

Fayose and God's response

Wednesday, 04 October 2006

By Okey Ndibe



Governor Ayodele Fayose

Embattled Governor Ayodele Fayose of Ekiti presumes to know something the rest of us don't. Faced with a notice of impeachment signed by twenty-four members of his state's legislature, the governor affects an unflappable disposition. Addressing a small crowd a few days ago, Fayose waxed with combative words. Though charged with bilking his state of billions of naira, the governor came across as unperturbed. His utterances were far from contrite.

If the man is at imminent risk of toppling from grace to the murk, indeed of receiving the Alamesiegha treatment, he is not letting on. Instead, he is wroth. He openly disdains the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and its "mountain" of evidence against him. And he makes no secret of loathing the legislators determined to dislodge him from his gubernatorial perch with immediate effect. He is huffing mad, his manner is gruff, curmudgeonly. Why, you may be wondering, is this seemingly outmatched man pouting at his formidable foes, beating his chest as if he were invincible?

Well, to have him tell the story, he is exactly that: invincible. Fayose claims, in effect, to know God on a first name basis. He has served notice to his traducers that he has a direct line to God, a lien on the battalion of angels. He insists that he has God on contract to fight for him, to mix it up with his antagonists if it ever comes to a brawl. Invoking his divine connectedness, he has spoken as if

intrepid. He has not abandoned his accustomed swagger. Who would begrudge the man his air of confidence? If God be for us, who born the monkey that would be against us?

Fayose's fighting stance was captured in the October 2, 2006 edition of *The Guardian*. The governor, according to the paper, "boasted that no power could

remove him from office as he has the mandate of God..." No, this was not a case of misrepresentation by the newspaper. The report continued: "Quoting from the Bible, Fayose who claimed that he had never lost any battle, said the Assembly members would fail because they were not fighting him but God." Then the paper offered us the governor in his own vintage words: "I want [those plotting to remove me] to know that the God I serve would definitely put them to shame because their gathering is not of God and it would be scattered."

It is a familiar refrain, this invocation of divine accreditation by men accused of behaving badly. It was Alamesiegha's mantra when he was caught in London with an obscene cache of cash. And when he wangled an escape back to his Bayelsa base, why, he told his perplexed audiences that he hadn't the foggiest idea how he sprung free from British law. "I assure you that it was God," intoned the fugitive, touting that well-worn line. The implication was that God approved everything Alams did, including deploying millions of public funds to private use.

Word reaching me lately is that God is no longer willing to remain mute in the face of these heretical concoctions. I can report authoritatively that, upon hearing Fayose's recent claim, God immediately instructed His press office to fax a disavowal to the Nigerian and international press. The opening words of the divine statement went like this: "God wishes Nigerians and the world to know that anybody fighting Fayose is fighting

Fayose and not God. As a matter of fact, anybody fighting the governor is fighting him and the Devil. Fayose recently told an audience that the god he serves would certainly put his enemies to shame. Let it be clear that the governor doesn't serve me. If anything, he has been behaving as if he were some kind of god. But no matter." To disabuse the minds of those who believe that anybody who quotes from the Bible is of God, the press release reminded people that Lucifer himself was adept at regurgitating biblical passages by rote.

It was not all. The divine press release warned that God was close to losing all patience with Nigerian public officials who drag His revered name into their iniquitous deeds. It warned them to desist from the scandal of ascribing their toxic behavior to divine inspiration or approbation. "Politicians who act evilly only worsen their certain damnation when they allege that their impunity has God's imprimatur." The press release then offered a litany of examples where Nigerian public officials, having conducted themselves in ungodly ways, turned around to besmirch God's name.

"When Nigerian politicians rig elections," the statement bemoaned, "they fearlessly proclaim it God's doing. Let it be clear that there is no condition whatsoever under which God welcomes or condones rigging or hanky panky of any kind. Many Nigerian public officials pilfer public funds, but then claim that God has blessed them. Let it be clear that all stealers and embezzlers are cursed. They maim and kill their opponents in a mindless bid for power, only to profess

that only God gives power. For the avoidance of doubt, God refrains from meddling in elections, leaving it the business of registered voters. That's why many atheists have won, and most likely will continue to win, elections. Any man who ascribes his electoral victory to God invites close investigation. Often such meretricious sentiments are an indirect confession to stealing an election. Day and night, Nigerian politicians work perversely hard at destroying their nation. Then they tell their pauperized citizens that only God can solve their problems. This is a blatant lie. The task of addressing a nation's maladies lies in the hands of its citizens. For proof, just take a look at China. It is officially a godless nation, yet its citizens and leaders are sweating to transform it into one of the strongest economies in the world. Examine the nations that now boast buoyant economies—Japan, Singapore, South Korea, even the nations of old Europe. Are they by any stretch the most devout nations? Far from it!

