



## AFRICAN FOUNDATION FOR PEACE AND LOVE INITIATIVES, NFP



**Bringing God's PEACE and LOVE and WHOLENESS to AFRICA**

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### **RESCUING OUR EDUCATION SYSTEMS: WHEN STATISTICS ARE PATHETIC, CITIZENS AND STATESMEN MUST COLLABORATE FOR SOLUTIONS**

**(BY REV. (DR.) TITUS K. OYEYEMI  
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#### **The Need to Find Solutions Beyond Wishful Thinking**

When statistics are pathetic, citizens and statesmen must collaborate to find solutions. Authentic leaders at government and community levels must become creative and innovative. Responsible teachers and parents must roll up their sleeves and to work. The children and youths must be mobilized, challenged, and encouraged to perform their best. When statistics are bad as they present are in Nigeria, no one should consider himself as a sacred cow; no one should care whose ox is goad when times are at their worst. Leaders must be prepared to receive their appropriate portions of blame. Authentic leaders will not resist constructive criticism. Branding every criticism as unpatriotic makes leaders blind, wicked and oppressive.

#### **Are Statistics Not Pathetic?**

Are the statistics not pathetic when WAEC results, school drop outs, teenage pregnancies, school violence, student truancy, and tardiness, are on the increase. Are the statistics not pathetic when in 2007, 1.4 million Nigerian youths took WAEC and only 14% passed? In 2008 1.3 million took WAEC and only 13% passed? A story in the *Daily Trust* of Thursday, 24 September 2009, showed that out of a total 1,373,009 candidates, 356,981, representing 25.99% passed WAEC in 2009. Are the statistics not pathetic when secondary school leavers waste away spending average of three years repeating WAEC or seeking admission to institutions of higher learning. Are the statistics not pathetic when *world peace index* shows that Nigeria is the 117<sup>th</sup> least peaceful country in the world in 2007, 113<sup>th</sup> in 2008, and the 129<sup>th</sup> in 2009, out of 144 countries of the world?

#### **Rushing Children through Schools**

We rush our children through secondary schools only to create a backlog for them at the time to enroll in institutions of higher learning. Admission to pre-degree courses costs four-folds compared to normal degree courses. Education is difficult and schooling is tedious. Young people need stimuli not hindrances or obstacles to education. Yet, in Nigeria, it is the youths that are chasing education, education is not chasing them. It is pathetic that 500 candidates are chasing one academic admission space in the institutions of higher learning. 75% of Nigerian parents cannot afford to send their children to college or university. The youths have no alternative than to languish at home, struggle on the street, and live in abject poverty. By all ramifications, Nigerian youths rank among the poorest of all nations on earth. With no opportunity for education, millions of teens have miscreants and area boys and girls.

Yet no-one called a solemn assembly. There was no conference, no seminar; no workshop was convened to discuss these pathetic statistics. The Senate or the House of Assembly summoned nobody to explain the situation. There was no Presidential query? Private school owners are making fortune. Local Governments are not coming to the rescue of the youth by founding community colleges to provide buffers and opportunities for high school graduates who must repair their bad WAEC results.

#### **WAEC Has Outlived its Usefulness; JAMB is Red Herring; Post JAMB is Illegal**

In my opinion, WAEC, JAMB, and Post-Jamb are no longer necessary. How many hurdles do we want our teenagers to cross before they can be higher education ready or ready for higher education? Of what use is WAEC with less than 15% candidates passing the examination in the last ten years, and with the average student repeating

**“I create the fruit of the lips; peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, says the Lord; and I will heal him.” (Isaiah 57:19).**

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the examination three times? Instead of the six 6 years of secondary school education, the average student now uses six in the school, three outside the school to pursue GCE, JAMB and Post-JAMB. How relevant is JAMB and when is it appropriate to take it? Is it appropriate for students to sit for JAMB two or three years after they have left school at JSS3? Is post-JAMB not another method to scare away teenagers from the opportunity to receive higher education?

### **The Need to Reorient WAEC, JAMB, and Post-JAMB**

In my opinion, there is a need to reorient WAEC, JAMB, and Post-JAMB. These examination processes are not a true evaluation of students. These examination processes do not evaluate the cognitive learning of the student. They neither measure the formative capability of the student, not his or her summative capacity.

By reorienting WAEC, JAMB, and Post-JAMB, we can redirect the financial and manpower resources guzzled by these institutions to effectively evaluate the continuous formative and summative cognitive learning of our children. The resources at WAEC, JAMB and Post-JAMB will be more productive if they are restructured to do cognitive learning evaluation through students' continuous assessments.

