

**A TRIBUTE TO
MY KINSMAN, A POLITICAL VISIONARY, IKEMBA NNEWI, EZE IGBO GBURUGBURU
CHIEF CHUKWUEMEKA ODUMEGWU OJUKWU**

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If the whole of Nigerian atmosphere is at the moment charged with opinions, accolades, praises, recollection of the past, regurgitation of abuses for seemingly past mistakes, re-visitation of past pains and experiences, a reflective journey back to one of the greatest event that touched the mallow of Nigerian life ever in history – Nigeria-Biafra War, a new analysis of Causes and Effects, and lots more. Then this moment in our history as a Nation is not anything out of place.

If the fast growing industrial town of NNEWI (the Pride of the East) sits in mourning while recalling the exit of a Hero, a Visionary, a conscious and ardent preacher of Social Justice, a predictor of the mess that engulfs the present Nigeria as a Nation, a fearless fighter in the presence of injustice; an educated, intelligent and knowledgeable Son who saw an impending doom and cried out loud for avoidance of it, then this moment in our history as a Nation is not anything out of place.

If the minds of many at the moment is called back to recall that a ‘political prophet’ early in the history of the nation called Nigeria, stood his ground amidst all odds to point out strongly the defects that punctuated the casual collection of individuals, tongues and tribes and compelling a union of these by the allotting of a name in an apparent negligence and disregard of backgrounds, ideologies and behaviours, then this moment in our history as a Nation is not anything out of place.

If colleagues and contemporaries (each according to his or her own opinion) should find it timely now to grant interviews and publish write-ups about opinions shared, about executed and non-executed plans, about secrets shared as well as warnings and pieces of advice given, about reasons in favour and reasons against; about the excesses, the weaknesses, the recalcitrance as well as the positive contributions of the ‘HE’ that has just lefts the stage, then this moment in our history as a Nation is not anything out of place.

If I am privileged at the moment to apply a tool of analysis on a huge data of proclamations, reflections, write-ups and many more diaries of recorded events on the Sayings of a Sage who walked through life in many faces: Dogged, Tough, Confrontational (Positive or Negative?), Outspoken, Unintimidated,

Focused, Zealous and Unassuming, then this moment in our history as a Nation is not anything out of place.

This Life is a Stage as Shakespeare put it. I play my own part; you play your own part. At the end of our individual and different parts and scenes, we leave the stage. But one thing keeps on lingering, even when we must have left the stage, namely: **THE MEMORIES WE LEAVE BEHIND IN THE MINDS OF THE LIVING.** These memories will speak volumes of the impact we will be able to make in life; they will give testimonies about how we walked through life and how life passed through us; they can be educating, they can as well be disappointing. When they are educating and inspiring, the world stands in ovation and appreciation for a **GIFT** to humanity, but when they are disappointing and annoying, the world and even the yet-to-be-born will have the cause to heap abuses, in words and actions, upon a life that became a disgrace to humanity.

We mourn and celebrate today the life of a Visionary, who like everyone of us, walked through this life, amidst the burdens of the **WEAKNESSES** in us as humans, coupled with his vocation as a Soldier and its demands, but who left behind piles of experiences and prophetic predictions, which today have stood the test of time and are stirring all of us to the face in the present Nigerian Nation.

It takes the courage of a Leader not just a Ruler to speak out in defence of his people, and when that is done, it takes again the endurance and perseverance of a good Leader to stand unshakable in the face of reactions (sometimes threats) in response to his utterances. The Icon, in whose honour we have all gathered today, **EMEKA,** gave himself out and stepped on toes. It was really detrimental, catastrophic and painful to the Easterners; many of our Fathers and Mothers, Young Men and Women, even many Children gave in their blood in defence of the **TRUTH** that was told at one time in our history, but which was viewed with utter contempt and was snubbed. This single **TRUTH IN TWO WINGS** that was spoken about 46 years ago is still the bane of the Nation called Nigeria today: **CORRUPTION AND INJUSTICE.**

It was:

- **A call for The restitution of Values**
- **A call for The enthronement of the right principles of Leadership**
- **A call for Fairness in the administration and promotion of the common good, and basic amenities**
- **A call for Total rejection of Nepotism**
- **A call for Proper dispensation of the sense of duty and responsibility**

