

Agbaakin: My Leadership, My Hope

As it has been.

The scape of the common psyche of the body politic in Black Africa is littered with broken dreams. This dream-scape is rich with unfulfilled hope of a (seemingly) misbegotten generation. Youth, infants and the aged who have been used, abused, disused and reused by the very people that they have to call "Father".

Our publications and reviews on our situation are rife with lamentations, ranting, outright curses and all the effluent of hopelessness and decay. We are a proud people who had hoped to effloresce into a bright flower that all adore, but we have failed to blossom. We have become the Dark Continent: we are divided, hungry, at war, without direction, without pride and without God. We are the "Nosferatu"; the Living Dead.

But, remember, THIS IS NOT WHO WE ARE!

Why, simple, an ancient reason "Ex Africa, semper aliquid novi": Something new always comes out of Africa!

To become who we truly are, what must we do?

Simple, we must displace and reposition the hypostasis of our situation.

How? By seeking Leadership, Government and Development.

What we must seek.

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a. Leadership -

Our idea of leadership has been bastardized by colonialism, and our post-colonial experience has put us in a construct where we see ourselves as different from "the government" and "leadership". Added to this is the poison from the pits of hell that has made us believe that the white man is superior to us, and his ideas, values and concepts are superior to what we are, what we have and what we do. This mindset has eaten so deep that it expresses itself in religion; we believe that God is a white man (since Jesus and Mohammed were white skinned) and must be understood and worshiped in the white man's tongue (English or Arabic).

We have failed to appreciate God (I call Him Edumare) in the context of our historical and cultural reality; we have failed to grasp the true essence of what relating with the supreme deity means for us as Africans.

This dissociation of the common psyche from responsibility for common good and "deification" of the white man are, in my opinion, major hurdles that have to be surmounted. These attitudes lead us to a place where we overstate the problems, we overstate the solution and miss out the fundamental steps to the solution. We miss out the fact that the solution is in/with us, not in recommendation from the white man.

Another basic, but grave, mistake we have made is to define leadership as the efforts, activities and vision of one man, or of other men apart from ourselves. No! Leadership is the deliberate exercise of responsibility towards a common

vision by several of us in our different roles and stations in life, and at the different levels of administration of our nations. Leadership is when each of us accepts and assumes responsibility for the good ourselves and our community.

Leadership often demonstrates itself in various places, and at times when it is not even recognized: the young man that stops cars on the road to allow an elderly woman to pass; citizens safeguarding the neighborhood from miscreants or potholes. Our challenge is not that Leadership does not exist, no! It is that Leadership is unrecognized and is not encouraged and directed. Our challenge is to mobilize, aggregate and coordinate these efforts.

To guide these men we need a group of "wise men"; men who are gifted in intellect, wisdom and passion for the nation and who believe inalienably in the unity and prosperity of the nation. These men serve to guide and motivate the efforts of the citizens to strive for national development and defense of the nation [and its interest] [by force of arms if need be] against external aggression. These men do not need to hold offices, but they function as the national elite and serve to preserve the awareness of a common destiny that is needed to overcome sectional aspirations. This prevents politics from becoming a game of advantage played to serve sectional interests, but elevates politics to the realm of statesmanship.

To motivate, guide and coordinate these tiers of leadership is the personality we have ingrained in our psyche as "the Leader". He ensures a common agenda for the political elite, cohesive implementation of transparent, accountable and enforceable policies and targets. The essential role of "the leader" we need will be to:

- a. Review and articulate the dreams of our founding fathers within the frame of an indivisible, indissoluble nation.
- b. Raise the consciousness of the people to our common destiny and the need to strive for the commonwealth realizable by the pursuit/actualization of the blessing of God resident in us.
- c. Raise the awareness that in ALL we do as a people, we do within the context of submission and worship to the God that Abraham worshiped, and we take EVERYMAN among us that lives in the worship of this God as a brother.

