being produced—but of the society at large. In my estimation,

Nigerians may buy simple products locally, such as food, but not complex products such as laptops or a microwave oven, because they are wary of 'local' standards and quality.

Besides the very potent reason for mistrust in production processes and product standards, I believe that a sense of inferiority may also play a huge part.

Trust

Trust is the bedrock of every society. If one does not trust others, there will be disunity as a result which will lead to further distrust and consequent dysfunction.

The Nigerian people have been greatly battered and bruised. It is very difficult for them to trust and they, sometimes, become untrusting to the point of over-suspicion. This is their reality.

Without trust, society crumbles to dust!

Everyone suspects everyone else of intentionally being out to outsmart them. And I do not dispute that there are many people out to do so.

For example, in the open-air markets, everything is negotiable and the buyer is at the mercy of the seller. If a buyer looks wealthy,

perhaps wearing an Agbada, then the price is inflated—but not for another buyer who does not look as wealthy.

Furthermore, the streets are deserted after dark. The vast majority of the population does not feel safe going out at night for fear of being robbed, or worse. For those who do, they expect tight security wherever they may visit.

People live in fenced-off fortified houses—in isolation—even though most of these houses are already within gated estates with all estate gates further shut to traffic from dusk till dawn.

When petrol is being bought for a car, the driver watches the pump meter attentively to ensure he is not being short-changed by the attendant.

In contrast, for example, in the United Kingdom, products have a displayed price and there is no bargaining based on how well-dressed you look. There are markets where bargaining may happen but to a limited degree and product prices are, still, always displayed.

42 per cent of UK residents regularly leave their doors unlocked and only think about locking them if they are away overnight. When the front door is locked, the keys are likely under the doormat.

Bear in mind that in the UK, gated communities or houses are very rare. There are approximately a thousand gated communities in England, which has 23 million dwellings.

There is little to no fear of going out at night as there are vibrant night-time economies and there are no house or estate gates to be shut.

In the United Kingdom, there are no attendants at fuel pumps. You serve yourself and, hopefully, do not make off with the fuel.

The difference is clear. In Nigeria, it is every man for himself while in the United Kingdom it is every man for every other man.

How do we build trust as a society with each other?

This is the most critical question of our time because it encompasses, and would address, a whole range of fears and biases—and I believe the answer is clear.

Days of Majesty

Scorn

We often look to our colonial past with scorn and regret but I believe we have more to be thankful for than regretful of—and yes, even to our colonisers.

I emphasise that in *The Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith wrote: ³

‘Every individual necessarily labours to render the annual revenue of the society as great as he can ... He intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention ... By pursuing his own interests, he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it. I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for the public good.’

We are so appalled by and ashamed of the legacy of colonisation that we wish to have nothing to do with our colonisers. We are angry but fail to admit it.

If not anger, why does the African loathe European culture? Drawing comparisons to countries in Europe would appear so

inappropriate to the average African. We wish only to draw comparisons to our African neighbours and friends.

In my opinion, this mind-set will always lead to gross failure.

We are already Romanesque by virtue of being colonised by the British who were, themselves, colonised by Rome. Denying this palpable fact would be wilful ignorance.

If, for example, there were no Europeans on earth today, the legacy of Rome would live on through us, the African people—and what is that legacy?

Rome

The civilization of Ancient Rome had a lasting legacy on world history. Not only did Ancient Rome cover a vast amount of land at its peak, but it also existed for almost one thousand years. The legacy of Ancient Rome is still felt today in areas such as government, law, language, architecture, engineering and religion.

Government

Many modern-day governments are modelled after the Roman Republic. Concepts such as balance of powers, veto and representation were all developed and recorded by the Romans.

Nigeria has three branches of government similar to the Roman Republic. The Executive Branch (Presidency) is similar to the elected consuls of Rome. The Legislative Branch (House of Assembly) is similar to the Roman assemblies. Finally, the Judicial Branch is similar to the Praetors of Rome.

Nigeria even has a house of assembly, the Senate—from Latin, *senex*, meaning senior or old age—named after the Senate of Rome.

Law

Roman law has a significant influence over the modern-day laws of many countries.

Legal ideas like trial by jury, civil rights, contracts, personal property, wills and corporations were all influenced by Roman law and the Roman way of looking at things.

Language

The Latin language, spoken by the Romans, spread throughout much of Europe during the time of the Roman Empire. 60 per cent of words in the English language are influenced by Latin or have Latin roots.

English is the official language of Nigeria.

Architecture

The buildings and architecture of Ancient Rome still influence many building designs today. The neoclassical architecture movement of the 18th century was a return to many of the ideas of the Romans. The influence of Roman architecture is visible in

government buildings like the presidential residence, the houses of assembly and large banks.

Engineering and Construction

The Romans changed the world by spreading their innovations in engineering throughout the empire. They built long-lasting roads that helped to increase trade and also helped their armies to quickly move about the empire. Many of these roads are still used today.

The Romans were also known for their public projects. They built aqueducts to bring water into the cities for all to use. They also built public buildings like bathhouses. To build many of these projects the Romans perfected concrete. Roman concrete allowed them to build strong and durable buildings at a lower cost than stone.

Concrete is still used for building to this day.

