

Fall 2002

Book Review

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Recommended Citation

Perumal, Sandra (2002) "Book Review," *African Social Science Review*: Vol. 2 : Iss. 2 , Article 6.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/assr/vol2/iss2/6>

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African Social Science Review
Volume 2(2):91-92; © 2002 CIAS

BOOK REVIEW

Bedford Nwabueze Umez,* *Nigeria: Real Problems, Real Solutions*. Kearney: Morris Publishing, 2000, \$13.00.

Prof Umez's book, *Nigeria: Real Problems, Real Solutions*, captures the essence of Nigeria's history, its independence and its failure to thrive. The author uses Truth Serum to inject our minds and hearts with the reasons for Nigeria's problems of development. However, his proposed solutions as well, is what makes his book a necessary tool if Nigeria plans on taking its rightful place as The Giant of Africa.

At first I was baffled by the title and wondered whether reading such a book would have any impact on my already proactive solutions for Africa. However, I have read some articles written by Prof. Umez, and I did find his articles, both enlightening and hardly the political rhetoric that Africans are exposed to.

I think Professor Umez sells himself short when he puts restrictive titles to his books. It is obvious after you read his book that his solutions would apply to many countries in Africa and probably Africa as a continent itself.

On first reading the Foreword and the Preface, I felt as if, one would have to be Nigerian to really understand the dynamics expressed by the author. I have been immersed in Nigerian Politics by default, for the past two years but have not had the good fortune of perceiving Nigerian Politics with the depth and clarity, as expressed by Professor Umez.

I would put Prof Umez's theories as proposed in his book in the same category as Stephen Bantu Biko, Frantz Fanon and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o. I think all these authors, including Professor Umez have decolonized and liberated their minds enough to know that liberating the African mind is crucial to reclaiming Africa and Africans.

I think Professor Umez's book should be used as a text in most African schools to teach our children and enlighten their minds, as they are the future generation of Africa. With some editing and additions by African thinkers with like minds, such a book would serve African students well. They will not only be a more liberated generation, but African culture would revive itself through them.

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A book like *Nigeria: Real Problems, Real Solutions* looks at our African dilemma realistically and honestly. Professor Umez definitely is not proposing anymore "Band Aid" fixes for African problems or Nigerian problems. He has painstakingly diagnosed the root causes and has also set out curative remedies to our many ills.

In my humble opinion, I think *Nigeria: Real Problems Real Solutions* is a definite read for every patriotic Nigerian who has dreams of Nigeria becoming the Giant in Africa. Implementing the solutions put forward in this book seems to be the only hope for Nigeria. Applying the same principles to other African countries and enforcing mass liberation of African minds is the key to true liberation and freedom for all Africans.

It is not often that we get to read Non Fiction books written by African authors. We should encourage more African Authors to enrich us culturally and intellectually, as Professor Umez has done, and we can only do this by promoting African Authors. By reading books that educate us, by liberating our oppressive minds, we begin to introspect and look within ourselves. And on looking deeper, we become alive, develop a sense of pride and dignity in being African, and do not allow ourselves to be miseducated after learning the truth. We will then, not perceive ourselves as the Barbarians of the Dark Continent.

Thank you Professor Umez for giving me hope that Africa can become a great nation not only because it has vast mineral and natural resources but more because of its vast human resources only waiting to be enlightened and liberated by Africans like yourself.

However, theory is useless without actual practice and implementation. Therefore it is imperative that we liberate African minds at every opportune moment or else be doomed forever!

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Political Activist

*Umez is a Professor of Government, Lee College, Baytown, Texas. For a copy of *Nigeria: Real Problems, Real Solutions*, now in use in several Nigerian universities, send \$13 to Bedford N. Umez, Box 818, Baytown, Texas 77522.