Lamentations of a Political Commentator

Contributed by Anthony Akaeze
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Lawful Nigeria, a new book just released into the market catalogues how great the country would have been if its citizens and leaders were law-abiding

Book title: Lawful Nigeria Author: Agwagom Vincent Chibueze Year of Publication: 2011 Pagination: 118 Book reviewer: Anthony Akaeze The first thing that strikes the reader as he flips through the pages of Lawful Nigeria is the arrangement of the sentences. With the exception of a few pages in the book, every new sentence in the work begins with a new paragraph. There’s no direct continuation from one sentence to the other. This makes the work appear like poetry at first glance, but it is not. It’s a prose work. But that is not the only thing that arouses curiosity about the book. There’s also the title: Lawful Nigeria, which gives a sense of order and direction about Nigeria. But, as the reader will find out, the caption is but an oxymoron, as nothing in the work suggests this West African giant as an epitome of orderliness. The images captured in the book is a poor advertisement for Nigeria: corruption, greed, poverty, visionless leadership, hunger and scarcity in the midst of plenty and hardship. It’s a country where most of the citizens are gasping for breath, in spite of its well known wealth. Like many analysts admit, Agwagom Vincent Chibueze, the author, believes that Nigeria is a rich country and that the nation’s wealth will “go round even in multiples… should there be less greed and selfishness” by the political elite. Greed is detestable, but it’s worse when those who exhibit it are also bereft of ideas on how to move a country forward. Such spectre of bad leadership combined with avarice is what Agwagom laments endlessly. Generally, the work is a socio-political commentary on Nigeria by someone who knows it well, a man who is aware of the challenges the country and its citizens have faced in the last three decades especially. The book is divided into four parts, each with a different heading: ‘Discovery Matters, Political Matters, Socio-economic Matters and Relief Matters,’ in that order. Under the first part are eight topics such as ‘God on our lips; Wickedness in our hearts; Until we are ready to die and Endless envy.’ Part two consists of eight chapters, including ‘Justice in Chains; Counterfeit Lawmakers and Lawless Society.’ Chapter three has ‘The Limping Economy, Homeless Hawkers and Does it Concern Me if I Die’ as some of the subject while the final part has ‘Cool it and Don’t Quit; Aids Scourge: Take Care and Stay Alive, and Glorious Days Will Come’ as three of the six topics. Alongside these are poignant, thought-provoking and wise quotes from some of the greatest minds that ever lived. Sample: “In a country well governed, poverty is something to be ashamed of. In a country badly governed, wealth is something to be ashamed of.” Agwagom has done a good job of pinpointing the ills in the system, which have conspired to hold this potentially great nation from fulfilling its promise. Considering that the solution to solving a problem lies in first identifying it, the writer has played his part as a “concerned” Nigerian by highlighting the problems facing the country and, by so doing, challenged the people to find solutions to them. The onus lies on the people, including the leaders, to find solutions to the challenges, not God. God has done his part by providing the resources that the people need to be happy. However, there are some typographical errors which would need to be corrected in the reprint. On page 26, nobody is spelt as “ no body” (pg 26), while anybody is similarly written as “any body” on page 34. Still on page 26, Saddam is erroneously spelt as ‘Sadam.’ On page 39, multiply is spelt as “multiple;” bother as “border” on page 80, and bothered as “bordered”(pg 118). Further, a statement on page 84 ought to read, “more than 155,000 have been sent, not “set” as written. Elsewhere, Christ taught us, was presented as “Christ thought us.”