Christianity

The latter part of the Roman Empire had a great impact on religion in Europe through the spread of Christianity. Rome was the home of the Catholic Church which would hold great influence over Europe for the next thousand years. Today, Christianity is the largest religion in the world and 49.3 per cent of Nigerians are Christians.

Technique

I think the greatest legacy of the Romans is their technique. Technique in the form of scientific abstraction and classification, which informed processes and, consequently, built a foundation for trust and unity.

As a general rule, the greater the degree of abstraction, the easier a task or idea is to manage and replicate. Scientific abstraction and classification can also be referred to as learning or, more elaborately, as research.

We are certainly not Romans and we are certainly not British, but take a look around Nigeria and you will easily find that we are Romanesque.

However, if we do not identify, acknowledge and accept who we are—a product of the Roman way—we will never make meaningful progress.

Chapter Four – Progenitor

We so easily forget, or perhaps remember, but fail to accept the obvious.

During the slave trade, abolition, colonisation, independence, segregation, integration and now, discrimination, one thing remained constant—the glistening crown.

I support a new identity for all of Africa and, my country Nigeria, in particular, and strongly believe that this inevitable new identity should bear atop it a crown.

For all our failed efforts at fostering unity, one thing remains clear, a house divided against itself cannot stand.

Europe realised the need for unity centuries ago when they began to elect monarchs and so did the rest of the world.

Before the advent of exploitation of the African continent, in the early modern period, Africa had more Kingdoms than anywhere else. In Nigeria, there was the Kingdom of Nri, the Benin Empire, and the Oyo Empire.

This is not to say that these kingdoms were particularly sophisticated in their ways—I would imagine they were not. However, it highlights the fact that there was a conscious effort made by people to unite under a single monarch.

Pre-Slave Trade (Early Modern Period)

An interesting observation is that in the early modern period, there are at least 3.3 times more Kingdoms in Africa than in Europe.^{4,5}

Kingdoms of Africa in the early modern period (1500 to 1750)

Mali Empire (c. 1230 – c. 1600)	Kingdom of Loango (15th Century – 19th Century)
Mamluk Sultanate (1250 – 1517)	Kasanze Kingdom (c. 1500 – 1648)
Mankessim Kingdom (1252 – 1873)	Kingdom of Koya (1505 – 1896)
Ifat Sultanate (1285 – 1415)	Denanke Kingdom (1514 – 1776)
Warsangali Sultanate (1218–1886)	Kingdom of Baguirmi (1522 – 1897)
Ajuran Sultanate (13th Century – 17th Century)	Kingdom of Matamba (1530 – 19th Century)
Songhai Empire (c. 1340 – 1591)	Cayor Kingdom (1549 – 1879)
Jolof Empire (c. 1350 – 1549)	Kingdom of Luba (1585 – 1889)
Bornu Empire (c. 1380 – 1893)	Dendi Kingdom (1591 – 1901)
Kingdom of Kongo (c. 1390 – 1914)	Igala Kingdom (16th Century – 1901)

Kingdom of Kaffa (c. 1390 – 1897)	Dahomey (c. 1600 – 1900)
Kingdom of Kongo (c. 1395 – 1914)	Kasanje Kingdom (1620 – 1910)
Adal Sultanate (c. 1415 – 1559)	Kuba Kingdom (1625 – 1900)
Benin empire (c. 1440 – 1897)	Ouaddai Kingdom (1635 – 1912)
Kingdom of Mutapa (c. 1450 – 1698)	Kéné Dougou Kingdom (c. 1650 – 1898)
Kingdom of Fez (1472 – 1554)	Geledi Sultanate – (c. late 17th Century – 1910)
	Ashanti Empire (c. 1701 – 1957)

Kingdoms of Europe in the early modern period (1500 to 1750)

Astern Hungarian Kingdom (1526 – 1571)	Kingdom of Livonia (1570 – 1578)
Kingdom of Croatia (c. 925 – 1102, 1527 – 1868)	Kingdom of Ireland (1541 – 1651, 1659 – 1801)
Royal Hungary (1570 – 1867)	Kingdom of Scotland (843 – 1707, 1660 – 1707)
Kingdom of Ireland (1541 – 1651, 1659 – 1801)	Kingdom of Prussia (1701 – 1918)
Kingdom of Great Britain (1707 – 1801)	Kingdom of Sardinia (1720 – 1861)

Post-Slave Trade (Late Modern Period)

Curiously, after about two centuries, we find that the reverse is the case. There are now 3.7 times more Kingdoms in Europe than in Africa.⁴

Kingdoms of Africa in the late modern period (1750 to 1945)

Zulu Kingdom (1816 – 1897)	Kingdom of Libya (1951 – 1969)
Yeke Kingdom (c. 1856 – 1891)	Kingdom of Tunisia (1956 – 1957)
Kingdom of Egypt (1922 – 1952)	Kingdom of Burundi (1962 – 1966)
Ethiopian Empire (1270 – 1974)	

Kingdoms of Europe in the late modern period (1750 to 1945)