“God wants it underlined that at no time did He direct Nigerian leaders to siphon their nation's oil wealth to private bank accounts. The habit of stealing, God wants to assure you, is encouraged only by the guy who runs the show at the infernal address. I'm talking of the Devil himself. Look at Nigeria's tattered state. Its leaders (by the way, they prefer being called rulers) steal unconscionably. Their greed leaves little for health care, road construction, a sound educational system, and clean streets. Please stop fasting and praying and start holding your leaders accountable. God is not in the business of building hospitals or roads, equipping

libraries and laboratories, and taking trash off streets.”

There was a lot more in God's press release. “Nigerian leaders fly abroad for routine medical check-ups,” it said, “but they prod the suffering masses to take their ailments to “miracle” crusades at the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway. If these leaders believe that pastors ought to replace medical doctors, how come they themselves don't submit to the ministrations of ‘powerful pastors?’” It continued: “Your leaders ask you to fast and pray even when you are famished, your stomachs empty. Yet, they themselves never practice what they preach. God sees through their turpitude. When they withdraw to their splurgy redoubts, they neither pray nor fast. Instead, they immerse themselves in unbridled hedonism. They quaff expensive liquor and choice wine until they take a leave of their senses. They cavort with lithesome belles young enough to be their granddaughters. They flaunt paunches and swollen necks that betray their gourmandizing excesses.

“Nigerian prisons teem with impoverished citizens incarcerated for small crimes. Thousands are languishing in jail for picking pockets in order to put food in their hollow bellies. Yet, when public officials contribute massively to their nation's economic backwardness by stealing billions, they are garlanded. Universities compete to confer honorary degrees on the knaves. Traditional farters (yes, some of them fart a lot!) rush to bestow titles on them. Even some church leaders crown them “elders” or make them knights! Their names make the list

of candidates for the highest national honors. The press seeks them out for quotes on national issues, flattering them with the name of "stake holders." They are baptized as political "godfathers" instead of the more fitting satanic fathers. Oil blocks are allocated to them, and they bask in opulence.

"In the rare event that they are charged with any crimes, their fellow collaborators-in looting gather in nocturnal congresses with the single aim of saving them from the sanctions of the law. Self-styled "statesmen" begin to lobby on behalf of the indicted miscreant. They coat his crimes with sugary lies, calling them the machinations of political enemies or the fabrications of 'disgruntled elements.' They insist that the privileged criminal deserves not the harsh retribution of the law but some species of 'soft landing.' This ritual of evasion, equivocation and mendacity is playing itself out in the Fayose case. It is entirely up to you Nigerians what you decide to do with the man. But let it be known that anybody who fights Fayose fights Fayose. God is not sending any troops to fight for the beleaguered governor. He may have enough money to buy the services of a few "pastors," but that, God wants it known, is as far as his lucre will carry him."

Readers' Favorites

1. Nigeria's savaged children
2. The war we ordered is here
3. What I saw in Nigeria
4. Murder Incorporated
5. No Longer at Ease
6. My Vote for Andy Uba
7. Achebe, Soyinka, and the Nigerian Mess
8. My Biafran Eyes
9. My Father's English Friend
10. A female speaker's manly vices
11. The education of Umar Yar'Adua
12. The triumph of barbarism
13. Achebe's apt censure
14. Andy Uba Goes to War (1)
15. Andy Uba Goes to War (11): What OBJ taught Uba
16. Why I Take It Personally
17. Andy Uba's highest bid
18. The folly of the Nigerian elite
19. Fraud Incorporated
20. Etiaba's father, not mine
21. Our laughing president
22. Fayose and God's response
23. My 419 Call
24. A feud of three bulls
25. More reasons to ignore Soyinka
26. Who does Obasanjo work for?

Read or download more titles at

<http://www.okeyndibe.com>

About Okey Ndibe



Okey Ndibe is a novelist, poet, political activist from Yola, Nigeria. He is the author of *Arrows of Rain*, a critically reviewed novel published in 2000. Ndibe relocated to the United States in 1988, where he founded *African Commentary*, a magazine described as "award-winning and widely acclaimed." Ndibe is also a published poet, and a former associate professor of English at Bard College at Simon's Rock. He currently teaches fiction and African literature at Trinity College in Hartford, CT. Okey Ndibe is finishing his second novel titled *Foreign gods, incorporated*.

Speaking Engagements

To discuss a speaking engagement, please contact Okey Ndibe by e-mail (okey@okeyndibe.com) or by phone (860.306.7843).

PDF conversions done with Adobe Acrobat Professional 6.0 (US & International Patents) under license to All Hands Business Solutions, Inc.