

46TH ANNUAL ACCOUNTANTS' CONFERENCE



**Rebuilding Nigeria's Value
System:
Time for Citizens' Engagement**
By: Pastor Ituah Ighodalo (12/10/16)

WHAT ARE VALUES:



Values are the beliefs, standards, principles about what is right or wrong and the extent to which they are respected. The kind of values adopted by a nation greatly determines the level of its development.



Values play a crucial role in every human endeavour. Building a nation, economic development and promoting or expanding the critical sectors of the economy is premised on a sound value system.

WHAT ARE THE PREVIOUS VALUES THAT WE HAD IN NIGERIA



Nigeria in the 50's and 60's and perhaps 70's was known as the nation with averagely significantly sound values. Somehow, over the last few years, that set of beliefs have been almost totally eroded.



The values that we were raised with like sound education, respect for elders, charity, truthfulness, abhorrence of corruption, accountability, respect for hard work and equal opportunity for all, importance of morality etc. are dwindling and virtually disappearing.

President Buhari had this to say in his Speech on Thursday, September 8, 2016 on the Launch of the Change Begins With Me Campaign in Abuja

“There is no doubt that our value system has been badly eroded over the years. The long-cherished and time honoured, time-tested Virtues of honesty, integrity, hard work,



Punctuality, good neighbourliness, abhorrence of corruption and patriotism, have given way in the main to dishonesty, indolence, unbridled corruption and widespread impunity”.

WHAT WENT WRONG?



The desire to acquire wealth and power at all costs has been largely responsible. The high incidence of corruption in practically all sectors of the Nigerian economy has since become so suffocating that it is now threatening to grind everything to a halt.



In advanced countries, the achievements of individuals are based solely on their passionate contribution to the development of their Nation. In Nigeria individuals are celebrated based on their ability to divert public funds into private accounts.



We have become a nation where smugglers have vowed to remain resolute in their unwholesome business; where fake drugs are continuously brought into the country despite the effort of NAFDAC, where substandard products are sold to the general public in spite of the endless warnings by the Standard Organization of Nigeria (SON);



A nation that virtually celebrates corruption, with some people even demanding it from their leaders and not questioning their life style and source of wealth.

HOW HAS LACK OF VALUE SYSTEM AFFECTED OUR NATION?

- Inability to expand and diversify our economy
- Dependence on Importation
- Irresponsibility and unruly behavior, Agitation and unrest, destruction of pipelines and oil infrastructure
- Uncleanness and unhygienic environment



- **Insecurity and high crime rate, even cultism in various spheres.**
- **Inability to build appropriate infrastructure**
- **Wide and expanding gap between the rich and the poor**



- **Uncurbed rural to urban migration**
- **High unemployment**
- **Misallocation of resources**
- **Brain drain**
- **Deep rooted economic problems and a weak currency**



Again, President Buhari has this to say:

“The resultant effect of this derailment in our value system is being felt in the social, political and economic sphere. It is the reason that some youths will take to cultism and brigandage instead of studying hard or engaging in decent living:



it is the reason that some elements will break pipelines and other oil facilities, thus robbing the nation of much-needed resources; it is the reason that money belonging to our commonwealth will be brazenly stolen by the same public officials to whom they were entrusted; it is the reason why motorists drive through red traffic lights,



it is the reason that many will engage in thuggery and vote-stealing during elections; it is part of what has driven our economy into deep problem out of which we are now working hard to extricate ourselves. Every one of us must have a change from our old ways of doing things, we cannot fold our arms and allow things to continue the old way”.

LESSONS FROM OTHER NATION AND ECONOMIES

The lesson we have to learn from other economies that are succeeding in moving their countries from the Third World to the First, is that we have to be ready to take hard decisions, such that the collective good is placed at the epicenter of our policy formulation and implementation rather than leaving things to the invisible hands of the

market and an untenable and unsustainable opulent consumption pattern of an avaricious and microscopic minority.

Nations that have done significantly well through applying appropriate values include:

- Switzerland
- Singapore
- Rwanda
- Dubai (UAE)

- Japan
- Australia
- Canada
- Germany etc.

HOW DO WE REBUILD NIGERIA'S VALUE SYSTEM AND GET EVERY CITIZEN INVOLVED?



We need to explore the prospects of rethinking and reconfiguring the modalities of the Nigerian value system, as it were, with a view to giving the country a new lease of life, more so as it is widely recognized that Nigeria is a viable and highly competitive emerging market.

We need to do the following:

1. There should be a total reorientation of our value system:



- The family must super-head this crusade by ensuring that their wards are raised with high standards of morality, appropriate values, hard work, honesty and patriotic zeal to defend the integrity of the family as well as the country at large.
- The government should be more proactive in its approach in alleviating the suffering of the masses and encourage a system that clearly rewards good behaviour and ensures strict enforcement of all laws.



- **Our junior schools and universities should bring back the teaching and courses on morals, ethics and civics.**
- **Our universities should ensure that the award of degrees is based on character, learning and hard work.**
- **The media should enlighten the masses on the implications of poor value system.**
- **The anti graft and security agencies should be proactive in their crime prevention**
- **The judiciary should be fearless in timely delivery of judgments.**



- The masses and individuals should call for accountability at all levels.
- Each individual must be self disciplined, clearly able to show their source of wealth and evidence of having paid commensurate taxes.
- Each individual citizen must have a voice to help protect their fundamental human rights.
- Our security agencies should realize that their uniforms do not make them above the law, and citizens they are paid to protect.



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2. WE SHOULD ALL WORK TOWARDS A CORRUPT FREE SOCIETY:



- where the electorates are given free hands to choose their leaders;
- where leaders are dedicated to serve with utmost sincerity;
- where the youth are given adequate opportunities to contribute to national development;
- where public servants are motivated to put in their best



- where religious leaders preach morality instead of prosperity;
- where there is resounding team spirit devoid of greed, selfishness, dishonesty, mediocrity, manipulation, fraud, tribalism and nepotism.
- where there truly is a sense of national pride.
- where there is zero tolerance for corruption.



Thank you.