Such a man will need to:

- a. Have a natural love for the people and the nation.
- b. Continually depend on God for wisdom and ability.
- c. be able to listen to and accommodate conflicting ideas and points of view.

I offer myself as such a man.

This means that Leadership exists at three distinct but interdependent tiers, ALL of which must function if Africa is to fulfill the dream of our forebears, the expectation of those of us alive and the hope of those yet unborn.

b. Government.

Government is not simply the offices by which the state enacts its policies nor the bureaucracy by which it performs, NO! Government, our government in our quest is the mechanism and process of realizing the vision of leadership on a day to day/time to time basis, it is the sum aggregate of the efforts of responsible citizens demonstrating sovereignty. This brings me to a basic fact that we often miss out, government is not "they" that we elect (or who select themselves) to run the affairs of state; government is responsible citizens taking action on a sustainable basis to ensure that the policies which derive from the vision of leadership are articulated, transmitted and effected (regardless of the citizen's particular station in life). For example, it is common to come into a street with innumerable pot-holes, drainage filled with sand and household waste and the sorts. If you raise the issue of the state of the street, you get comments such as "the government should" do this or do that. We forget a basic issue in human life: the state is a social construct.

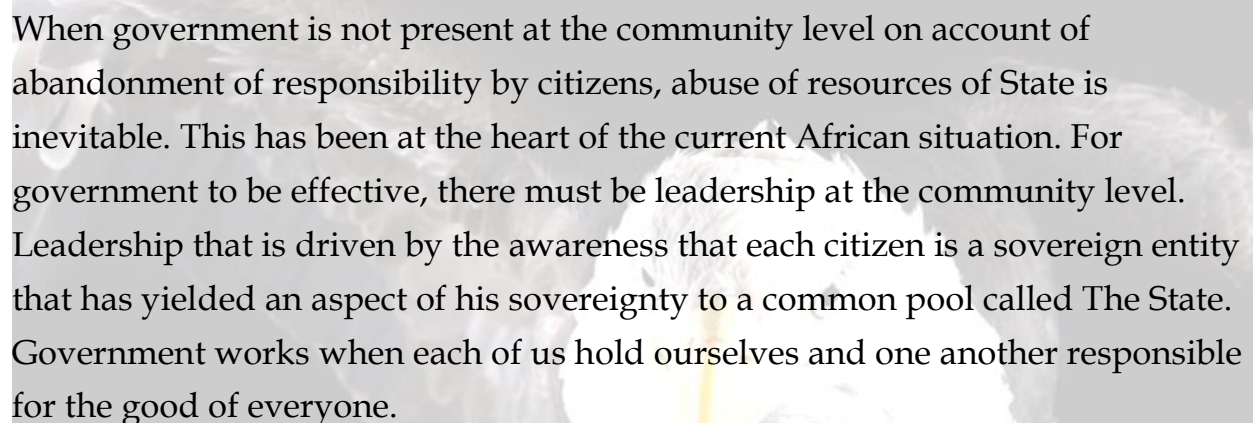
The state derives its powers and legitimacy from the active will of the constituents, the people. Hence, government begins with the activities of organized citizens to realize objectives that derive from a shared vision. In the case of the street in question, the government that should act are the citizens themselves! Waiting for the "government" to fix things in this instance is a communal act of irresponsibility, it is crass and it is arrant common-nonsense!

So, what would be the best way for us to derive government?

Our nations exist, first and foremost, as communities. These communities are defined by the persons/households aggregated in a particular geographical location within the overall boundaries defined as the State. These communities have basic needs and challenges, these communities have resources: the needs, challenges and resources of the state is the sum aggregate of that of its

constituent communities, but with a multiplier factor; the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

What does this mean? It means that government must necessarily start at the community level, and the function of the government at the level of the State is to aggregate, coordinate and direct activities and processes that use the commonwealth (resources of State via constituent communities) to meet needs and challenges.