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland (1801 – 1922)	Kingdom of Italy (1861 – 1946)
Kingdom of Italy (1805 – 1814 1861 – 1946)	Kingdom of Romania (1881 – 1947)
Kingdom of Bavaria (1806 – 1918)	Kingdom of Serbia (1882 – 1918)
Kingdom of Saxony (1806 – 1918)	Kingdom of Bulgaria (1908 – 1946)
Kingdom of Württemberg (1806 – 1918)	Kingdom of Montenegro (1910 –

	1918)
Kingdom of Westphalia (1807 – 1813)	Kingdom of Lithuania (1251 – 1263, 1918)
Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (1811 – 1861)	Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918 – 1943)
Kingdom of Hanover (1814 – 1866)	Kingdom of Iceland (1918 – 1944)
United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarves (1815 – 1822)	Albanian Kingdom (1928 – 1939)
Kingdom of Greece (1832 – 1924, 1935 – 1974)	Kingdom of Greece (1832 – 1924, 1935 – 1974)
Modern Kingdom of Hungary (1920 – 1946)	Empire of Germany (1871 – 1918)
Kingdom of France (972 – 1792, 1814 – 1848)	Austria-Hungary (1867 – 1918)
Russian Empire (1721 – 1917)	Kingdom of Portugal (1139 – 1910)

Unity

There are many who wish to see a divided Nigeria—or no Nigeria at all.

To them, I say the following.

The smallest unit of life is the cell, and cells are the basic building blocks of all organisms. Several cells of one kind that interconnect with each other, and perform a shared function, form tissues.

Several tissues combine to form an organ (your stomach, heart, or brain) and several organs make up an organ system (such as the digestive system, circulatory system, or nervous system).

Several systems that function together form an organism (like a human being).

Your body has many kinds of cells, each specialised for a specific purpose. Just as a house is made from a variety of building materials, the human body is constructed from many cell types.

There are skin cells, which are different from blood cells and different from bone cells.

Organs in the body are controlled through local self-regulation, rather than depend on the brain to dictate every single minute task. Organs and cells accomplish a lot on their own so that the brain is freed up for more important tasks.

I think, in many ways, that if we look to the human body and our knowledge of how it works, we may begin to get better insights into how society should be managed.

Three major applicable lessons can be learnt from the human body. Firstly, organs are not dependent on the brain for every instruction. This is possible through self-regulation.

For example, the heart beats on its own through a cyclic wave of electrical impulses. While it is true that the brain can tell the heart to speed up or slow down, the actual beating of the heart is controlled locally.

I would draw parallels to, perhaps, the police. While laws are made by the legislature, they are enforced by the police. The legislature could, and does, determine fines for breaking the law but is not involved in the issuing of fines to offenders. The police can self-regulate by establishing policies for how and when to issue fines.

Secondly, cells discriminate. Those wishing to secede, or otherwise divide, should consider this—will there not be further secession within the seceded territory? And to what end?

Skin cells are different from, and cannot function as bone cells. This implies that they can discriminate.

In the same vein, shall we continue to seek secession until we are pitted skin cell against bone cell of each man in his own county?

Thirdly, the brain is there to see the bigger picture. I would compare the brain to the central government, which exists to ensure proper running and protection from threats.

Divide and Conquer

The ultimate objective of divide and conquer is gaining and maintaining power by breaking up groups into smaller and less powerful ones.

The Berlin Conference marked the climax of the European competition for territory in Africa in which European powers met for 104 days, from November 1884 to February 1885, to share out Africa amongst themselves.

European nations such as Great Britain, France, and Germany began looking to Africa for natural resources for their growing industrial sectors as well as a potential market for the goods these factories produced.

Following the close of the conference, European powers expanded their claims in Africa such that by 1900, European states had claimed nearly 90 per cent of African territory. Furthermore, these claimed territories were divided by arbitrary borders which, in all likelihood, was done to foster division amongst their peoples and still does to this day.

I strongly believe that if we collectively come to a realization that division within Africa was likely an intent of colonisation, its long-lasting effects should be easier to transcend and overcome.

Serpent

Preside

The presidential system of government is relatively new. This system of government has its origins in America and its Constitution of 1787, which created the office of ‘president’ as head of state. The word ‘president’ is derived from the Latin *praesidens* meaning ‘presiding over’. Substantively, it could mean director, ruler, governor or leader.

The constitution of the United States followed the successful war of independence from the British crown. The war of independence—also called the American revolution—was the insurrection fought between 1775 and 1783 through which 13 of Great Britain's North American colonies threw off British rule to establish the sovereign United States of America, founded with the declaration of independence in 1776.

As the drafters of the American Constitution met to deliberate the terms of their union, they found themselves in a new political situation in which it was necessary to ‘bring into practical working the authority of the people, in place of that of the crown of England, as the source of all political power’.

In essence, the authors of the American constitution sought to combine the powers of a monarch (head of state) with those of a prime minister (head of government) into one office called the presidency. The result is inevitable—a two-headed serpent.

Whilst the taxes levied upon the American colonies, which led to the American Revolution, was done in King George III's name, they were approved and supported by parliament.

It is worth noting that England was already a constitutional monarchy at this time, with the existence of a prime minister and a parliament and limits on the power of the monarch.

It is understandable, therefore, that after independence, within the American constitution, the authors wanted little semblance to a monarch.