- **A call for An establishment of authentic independence and value systems and not independence in a borrowed robe**
- **A call for the respect due to our different cultural values, behaviours, backgrounds and understanding**
- **A call for the rejection and eschew of Neo-colonialism in every facet of our life as a Nation**

IT WAS INDEED A PROPHECY, but this prophecy again landed on deaf ears and gave rise to anger and dissention; the stage was set with Fury and Confrontation; the reality and truth were laid aside and were marred with insensitivity; opinions and discussions left the subject matter and centred on who was more ambitious than the other; the GIVER OF THE TRUTH, EMEKA became a Tyrant and an Impostor in their minds and evaluation, who must of necessity be avoided and if possible do away with; the Nation boiled and exploded into camps, the centre could not hold again. The intensity became so severe that the whole environment became insecure for the political class. **BUT WAS THE ENVIRONMENT ACTUALLY INSECURE?** It was not, but the reality on the ground was that the non-acceptance of the Truth that was told became a Torment to the Defiant. As a result, the Great Nation – Nigeria with all her Intelligences was packaged and sent on a **SHAMEFUL JOURNEY TO ABURI – GHANA**, the same Country she had the effrontery to send packing with the slogan ‘**GHANA MUST GO**’ 13 years later from the end of the civil war (1983). But that is not the whole issue: Today we are going back to **GHANA** especially when the issue is **QUALITY EDUCATION** comes to the fore.

CONSENSUS was reached in Aburi, EMEKA you were also there. But the implementation stumbled at the hard Rock of manipulation, deception and indecision. Consequently, a Consensus in line with the Common Good came back to the Nation and received a manipulated injection of the four-letter word ‘**VETO**’ as part of the blue print. But EMEKA said again **NO!**, and from his wealth of political convictions and altruism raised his head, amidst dissenting voices, and cried ‘wolf’ to a stark reality of the Subjugation of Justice. When this cry of ‘wolf’ was turned down, darkness dawned and a long night of war, horror and genocide followed. This War was fought and lost. Many from both sides became victims and lost their lives; many were left alive but as Handicaps. To those who dies: **MAY THEIR SOULS REST IN PEACE.**

EMEKA, as we all are gathered here today in solidarity with the Memories you have left behind, and with an unreserved love for the Truth and readiness to defend it, we make our pledge in this struggle for Freedom and Justice. Since the end of the long night of war, many conflicting opinions and voices have given assessments, evaluations and contentions ranging from the question on whether there was any sense

of necessity in embarking on the War, to a statistical mathematization that leads to a summation of LOSSES that outweighed the GAINS. It is an inevitable expectation because every War, due to its nature, leaves behind scars of Wounds, Horrors, Losses, Regrets, Blames etc. And because the corrupt Elites abhor the Truth, the Cause of the Non-Implementation of the Consensus Decision does not come into question and has remained unquestioned.

YET OUR PROBLEMS CONTINUE:

- **From the beginning it was MANIPULATION, today still Nigeria is eating deep into it.**
- **From the beginning it was NON-IMPLIMENTATION, today still Nigeria wallows in an ocean of Blue-prints filled with Policies that are dormant and ineffective.**
- **From the beginning it was NEGLIGENCE OF LIVES AND PROPERTIES, today still we are on daily basis the first-hand Receivers of such heartless experiences. The Niger-Deltans just woke up to the Reality of the situation only after it had claimed the life of their illustrious Son, Ken Sarowiwa who rose as an Activist in solidarity with the Voice of Truth, with the other Seven Ogoni Sons, lending their voices to the utter disapproval of the actions of a Government that can only milk from their resources without any effort to offer anything for replenishment. And Emeka, just as you were tagged an IMPOSTOR, they are branded today as MILITANTS.**
- **From the beginning it was UNQUANTIFIEABLE GREED AND SELFISHNESS, today still we walk the streets of the modern-day Nigeria where this Greed stirs everyone on the face in the forms of Survival of the Fittest; Embezzlement of Common Resources; Pursuance of Political Positions by all means even at the expense of human life; Insensitivity to the plight of the common Man on the street amidst rich endowments of Natural Resources.**

EMEKA, as you have been lowered and buried into the Mother-Earth. Rest in Peace with the hope and assurance that the Truth you fought and died for survives and lives, **for Truth is a Universality and not a Relativity and once told, it remains One and Alive.** It can be manipulated and delayed, but its manipulation is only accidental not substantial. For every accidental change or manipulation has no power over the Substance.