When government is not present at the community level on account of abandonment of responsibility by citizens, abuse of resources of State is inevitable. This has been at the heart of the current African situation. For government to be effective, there must be leadership at the community level. Leadership that is driven by the awareness that each citizen is a sovereign entity that has yielded an aspect of his sovereignty to a common pool called The State. Government works when each of us hold ourselves and one another responsible for the good of everyone.

c. Development.

Since independence, we have continued to compare ourselves with the white man and we have defined development either as how close we are in being like the white man (or having what he has) or to the signs of reduction of physical poverty. Thus we have defined development, forgetting that true development starts when we eliminate the true poverty; that mental construct that keeps us below the best of who we are as a people. That mindset that deprives us of the understanding that we are a group of sovereign persons and thus have to exercise responsibility as individuals and as a people. Responsibility towards ourselves and to our generations yet unborn. Somewhat our conception (and

thus pursuit) of development has missed the essence of the dreams of our fathers.

We must define "development" in our own terms. First, *development is not becoming like the white man*. I accept the fact that the past millennium has been dominated by the advances of the white race, but that is not the yardstick for determining who we are nor what we can be. Why?

Because we have a hope in The Most High God, Edumare. We believe that we are the product of deliberate intelligent design, not a random outcome of mathematical probability within chaos. We believe that The Most High God created us, and in His creation He has blessed us; blessed our beginning and our very essence. We believe that His blessings are resident in us and is expressed in our Motherland, in Africa.

For us, development is:

- a. Awareness of the Blessing resident in us, and in our Land.
- b. Assumption of responsibility to actualize this blessing.
- c. Preservation of this heritage for our children's children.
- d. Awareness of and worship of the God that Abraham worshiped.

What we must do.

a. Unification.

The communities in the nation-states of Africa must put aside our differences for pursuit of the common destiny of One under Heaven, based on faith in the God

in whom Abraham trusted and worshiped. We must subjugate our hitherto fragmented and divisive religious and ethnic identity to nationhood, for, a single broom stick cannot sweep clean.

This is essential in each of the Nations of Africa; divisiveness is our greatest threat to prosperity.

b. Sovereignty.

I do believe that for us to truly develop, we need to assert ourselves. We need to be in control of the government and finances of our nation. We need to be in charge of our education and our ensuing culture. These are things that we are steadily giving over to foreign powers in the name of a "global economy" and a "global village". We are eager to educate the children of our elite in foreign lands, to have our currency controlled by foreign private powers and to have our military manipulated by the white man.

We are not a sovereign state if we do not have control over our finance, our military, our education and health, our foreign policy and our trade. The events in Congo, Sudan, Ivory Coast and Libya are lessons that must not be repeated.

We will strive for the best that we can be, not to what any other race has seemed to have achieved. Our motivation is to secure hope and prosperity for our unborn within the compass of submission to God. We do not seek to be like any other nation.

