

## **BOOK REVIEW**

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**Title of book: Issues in development: leadership, education and religion**

**Author:** Prof. Barth N. Ekwueme

**Publisher:** University of Calabar Press

**Printer:** Radiant Integrated and Communications Ventures

**Year of publication:** 2014

**Place of publication:** Calabar

**Number of chapters:** Three

**Number of pages:** 169 pages

**Cover type:** paper

Preamble: Delving into the contemporary and critical social problems of development in the country in the manner he did in this interesting text, Prof. Barth Ekwueme has not only proven himself a great scholar, but also one of Nigeria's foremost – and most controversial – scientists and social critics. He is a seasoned geologist no doubt, but he has a mastery of the key rudiments of other disciplines under the sun, including philosophy, religion, education, political science, development sociology, psychology and geography as evidenced in the text. Prof. Ekwueme's perceptive commentaries on Nigerian society are very eloquent, insightful, and thought-provoking. This three-chapter book is memorable for its vastness in polemic and substance. To a large extent, he re-echoed Chinue Achebe's "The trouble with Nigeria" published in 1980.

The book is excellently written in clear and simple English without being simplistic. The issues in development discussed in the text were presented from personal and informed perspectives without mincing words.

Chapter one: Leadership and development

This chapter was divided into 11 sections namely: the nation, committed leadership, some African countries, China experience, the fight against corruption, elections, conflicts and resolutions, iron and steel, power supply, people's welfare, and lastly insecurity: causes and mitigation.

#### Chapter two: Education and development

The second chapter is further divided into six sections viz: the Church and education, accreditation, education and change, private universities, university entry examinations and the essence of education.

#### Chapter three: Religion and development

This chapter is composed of six sections: parenting; behaviour and religion; pilgrimages; retreats; marriage anniversary and confessions.

In this concise text, Prof. Barth Ekwueme conceptualized development as a function of the relationship of three key indices namely: leadership, education and religion. These together constitute the tripod on which the wheel of development revolves. Any society lacking substantially in any of these, is not regarded as developing.

The text carefully outlined the reasons why Nigeria is backward (lacking in visionary leadership; poor funding of education; corruption, ethnicity, nepotism; deceit evidenced in sham-accreditation exercise; mediocrity, etc.) and cited instances of societies that are blazing the trail and the sources of their greatness one of which is their love of their country, unity, minimal corruption and belief in their country. Nigeria is several steps away from this and the future is bleak. In fact, the author empathizes with the prediction of an impending doom of disintegration of the geographical entity known as Nigeria. In his words "this disintegration will occur because ethnicity, tribalism, statism, religious fundamentalism have been introduced in all facets of Nigerian life".

No doubt, the book has its shortcomings in the area of grammatical, typographical, and layout errors. These are minimal, though. For instance, in chapter one, 1.1: is written "the Nigeria nation" in the table of contents while it appeared on p.2 in the body of the book as "the Nigerian nation"; 1.6: Elections appeared on p.34 in the body of the text as against p.35 designated for it in the table of contents; 1.7: Conflict resolutions paginated 40 in the table of contents appeared in p.39 in the text. 1.8: Iron and steel, p.47 in the table of contents is in p.46 of the text; 1.9: Power supply – p.52 in the table of contents – is on p.51 in

the text; 1.11: Insecurity: causes and mitigation is paginated 76 in the table of contents but actually appeared in p.77 in the text.

In chapter two, 2.4: Private universities paginated 105 in the table of contents is not found anywhere in the text; what was found in p.105 is 2.5: Universities entry examinations but was designated p.108 in the table of contents; also 2.6: The essence of education which appeared in p.108 in the text has no page designated for it in the table of contents.

Chapter three has its fair share of these anomalies. 3.3: Pilgrimages in the table of contents appeared in the text in p.142 as pilgrimage (i.e. “s” was missing). 3.5: entitled marriage anniversary in the table of contents appeared in p.166 as “celebrating marriage anniversaries”; 3.6: confessions in the table of contents did not appear in the text at all.

4.0: Conclusion in the table of contents was nowhere to be found in the text. Lastly, the table of contents was silent on the author’s profile which appeared in p170.

In spite of these lapses, the book is a must-read for everyone – students, lecturers and the general public. It is a reference point for researchers in the sociology of development and public policy. I admire and highly commend the effort of the author.