Is Africa Drunk?

In Genesis 9:21, the statement "he (Noah) drank of the wine and was drunk; and he lay naked in his tent" elicits different emotions and reactions. As I contemplate on the topic "what ails Africa?", here-in re-stated "Is Africa Drunk?", this statement sheds some light.

Africa is the second-largest continent, coming second to Asia. In terms of natural resources, Africa "holds more than half of the world's rare minerals and is rich in both renewable and non-renewable natural resources" (IDEA, 2017). How come then Africa grapples with immense marginality and vulnerability (Ashford, 2007) leading to immense poverty?

Noah (and his family) were chosen by God and rescued from among the entire creation. Of the existing species, he was mandated to have two of each, to see to the survival of the entire Creation at the time; the rest was brought to an end. He must have been extremely favoured. When the catastrophe was over, the remnants started the new task of re-living. Noah even planted a vineyard and subsequently had of its best grapes. It is from these that he made wine and enjoyed its first two or so measures, but as the drinking continued, he got drunk and lay naked. How could a man of such worth and status get himself drunk to a level of lying naked, throwing out the honour that would have allowed God to do even greater things through him?

Africa's Resourcefulness

Africa is the cradle of humanity (Oppenheimer, 2009; Beyin, n.d.). Her vastness and resourcefulness, can neither be coincidental nor in vain. Presently, her youthful population (Ashford, 2007) is such a human resource that attracts any social transformist. Her resourceful feminine population (Kiingati, 2019), cannot be ignored. Despite these endowments, Africa, like Noah continues to throw away resources that nature has in store for her greatness, " (Bond, 2008); it lies naked in drunkenness. She that has immense favor and resourcefulness, continues to appear in world media on matters of corruption, bad governance, poverty, human rights violations, negative ethnicity, debt burden ... (the list is endless). What lessons can Africa take from the drunkenness of Noah?

Is African leadership drunk and lying naked? Power and money corrupt absolutely (Martin,1998 quoting Lord John E. E. D. Acton). When leaders use the authority and the public resources granted to them, to enrich their families and those close to them, they cannot be sober. Is it not of concern that African riches struggle to surpass a generation and so adequate preparations need to be done (Barbera, Bernhard, Nacht & Mccann, 2015)? How come African political parties are often pegged on tribal lines and play the role of elevating individuals to power, for personal gains (van Wyk, 2007)?

How come even after years of African leadership, extreme poverty and dependence on the developed world remains (Bond, 2008), yet these leaders continue to blame the state of Africa, on external forces and natural catastrophes (Emeh, 2013; Edoun, Balgah, & Mbohwa, 2015)? The presence of a citizenry that squats on its land awaiting evictions (Otiso, 2003), reigning over a non-food secure continent (Dodo, 2020), as well as ruling a populace that can hardly afford health care (WHO, 2012) questions the sobriety of the African leaders. How could a sober African leader unleash the terror of law-enforcers on her citizenry (Obasogie & Newman, 2017) that the leader is meant to protect? With such realities, any leader has to put social transformative efforts in place, if not they are drunk and naked.

Might the interventions of the African Civil Society including the Faith-Based Organisations also be getting drunk? The narrowing down of the FBO's is based on the key role they play and the trust that they command among the faithful, where "Religion constitutes an inextricable part of African society" (Mbiti, 1999; Obaji & Ignatious (2015 p.1). Concerning the leaders of the FBO's; specifically chosen, anointed, and commissioned, what are these ministers focussing on? As the rest of the secular world grapples within the murky waters of materialism and consumerism, might the leadership of the FBO's be demonstrating complacency and slowly getting drunk with the subsequent evils (Agbiji & Awart, 2015)? Do statements like close your eyes and pray (while we immerse wealth and enjoy life on earth) be taking shape (Kenyatta, n.d.)? Are we witnessing wealthy church ministers administering to a disempowered flock, yet focussing largely on verses that enhance the guilt of not giving, among their flock (Lauterbach, 2019)? Noah was drunk at a time when God desired to use him to take the remnant of the creation to yet another higher level. Will the present leadership of the FBO's, be used to take the African creation to yet another higher level? This will be realized only if this leadership is not lying naked in drunkenness.

Is the African population drunk and lying naked? Do the African men and women exploit resources sustainably and ensure that they do not jeopardize coming generations (Maletic et al., 2014)? Do the youth (male and female), start early enough to focus on relevant education, effective utilization of their giftedness, and wealth creation, or do they remain victims of the society (Sommers, 2006; Urdal, 2004), or do they speedily join the spendthrifts in consuming the little that is at their disposal (Bevan-Dye, A. (2012)? Is the use of technology (the mobile phone) reduced to disempowering communications and addictions or does it surpass that to go towards self-efficacy (Cook, Heycoop, Anuntavoraskul & Vibulphol, 2012; Stark, 2013; Strassberg, Rullo & Mackaronis, 2014; Porter, Hampshire, Robson, & Delannoy, 2015)? How about our voter apathy coupled with ethnic-led voting patterns (Berman, Dickson, & Will, 2004; Bratton, Bhavnani, & Chen, 2011) not to mention voting for leaders who have terrible failed development records?

It is evident that some strides in the right direction are being made. It is also correct to note specific figures that have immensely fought for a socially transformed Africa, leaders, and citizens. However, much more is needed for the change to be effected. Only then can we overcome our drunkenness. We must desist from the temptation of the King who loved new clothes. After parading his nakedness, all his friends and subjects hailed him save for a small boy who dared tell him the truth (Andersen, n.d.).

Over-engagement in perceived successes, or over-engrossed in one's struggles of poverty, play an almost equal role in getting individuals drunk and lying naked. Both easily forget to see the bigger picture which lies in the power of ubuntu "A person is a person through other persons...I am because we are" (Oppenheim, 2012), public institutions, and in sustainability. For the successful, it is the solid power of the institutions that permit wealth to surpass generations. For the poor, it is within institutions that leaders are put to task and accountability of public resources assured, geared towards improved livelihoods within availed social amenities. As each seeks their place in the ongoing search for meaning, let no one fail to identify that which leads to one's drunkenness and nakedness, for that shall be the starting point towards a socially transformed Africa.

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