

**VICTORY OF FAITH OVER EXPERIENCE**

**(A REVIEW LECTURE)**

**BY**

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**ON**

**THE COURAGE TO CHALLENGE**

**BY**

**IKEDI OHAKIM**

**THE GOVERNOR OF IMO STATE.**

When I was first approached about reviewing a book kim, my reaction was a rejection based on the fact that I really have not developed a specialization in book reviewing. When I was then further told that the book was on Governor Ohakim, at least, that was what I thought I heard. I refused bluntly. It was nothing personal or directed at Governor Ohakim. I have never met him before until today. But most biographies on public figures tend to have the same format. "His Excellency said, and said. Madam Excellency smiled and waved. Madam Excellency wore a cream coloured dress etc..."

Then I was told that it was the Governor himself who wrote the book about himself. I became very curious. I urge you not to believe that it is only the cat that curiosity kills. Intellectuals are also victims of curiosity. I quickly did a mental calculation. This Governor has only been in office for two years and he is still in office. Why then would he write a book that can be used in evidence against him? Normally politicians don't like things in writing because then it becomes easy to pin them down. So, why would Governor Ohakim do this? I thought that I had to read this to believe it.

For the avoidance of doubt, I am not against writing of biographies. On the contrary, I am very much in favour because it was the lack of written African history that led to some European historians as late as the 1970s still claiming that Africa had no history before European conquest. I am also aware that we in this country possess a peculiar undesirable cultural trait where we forget yesterdays contribution and credit ourselves with all achievements. It has even been known to happen where commissioning plaques put up by a departed administration are ripped down by a new administration and replaced with the name of the new boss. Therefore I am in full agreement with recording history, and I know that I have used every occasion that I get to encourage office holders to commission a record of their achievements while in office.

After curiosity led me into accepting the manuscript, I must confess that I have come to the conclusion that Governor Ohakim is an incurable optimist. I am not yet talking about his political experiences; at least not yet. Reading through this book gave me the same feeling I had when I read Anne Frank's book "The Diary of a Young Girl" on the Nazi holocaust. Anne Frank was a young Jewish girl arrested with her family by the Germans during the second world war and packed off to the infamous Belgen-Belsen concentration camp. She was only 15years old. Her entire family perished leaving only her and her father. She wrote about the bestialities in the camps, the betrayals and the horrors which we human beings were capable of inflicting on each other. But she concluded that "in spite of everything, she still believes in the goodness of mankind" When you read this book, after all the data that Ohakim has assembled and presented as evidence of Nigerian regression from Third World country to Fifth world status, that Nigeria will overcome her state of debility takes a leap of faith. But I jump ahead of myself.

Let me start by making some general comments I congratulate Governor Ohakim on the level of scholarship shown in this book. I do not say this with any professorial condescension but in genuine

admiration. At least I counted 65 references to other authors and their views in this book. As an author myself, I know how tedious and time consuming it can be to consult other works in preparation for one's own work. And so, I was pleasantly surprised to come across these cross references. That was the first indication that in Governor Ohakim, you are dealing not with an ordinary politician but the noble Athenian public figure in the classical Greek model of the public servant. Secondly, this is not a book whose idea sprang up on entering the Imo State Government House. He himself has stated in the acknowledgement section that this book has been 17 years in gestation, starting with toying with the idea in 1992. And I believe him because I know that it is simply not possible to write a book of this magnitude and standard in two years while holding down a job as an Executive Governor of a state. But the motivation for writing this book is better stated in his words "I knew that I had to tell my story on the campaign trail and beyond for posterity. I knew I had to share my experiences to encourage the youth to believe in themselves and the strength of their hard work,; to lend my voice to that philosophy now made popular by Barack Obama with the mantra, "Yes, we can", especially if we muster the courage to challenge the status quo and whatever or whoever says we can't" There is one omission in that list of those who will benefit from reading this book. In political Science, we have what we call the law of unintended consequences, where action leads to a consequence so remote that it never even crossed the mind of the actor. In this particular case, asking me to do a review article on this book which was just sheer coincidence has enabled the book to claim not a convert but to confirm a long held dream that Nigeria is worth fighting for for the sake of the Black race. We are not worthy of Nigeria, at least not now, given the way we have treated her. Dylan Thomas in a poem entitled "Do not go gentle into that good night wrote "Do not go gentle into that good night, Old age should burn and rave at close of day: Rage, rage against the dying of the light". So, I am now energized to go raging into the night and not allow the vicissitudes to extinguish a dream. So, if there is going to be a second edition to this book, I hope the following will be added "and to strengthen old men who still dream of a Nigeria as a super power to keep the dream alive."