This is very similar to the case of Nigeria implementing a semi-presidential system of government in 1963, soon after independence from the United Kingdom in 1960.

Once again, drawing parallels to the human body, every human being has a 'heart' which is separate from his 'mind'. The heart is where you generate emotions like trust, love, hope or despair while the mind is where you reason logically.

Every human being has distinct logical and emotional aspects to their being. Imagine if you made rational decisions emotionally or emotional decisions rationally. One might become confused, conflicted and begin to give out mixed messages.

So too, a president, by definition, conflates the emotional aspects of government with its rational aspects and this can serve to undermine a country.

Who is a president, noble king or public servant? And why conflate?

Minister

Parliamentary systems, unlike presidential systems, are typified by a fusion of powers between the legislative and executive branches. The Prime Minister, who is the chief executive, may be elected to the legislature in the same way that all other members are elected.

The term minister comes from Middle English, deriving from the Old French word *ministre*, originally *minister* in Latin, meaning 'servant, attendant', which itself was derived from the word 'minus' meaning 'less'.

Therefore, unlike a presidential system where a president 'presides' as a conflated pseudo-monarch, in a parliamentary system, the prime minister 'administers' as a servant and the monarch reigns but, critically, does not rule.

The Prime Minister is the leader of the party that wins the majority of votes to the legislature (either de facto or in some cases through an election held by the legislature). The Prime Minister is a member of Parliament and is directly responsible to that body.

The Prime Minister appoints Cabinet Ministers. However, unlike in the presidential systems, these members are typically legislative members from the ruling party or ruling coalition. Thus, in a parliamentary system, the constituency of the executive and legislature are the same.

If the ruling party is voted out of the legislature, the executive also changes. Continued co-operation between the executive and legislature is required for the government to survive and to be effective in carrying out its programmes.

Parliamentary systems are characterised by no clear-cut separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches, leading to a different set of checks and balances compared to those found in presidential systems.

Parliamentary systems, however, usually have a clear differentiation between the head of government and the head of state, with the head of government being the prime minister or premier, and the head of state often being a figurehead, often either a president (elected popularly or by the parliament) or a monarch (often in a constitutional monarchy).

In a parliamentary system, the legislature (parliament) holds supreme power and not the head of state.

To make it clear, a president can also act as head of state in a semi-presidential system—alongside a prime minister as head of government—as Nigeria had not long after independence.

However, the act of electing presidents every few years would serve to defeat the purpose of having a separate head of state, which is unity and continuity.

Constitutional Parliamentary Democratic Monarchy

I believe that a constitutional parliamentary democratic monarchy is the best system of government for Nigeria. This is because the problems of Nigeria are not only socio-economic, procedural or institutional—they are cultural as well.

In simpler terms, I am convinced that we need not only an apolitical monarch—and I emphasise apolitical—but a progenitor as well.

A progenitor is defined as ‘a person who originates a cultural or intellectual movement’ or ‘a person or thing that first indicates a direction, originates something, or serves as a model’.

Monarchy is one of the oldest forms of government. In a monarchy, a king or queen is the Head of State. Most modern monarchies are constitutional monarchies. This means that, while the sovereign is head of state, the ability to make and pass legislation resides with an elected Parliament.

Although the sovereign has no political or executive role, he or she continues to play an important part in the life of the nation.

As head of state, the monarch undertakes constitutional and representational duties. In addition to these state duties, the

monarch has a less formal role as 'Head of Nation'. The sovereign acts as a focus for national identity, unity and pride; gives a sense of stability and continuity; officially recognises success and excellence, and supports the ideals of the nation.

The monarchy is the dignified part rather than the efficient part of the government.

An analogy comparing head of state (monarch) to head of government (prime minister) is that the head of state ceremonially opens hospitals, schools, libraries, bridges and so on while the head of government ensures that they are built.

Another analogy is that the head of state shakes hands with people at ceremonial events, while the head of government ensures there are people healthy enough to shake hands with.

I would much rather have a constitutional parliamentary democratic monarchy that 'administers' to the needs of people—as a servant—than a presidential system that presides over. The former implies much action while the latter implies much inaction.

Heavy is the Head

As glamorous as monarchy may seem, it is not—or at least, needn't be.

'Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown'.

This phrase means that a person in charge, or in a leadership role, has to bear many responsibilities, and it is often a very tough job.

Despite the obvious unity which a monarch—king or queen of all Nigeria—would bring, unity on its own is void of purpose. Unity is only purposeful when it is directed towards or against a certain objective.

This monarch of Nigeria would need to chart a course for a new identity and a new purpose. This, I expect, would be an enormous task, although necessary and achievable.

Chapter Five – Culture

Culture can be defined as the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society. A progenitor, as defined earlier, is a person who originates a cultural or intellectual movement.

Whilst such a constitutional monarch would not be political, he or she would, by no means not be cultural. This monarch must lead a positive cultural transformation.

He or she cannot rely on old traditions—which in many cases, are outdated and, in others, just vile and incomprehensible.

Our culture and many of our traditions are loud and overbearing. As a result, they fail to fulfil the purpose for which they are intended.

The way forward for Nigeria is a country and culture based on common sense. Common sense based on logic, reason, intuition, simplicity and proper, sound and good judgement.