IT IS OUR CONVICTION THAT THE BONES SHALL RISE AGAIN, and when they rise, 'WHAT IS' will give way to 'WHAT OUGH TO BE'. The real nature of the Truth is found in what ought to be, which is the Reality and not the Appearance. It is still a fresh experience in our minds when we were all face to face with the reality of Terrorism within the Nigerian Nation, sparked off by the action of a 23-

year-old young, promising-looking Nigerian studying in UK, who planned and unsuccessfully hatched the plan to blow-up the Northwest Airlines Plane on the 25th day of December, 2009. THE REALITY OF THE TRUTH was again told to the Nigerian Nation about the presence of Terrorism within her and that she has been added to the list of Terrorist Countries. Opinions and discussions shifted grounds again the Nigerian way. Consequently, instead of bending down to ascertain the truth about the matter and have a stitch in time which would have saved nine, pride took over and blocked the 'Focal Lens' of the truth about the matter. The reality is today stirring all of us to the face, because while we are still seeking for the reason for such enlistment of Nigeria among the terrorist countries, the present horrible state of the Nation featuring the activities of the politically-oriented Sect called 'Boko Haram' stand in contradiction to our claims of innocence. At the moment Nigeria has become Terror unto herself. But the Hero that just left the stage, EMEKA, saw these things 46 years ago and described them as *MILITANT ARABISM, which some States are using as instrument for the attaining of power in the World (Ahiara Declaration, 1st June, 1969)*. Again the Truth was told, but was ignored.

THIS HERO AND VISIONARY has just died in the body, but his spirit and legacies live on. That is our Christian Faith. That was his faith as a Catholic. That is my faith as I put down these words as a testimony to the truth and reality. That is the faith of all apostles of the truth. That is the faith of all who are ready today to say ENOUGH IS ENOUGH. That is the faith of all who will be ready to join the courageous voices of today to remind Nigeria that our Redemption is not to be sought 'WITHOUT' but 'WITHIN'. Shakespeare put it beautifully again: **The Fault is not on our Stars, but on Ourselves.**

Today, **EMEKA** has a message for us and the present-day Nigeria. This message is contained in his analysis of RE-DISCOVERING OF INDEPENDENCE. And in this Re-discovery:

- **The JUST must be prepared to welcome resistance from all who are enemies of the Truth**
- **No stone should be left unturned in the fight to expose Injustices and Hatred**
- **Determination and Persistence must make the list of the principles**
- **The opposing force which claims resistance to the Truth must be faced squarely until the light shines at the end of the Tunnel**
- **The struggle must continue relentlessly until the Bank of Justice and the desire for the Common Good is opened to all.**

As we say today ADIEU to this Gift of the Igbo race, a gift to Nigeria in particular and our world in general, I deem it fit to remind the Nigerian Nation that the woes that have kept us in bondage are our Nonchalance and Neglect of true Patriotism. Consequently, with over 50 years of experiences, the Nation

could only give birth to a conglomeration of Antagonism; Amassing of Wealth for the benefit and well-being of the foreign Nations where they will be deposited eventually because they were ill-gotten; Blockade and Disregard of the essence of Reason and the enthronement of '*animality*' in the pursuance of monetary proceeds and benefits from a God-given gift of nature – Crude Oil; Wanton neglect of lives, properties and basic infrastructures and institutions, such that Security, Health and Educational Institutions are nothing to write home about.

As the death of CHUKWUEMEKA ODUMEGWU OJUKWU has brought all of us here today, let it be a **Union of heart and mind** in the pursuance of the cause of truth and right; let it be **re-commitment** to our march against deception and societal bondage; let it be a **union of visions** for a repositioning of the Present in order to reap a progressive Future; let it be a **united effort** towards the liberation of the oppressed and the needy; let it be a **moment of decision-making** to lead this battle towards freedom, beginning from an AUTHENTIC TRANSFORMATION OF MYSELF; let it be the **moment of evaluation** that will bring our minds and actions back to the redeeming but neglected Value Systems. Most importantly, let it be a **moment of Reunion with God**, the Author and Owner of our Existence, who made everything Good, saw that it was Good and consequently entrusted Goodness to Man, not Evil.

Rest in Peace Emeka.

Requiem Eternam Dona Eis Domine.