### **Preparing Students for Higher Institution from SSS2**

I strongly propose that the resources of the proposed newly reconstituted WAEC, JAMB and Post-JAMB should be geared toward preparing our secondary school students for admission into higher institution at the beginning of SSS2. In this way, a student will have two years to prepare for higher education. Students should start accumulating grades for college at SSS2. And student should have two years to do so. Any student who may need to repair their admission requirements would have done so before they complete SSS3.

### **Grades Repairing Processes**

If a student is still unable to satisfy admission requirements at the end of SSS3, then a grade repairing education should be introduced. The grade repairing process should be part of the overall higher education system. The grades repairing process can take place within the institutions of higher learning or outside the institutions of higher learning through the community college system. Indeed, the purpose of JAMB or post-JAMB or whatsoever, should have been to identify students who need to repair their bad grades. Placement examination to institutions of higher learning should be only once. All other efforts should be to repair bad grades.

### **Creating Lower Classes to Repair Bad Creates**

If accumulated grades at SSS3 in any subject is not good enough, curriculums and tutorials could be designed to fix the deficiencies. These can be classified as Classes 95, 96, 97, 98 or 99. The placement test (JAMB or Post-JAMB) will identify which of the above classes and in which particular subject or subjects a student needs some grades repairs. In fact there should be one placement tests, not duplicated placement test of JAMB and Post-JAMB.

A student who needs repairs, for example, in two Class 99 subjects can accumulate college credits while doing Class 101 in other subject areas where he or she needs no repair grades. A brilliant student could be doing some Class 102 subject, even while repairing a Class 99 subject. In this way, we will keep the student academically active and give him or her opportunity to receive higher education. By all means we need an evaluation process that will prepare teenagers for higher education and keep them within the academic system at all times.

### **Introducing Community College System for Grade Repair Processes**

Each teenager should have a position waiting for him or her at the institution of higher learning. The goal of the school and education system should be to assist the teenager to get placed in that position. If grade repairing will be too clumsy at full-fledged institutions of higher learning, the two year community college system can come to the rescue. While attending the Grade Repairing Classes 95 - 99 to repair their bad grades, students can also attend and receive some Class 101 credits good for higher education.

In this way the two years spent at the Community College would have improve the bad grades and at the same time earned some college credit for the student. The two years would not have been a waste for the student. Remember those two years were previously spent at home sitting for GCE, JAM B and Post-JAMB. Funds and resources wasted on GCE, JAMB and Post-JAMB can be redirected to the Community College system. The

Community College System can provide young people with vocational skills and yet give them academic standing good continuous education and for employment.

### **The Need for National Solution**

We need a national enrolment solution to our education problem if we want to resolve and reduce the predicaments of our youths. We may have to delay primary school enrolment for one year, in order to allow for backlogs to clear at the secondary school or at the point of admission to institution of higher learning. In the alternative, we may have to extend primary school by one year, to make it seven years instead of six, at least for one or two years. We may insist that no child will start primary school until he or she is six years old. The period of year 4 and 5 should be spent within the school system to better prepare the child for the rigors of primary education.

We may have to resist the temptation to rush teenagers through secondary schools, which in my opinion, had contributed to the backlogs at the point of admission to institution of higher learning to greater extents. We may have to insist that no teenager will enter secondary school until he or she is thirteen years old. Institutions of higher learning should not be used as nannies for underage children. Students enrolled in the institutions of higher learning should be of the right age: say a minimum of 18 years of age.

### **Proposing a Monumental and Historic National Sacrifice**

I recall that if corporations did not make profits at the end of the year, shareholders will not receive dividends, and employees will not receive end of year bonuses. In spite of the hard times, I know that government at all levels (presidency, senate, house of representatives, state, and local governments, and their assemblies) are already spoiling for bonuses that they will award themselves. I therefore propose a historic sacrifice.

Now the year is coming to an end. The end of the year is another time of wastefulness in the name of yuletides or purported sacrificial giving. While I am not against festivity or the gracious attitude of giving to the poor, I want to propose that our honorable senators and representatives sacrifice their 2009 annual bonuses and end of year largesse to our children, youths and schools. Religion and servant leadership teach that the strong should serve the weak, and that the wealthy should provide for the poor. Our education sector is weak and poor. The wealthy should come to her rescue.

This the poser. Will Nigerian leaders be willing to forgo just one year of those bonuses? Can they spend those bonuses to reorganize our schools and education systems that are in shambles? Can the senators, the presidency, the ministers, and the governors, donate just one year bonus to the failing and flailing education system in Nigeria? Can they truly let those bonuses go without recouping them through the back doors?

Thank you.

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