Many, and I suspect most people may not see the correlation between, perhaps, a couple borrowing money to host a wedding reception they can't afford and a fire service which is in shambles; or deafening music at that wedding reception and an ill-equipped police force; or the master of ceremonies at that reception

introducing 'prominent' people as they arrive and a poor road network; or specially reserved seats at a 'high' table for those 'prominent' people and poor electricity supply.

These problems are all interconnected and cannot be solved in isolation. You are not likely to have good roads if you do not have a good fire service. it is all about the collective standard.

This standard cannot be set by a monarch but by policies set out by politicians. However, a monarch would activate the cultural motivation to set and maintain high standards—in the interest of national pride—rather than blindly practice low ones.

Culture plays the single most important part in the development of a nation. If culture does not promote technology, science, innovation and reason, what else will?

A progenitor monarch who takes ownership in a modern, gracious, progressive, original and forward-thinking way, will greatly enable the positive cultural and consequent societal transformation of Nigeria.

On the contrary, however, a progenitor monarch who is backwards, ignorant or crude would only guide the country in the wrong direction.

For example, if a monarch recognises excellence as scientific achievements, lifelong professional service or volunteering efforts and decided to reward them, the small singular act of rewarding those who deserve it is invaluable.

Not only would it foster trust—as most people expect hard work to be rewarded—it would send a strong signal in support of meritocracy and motivate countless numbers of people.

However, if this same reward is given for bigmanship, or to otherwise corrupt or undeserving people, it would erode trust and have a net negative effect.

Therefore, choosing a suitable monarch is of paramount importance.

Furthermore, protections would be devised—just as in a presidential system—to prevent overreaching by setting out limitations, means, methods, expectations and functions of such a monarch.

'Bigger Is Better' Versus 'Less Is More'

I believe every thinking man falls ideologically into one of two categories. He either believes bigger is better or less is more. Some people view the projection of apparent power as appropriate. I do not. In many ways, it is bigmanship.

Is Bigger Better?

For example, in the United States, the president travels in a custom made personalised limousine and each president gets to design theirs. Another identical limousine always accompanies in convoy.

It is not uncommon for the President to visit three separate cities in a single day, especially during campaign season. That means three separate motorcade detachments need to be forward deployed to those cities. The vehicles are transported aboard heavy-transport military planes at a high cost.

In addition to the presidential motorcade being forward deployed to where the president is heading, it is now usually customary to deploy a pair of helicopters to the destination regardless of if they are used or not.

The motorcade comprises forty to fifty vehicles including dozens of police motorcycles. Furthermore, as the motorcade traverses a city, roads are closed and sections of the city shut down. As the president takes meetings or tours facilities, wide swaths of the city remain blockaded and fortified.

While in the air, the president flies in a customised Boeing 747 aircraft—one of the largest planes ever made. For short air hops, a helicopter called Marine One always flies in a group of as many as five identical helicopters.

If it were up to me, the president would drive him or herself and use public buses and trains for short journeys and commercial flights for longer ones—with minimal security personnel.

It is understandable the desire to protect the continuity of government which could so easily be disrupted. However, if a country is not safe enough for a president already provided with security, how could it be safe for the people of that country.

Is Less More?

For example, in the United Kingdom, Queen Elizabeth II's motorcade comprises usually two cars, sometimes three—akin to that of the prime minister. Her two identical limousines were gifted to her on behalf of a consortium of British-based automotive manufacturing and service companies in recognition of her golden jubilee year. The identical Bentleys do not travel together.

Furthermore, roads are never shut when she visits a city. Instead, she, like the prime minister and visiting dignitaries are escorted, using a rolling roadblock which usually last seconds—causing minimal disruption and implemented by a specialised unit of usually three police motorcycles.

The queen often drives herself, uses the train and commercial flights and so does the prime minister.

Exactitude

For Nigeria to succeed there must be a culture of ‘exactitude’.

This means emphasizing accuracy and repeatability through patience and discipline.

Directions

Every so often, when one stops driving to ask for directions, the answer is ‘go straight’. This is not because the describer does not know the way or intends to mislead, but rather lacks the communication tools, patience and discipline to describe it.

Where he can communicate effectively, he assumes you are not smart enough to understand and plays dumb.

Where he can communicate effectively and does indeed describe accurately, it is considered unusual and extraordinary.

Imagine this, what if every building—house, office or otherwise—had a unique address such that you do not have to stop for directions?

Well, this exists and is called an addressing system. This addressing system is interfaced using a navigation system, usually a Global Positioning System (GPS).

Music

Who could have ever imagined that musical sounds could be represented with ink on paper or clicks on a computer? However, music has been notated for at least 3,420 years—from stone tablet inscriptions to paper scrolls and now, the computer.

We often take for granted little things which are commonplace today but were profound—and, I believe, still are. If we cannot communicate optimally, then we are not much better than early humans in the early ages of discovery.

It takes effort and we must communicate as though our lives depend on it—because, from a socio-economic perspective, it literally does.

Furthermore, if the violin is notated but the gangan is not, which do we expect to succeed?

African musical instruments are not notated. This is dangerous because the musical knowledge is not retained.