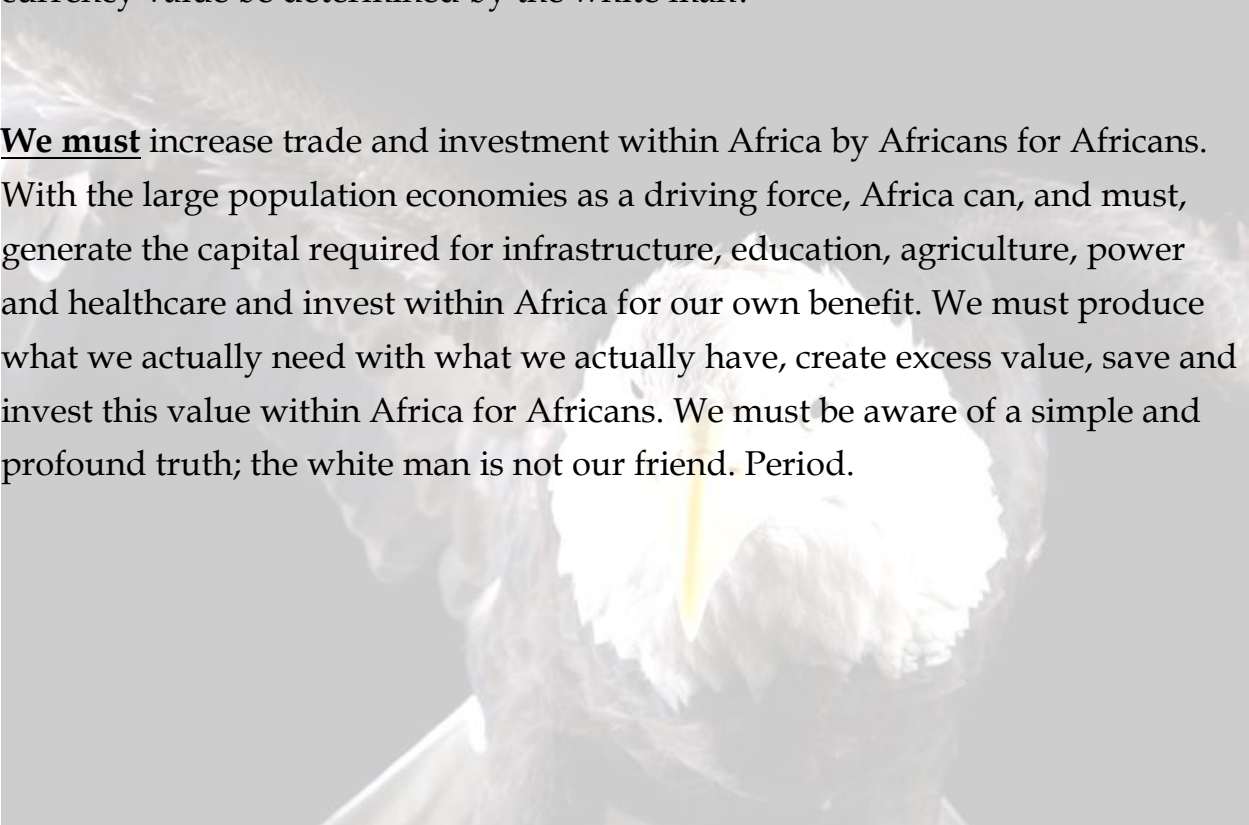
We will protect our economy, security and cultural experience from corrupting influences and all that may weaken us. Why must we store our reserves in \$US

in American banks? Gold is mined in Ghana and South Africa, why do we keep our gold deposits with the United States?

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We talk about foreign capital inflow, why must it come from the white man? Who says that basic economics and finance does not permit us to determine our policies in trade, finance and currency? Why must we expose ourselves to a centralized control of capital masked as "the global economy"? Why must our currency value be determined by the white man?

We must increase trade and investment within Africa by Africans for Africans. With the large population economies as a driving force, Africa can, and must, generate the capital required for infrastructure, education, agriculture, power and healthcare and invest within Africa for our own benefit. We must produce what we actually need with what we actually have, create excess value, save and invest this value within Africa for Africans. We must be aware of a simple and profound truth; the white man is not our friend. Period.



Conclusion: Agbaakin's call to you all.

Dare to believe, walk with me.

We are a people defined by our hopes, and our hopes are based on Faith. One faith in the One God who cannot lie, the God that rules in the affairs of men. We believe in the hopes of our Fathers, we do not curse the fathers that failed us. We have several reasons to doubt, we have several reasons to give up on our countries. And on Africa.

But I bring you good news. This good news is my call to you, I am asking you in your own way at your own locale to join with me in this Great Hope. This Hope is **The Hope of Edumare**. I believe that we are blessed of The Most High God, I believe that we have this blessing resident within us and right in our homeland of Africa. In the face of the deep rooted existential challenges that we face, we can dare to believe in the blessing of The Most High God and dedicate ourselves to its pursuit.

This is The Hope of Edumare: dare to believe, walk with me!

Michael Olagbenro

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