On the contrary, African music is taught by word-of-mouth and passed down in this way, which is extremely unreliable.

Take a contemporary violinist and give him a piece of music written by Handel 270 years ago and he will play it. Then, give him a piece by Bach, which is completely different, and he will play it.

However, give a contemporary African musician the gangan and he will strike it incorrectly. This is a failure of those who have gone before us. Nevertheless, we cannot remain stuck in the past.

If the timpani is notated and has been for centuries, why not the gangan?

On the Shoulders of Giants

‘If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.’

This saying by Isaac Newton in 1675 implies using understanding gained by major thinkers who have gone before in order to make intellectual progress.

I strongly believe that besides the sense of inferiority inflicted upon us by slavery, colonisation, segregation and discrimination, we, ourselves, are often biased towards ideas depending on their origin. This sort of bias is called discrimination.

For example, it is often considered politically incorrect to compare African policies to European policies while discussing ways for societal progress. This mind-set is very wrong and counterproductive.

Not only do we deprive ourselves of the opportunity to better our country and its communities, likely out of anger or a lack of understanding—we also reinforce stereotypes by insinuating that there is some difference between African and non-African needs.

I can completely guarantee that the needs of Africans, non-Africans and all humans are indistinguishable. What varies are the

solutions devised and means of implementation—a product of culture.

Furthermore, and critically, if we cannot identify our giants or are wilfully ignorant of them, how then do we see further.

Nigeria, for example, is equally as complex as the United Kingdom—if not less complex.

A little known fact about the United Kingdom is that it is one country but made up of four nations—Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Each of these nations, except England, has its own devolved regional parliament, national identity and native language—Welsh in Wales, English in England, Gaelic in Scotland and Irish in Northern Ireland.

If a country that could otherwise be extremely divided is a beacon for unity around the world, then I believe we must stand on their shoulders and see further.

When we truly forgive those who have afflicted us—but do not forget their misdeeds—then we shall be set free from bondage.

Chapter Six - A New Life

A bird born in a cage thinks flying is an illness.

We, the people of Nigeria, must realise that human beings are limited primarily by fear of the unknown, either individually or collectively.

Just as a fish in the sea is not conscious of water, we too must realise our limitations and accept that we may not always see the bigger picture.

We must also foster and encourage independent thought as opposed to social pressure.

I hope that practical steps to be outlined in this book will foster unity, trust and progress in every sector of Nigeria and bring about a new purpose, identity and life for all Nigerians.

Practical Steps

The steps outlined below are not listed in order of importance.

1. No Standing Armies in Peacetime

(a) Problem

The Nigerian military, in my opinion, poses the greatest threat to peace and stability at home. Their primary functions are to defend the country from external aggression, maintain territorial integrity and suppress insurrection.

Unfortunately, the military has been responsible for nine coups over 27 years. There was a coup approximately every three years. According to Nigerian historian Max Siollun, reasons for staging coups were ethnic rivalries, intra-military quarrels, personal jealousies and ambitions, and personal fear.

These coups were, by definition, illegal. They removed existing governments from power, usually through violent means. Furthermore, the economic effects of military rule were disastrous. As a result of the military's economic policy of the 1980s, 45 per

cent of foreign exchange earnings were going into debt servicing and there was very little growth.

This led to a rise in poverty, crime, child abuse, disease, institutional decay and urban dislocation. The instability and dissatisfaction caused by these economic policies were part of the causes of further coups.

The constitution of Nigeria, in its provisions for the establishment of armed forces, states:

(1) There shall be (an) armed forces for the Federation which shall consist of an army, a navy, an air force, and such other branches of the armed forces of the Federation as may be established by an Act of the National Assembly.

(2) The Federation shall, subject to an Act of the National Assembly made in that behalf, equip and maintain the armed forces as may be considered adequate and effective for the purpose of –

- (a) defending Nigeria from external aggression;
- (b) maintaining its territorial integrity and securing its borders from violation on land, sea, or air;
- (c) Suppress insurrection and act in aid of civil authorities to restore order when called upon to do so by the President

but subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly.

- (d) Perform such other functions as may be prescribed by an act of the National Assembly.

I would very much like to believe that such times and threats are behind us. However, why not make certain of it.

(b) Solution

(1) I propose the creation of a military reserve force. This force would only be activated when the need arises. Members of this force would be trained and assessed regularly to ensure their suitability for purpose. Otherwise activated, they would return to their daily lives as civilians.

(2) Besides a reserve force, there should be a highly trained quick reaction force—greatly limited in number—to manage any threats which may suddenly arise. However, if such a threat is great, the reserve force would subsequently and quickly be activated.

(3) Military weapons, as used in previous coups, should be handled independently of the military. That is to say that when a weapon is required by forces personnel, it is given only for valid reasons. This independent body could, for instance, comprise civilians.

2. No Arms in Peacetime

(a) Problem

For some reason, many soldiers within Nigeria bear arms while going about their day-to-day activities. These arms are usually deadly automatic assault rifles. Consequently, these soldiers are often accused of grave abuses against civilians.

(b) Solution

(1) Military weapons should be handled independently of the military as stated above. Furthermore, forces personnel should not bear arms on home soil except for the purposes outlined in the constitution.

(2) If necessary, military personnel can be retrained as police officers to carry out policing duties on home soil.

3. General Amnesty for Corrupt Practices

(a) Problem

Nigeria is mired in an ongoing battle against corruption, with its roots dating back to independence. In 2012, Nigeria was estimated to have lost over \$400 billion to corruption since then and in 2018, Nigeria ranked 144th in the 180 countries listed in Transparency International's Corruption Index.

The problem with corruption is that it usually happens behind closed doors and is difficult to prove in a court of law. There is often much conjecture about who is or isn't guilty.

(b) Solution

The solution is three-fold.

(1) Firstly, restructure, retrain, empower and command the police to perform their duty with strict penalties not only for wrong actions but, critically, for inaction.

The key is to formulate a creative police policy that includes means of reward and, equally important, punitive measures.

For instance, a policy that commands immediate detention of people suspected of committing a crime. That is, not asking anybody—supervisor or governor—for permission to perform their critical duty.

Police personnel who perform their duty properly should be rewarded in some way and those who don't should not.

(2) Secondly, there should be an overhaul of finance management mechanisms. Much corruption is due to contracts being awarded to companies that do not exist.

Therefore, whosoever is responsible for approving funds for a contract must also be commanded to carry out due diligence.

If due diligence is not carried out adequately or overlooked, whosoever is commanded to do so should be held liable.

Such liability would be difficult to enforce in a court of law due to the presumption of innocence. That is, the necessity to prove that such financial mismanagement was not done intentionally.

I, therefore, propose a new species of statutory declaration—a 'presumption of guilt' declaration or 'innocence waiver'—

compulsory for finance managers and to be made before resuming office.

Voluntary, though compulsory for office, this declaration would, within reason, void their right to be presumed innocent.

(3) Thirdly, there should be a general amnesty for all corrupt practices carried out before a set date. After this date, those found guilty of prior corrupt practices cannot be punished for them. However, there will be certain conditions attached to such an amnesty. They would:

- (a) have a criminal record
- (b) be barred from running for political office
- (c) be barred from being a member of a political party
- (d) be barred from handling public funds
- (e) be barred from receiving public funds (state aid etc.)
- (f) be barred from government employment
- (g) be barred from voting

4. Political Parties

(a) Problem

(1) There is a lack of broad political participation of political parties in Nigeria, which leads to political apathy among the population. Many young people, in particular, would rather engage in voting for reality TV contestants than vote at elections.

This is because they are underrepresented in elections—which is a consequence of arbitrary age restrictions placed on certain political offices.

Furthermore, there are many barriers and requirements for formal registration of political parties which include:

- (a) Payment of a non-refundable fee of ₦1,000,000 (one million naira)
- (b) Presence in at least 24 states

It could be assumed that the electoral body, INEC, has put up these barriers to deter 'unserious' political parties from registration. However, I think this is artificial, inorganic and undemocratic. If a poor man wishes to form a political party opposed to poverty, where shall he get one million naira?

As a result, we had only eighteen political parties in 2020. I would contrast this with our handy United Kingdom, where the fee is £150 (₦74,400) and there is no requirement to have multiple offices. The United Kingdom has 408 political parties.

(2) There is little control over political party campaign financing, expenditure and media exposure in Nigeria. This is a very critical aspect of democracy, although it may not be immediately evident.

The problem this poses is that a party with significantly more money could easily overshadow others and, essentially, buy an election—especially in relation to advertisements and day-to-day expenses.

(b) Solution

(1) The solution is to be open-minded and not to make any assumptions on behalf of the electorate. One such assumption could be that votes would be split unevenly amongst different parties and possibly prevent a clear winner. However, it is not the duty of the electoral commission to artificially reduce voter's access to candidates.

In the United Kingdom, for example, candidates must pay a £500 (₦248,513) deposit, which is returned to them if they win at least

five per cent of the votes cast during the election. Otherwise, they forfeit the money.

Ultimately, a creative system that allows for easier and broader participation should be implemented. For example, parties could be allowed to form coalitions under set rules.

(2) Furthermore, there must be regular public declarations made by parties of their donors and donations received. There should also be equal amounts of media exposure, in the form of adverts, interviews and others, for all parties during election campaigns.

There should also be a set maximum permitted budget to be spent on campaigning which applies to all political parties.

Parties or individuals who breach these should face punitive measures such as fines, disqualifications etc.

5. Remuneration for Politicians

(a) Problem

(1) Nigerian politicians are paid excessively. This is no surprise as it validates the aforementioned narrative on bigmanship.

The details of the remuneration for Nigerian senators from 2009 are shown below.⁶ Not all allowances are paid annually. Nevertheless, senators are reportedly being paid anything between ₦29,480,000 and ₦353,760,000 per annum in 2021.

Allowance	Value
1. Basic Salary (B.S)	2,026,400.00
3. Constituency Allowance (250% of B.S)	5,066,000.00
4. Newspapers Allowance (15% of B.S)	303,960.00
5. Wardrobe Allowance (25% of B.S)	506,600.00
6. Recess Allowance (10% of B.S)	202,640.00
7. Accommodation (200% of B.S)	4,052,800.00
8. Utilities (30% of B.S)	607,920.00
9. Domestic Staff (75% of B.S)	1,519,800.00
10. Entertainment (30% of B.S)	607,920.00
11. Personal Assistants (25% of B.S)	506,600.00

12. Vehicle Maintenance Allowance (75% of B.S)	1,519,800.00
13. Leave Allowance (10% of B.S)	248,424.55
14. Severance Gratuity (300% of B.S)	6,079,200.00
15. Motor Vehicle Loan (400% of B.S)	8,105,600.00

Why does, or should, the state pay for the wardrobe, entertainment or newspapers—amongst others—of its servants? It is egregious and the audacity laughable, but not surprising.

Public office expenses are determined by the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission, which is not noticeably independent. Consequently, there is no guarantee of impartiality.

(b) Solution

(1) The Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission should be made fully independent to guarantee impartiality.

(2) Details of formulae and means used to determine pay packages should be made public.

(3) Remuneration for public office holders should be highly conservative. I propose a remuneration package comprising an annual basic salary akin to that of civil servants, which takes cognizance of national minimum and living wages.

(4) Allowances should strictly be limited to accommodation, transportation and, where necessary, an assistant. Accommodation, for example, must be in the same city as the legislature and transportation allowances used only for legitimate legislative activities.

(5) Allowances should be used only for the purposes described and only when verifiable. The officeholders would need to prove their expenses, for example, by tendering receipts, invoices, etc. to the commission.

(6) All receipts, invoices, etc. tendered and property or services thereby acquired would further be verified by the commission.

(7) Results of all verification done by the commission should be made public.

6. Age Restrictions for Political Office

‘No taxation without representation’ was the rallying cry for the American revolution.

(a) Problem

(1) In Nigeria, you are allowed to work, marry, drive, smoke, drink alcohol etc. at the age of eighteen. Crucially, also, you are allowed to vote. However, you cannot be voted for at that age because of restrictions set out in the constitution.

The motive is understandable—we do not want young impatient impertinent people causing civil wars as a result of their raw ambition, inexperience and arrogance.

However, this is not democracy and a great fallacy at that.

Once again, it is not the duty of the state to artificially limit voter’s access to candidates.

(b) Solution

(2) If one can vote at the age of eighteen, one should be able to be voted for. Our constitution, although beautifully crafted, is not perfect and I think this is one of its great failures—ageism. There ought to be only two personal political qualifiers in the constitution:

(a) Person (implying man or woman)

(b) Full age (distinguishing a child from an adult)

However, there are others.

I ask, therefore, if a person can vote but not be voted for, what is the difference between this person and an American revolutionary—given, also, that one pays tax if working at eighteen?

7. Restrict the Vote

Conditions that apply to political candidates should apply equally to voters and vice versa. If one is required to have completed secondary school to stand for election, the same should be required of voters.

(a) Problem

(1) Provided completion of secondary school education is a tenet of our constitution, it means the framers of our constitution saw certain value in completing secondary school.

The working assumption is that school opens up one's understanding to principles of politics, economics, science, technology, history and much more.

However, many people take the vote for granted because they may not understand its value. There are frequent allegations of vote-buying and selling.

It can be assumed, therefore, that whosoever partakes in selling his vote does not comprehend the magnitude of his action, perhaps because he has not completed secondary school.

(b) Solution

(1) Every prospective voter, as part of voter registration exercises, must present proof of completion of secondary school education or its equivalent.

Given that it is already compulsory for every child to be educated up to secondary school, this would serve to enhance the quality of election outcomes, because it is assumed that 'better' choices will be made.

(2) The electoral body should validate every certificate provided as proof of secondary education by prospective voters.

(3) The electoral body should prosecute anyone who makes a false declaration or submission.

8. Tax Credit/Relief for Research and Development

This may be the single most important tool in the box of government policy. That is, tax credit or tax relief for companies that contribute to innovation in Nigeria.

(a) Problem

Nigeria has a shortage of technological know-how. Almost everything is imported, from matches to motor vehicles. Furthermore, where produced domestically, such products are usually discriminated against.

This often leads producers to falsely brand their local products as made elsewhere.

(b) Solution

(1) Support research, development, innovation and consequent growth through tax credits for companies that invest in research and development. These tax credits could be either tax relief or cash payments which cover qualified expenditures on R&D.

I cannot sufficiently emphasise the crucial role this plays in the development of nations. Development in China, for example, can be strongly attributed to this single factor.

Furthermore, it is commonplace amongst every so-called 'developed' country and the single most identifiable reason why they are 'developed'.

(2) Qualifying criteria should be broad. Whatever size or sector, if a company is taking a risk by attempting to resolve scientific or technological uncertainties, it should count as qualifying R&D.

Endnotes

1 Okeke, I.C. (2018) *The Way Out*. An unpublished manuscript.

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5 Gurney, G. (1982). *Kingdoms of Europe: An illustrated encyclopaedia of ruling monarchs from ancient times to the present*. New York: Crown Publishers.

6 *Remuneration Package for Political, Public and Judicial Office Holders* (Feb., 2007 - June 2009). Retrieved from <https://rmafc.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Remuneration-Package-for-Political-and-Judicial-Office-Holders-.pdf>