One caveat. I am not going to do the usual thing by referring you to pages in the book because I wrote this review article from the original manuscript and I am sure that the pagination in the manuscript may not be different from the pagination in the book itself.

One overwhelming and overriding factor which colours Governor Ohakim presentation is his undiluted believe in divine intervention which he believes is responsible for everything. As difficult as this is for a political scientist to grasp, I can easily see how and why this is an overriding interpretative tool for him. His Father, Pa Maxwell Ohakim, had been married to his mother for five years and no children came forth. He resisted all pressure to have children outside marriage or marry another wife. Governor Ohakim said that it was this unceasing pressure that led his dad, a staunch Anglican to join a Pentecostal Church called The Assemblies of God. As an Anglican myself, I found it difficult to accept that the Anglican church would be part of the pressure on Pa Maxwell. I suspect that just as now, it is the fame of pentecostal churches for miracles and prophecies that attracted Pa Maxwell. To quote Governor Ohakim "in 1952, at the Aba Parish my birth was prophesied. There was a vision of my coming which was exact in the date I would be born. Furthermore, it was recorded that I would achieve greatness, but my parents would have to wait five years for the fulfillment of the promise", and Pa Maxwell was

prepared to wait, and wait he did until 1957 when little Ohakim was born. Governor Ohakim continued "He had quite a few nicknames for me. 'Governor' happened to be one of them. In retrospect even though he never told me, I suspect that it may have been part of the prophesy of 1952". It is a pity that Pa Maxwell did not ask for a prophesy on Nigeria. May it would have reinforced the message of optimism that Governor Ohakim proclaims about Nigeria. On the other hand maybe it might not have.

Against this very strong spiritual background, it is easy to see the reasoning behind Governor Ohakim's spiritualism in every aspect of his life, including public life.. So strong is this spiritualism that Governor Ohakim espouses the doctrine of predetermination. It is a source of strength for him as (a) it emboldens him on any cause of action he embarks on (b) it makes it easier to take risks where others will not dare, and (c) it makes it easier for him to accept the outcome, whatever that outcome may be as the will of God.

Perhaps, I should give more examples of happenings in his life that have strengthened and led him to declare "My belief in God is total" On May 7, 2007 three of his children were fast asleep in the transit official residence of incoming governors aptly named Douglas House when a fire broke up at the ground floor "ignited by inflammable fluids suspected to be gasoline" It was the gallantry of a mobile policeman who risked his life to rescue the children who were not even aware of the inferno down stairs. And then how about the Sosoliso episode. It is better transmitted to you in his own words:

*I would have roasted along with the 116 people, many of them young children, following the crash of the Sosoliso aircraft in December 2005. The PDP convention was holding in Abuja. I had left the venue of the convention for the airport to catch my flight to Port Harcourt to attend a crucial meeting in Owerri that evening. I purchased my ticket earlier and was just in time to board the 3.40pm Sosoliso flight. But at the airport, I learnt that the airline had scheduled a flight to Owerri to cash-in on the huge number of passengers heading that way. I immediately approached the airline counter and changed my ticket from Port Harcourt to Owerri. As I settled into the aircraft a few minutes later, I noticed that there were lots of students gathered at the foot of the plane to Port Harcourt, the plane I would have boarded if the Owerri flight had not been provided. I later learned that these boys and girls were students of Loyola Jesuit College in Abuja, homebound for the holidays. One hour later, as the news of the Sosoliso air crash in Port Harcourt broke, the news of my death also spread.*

If this episode were not so tragic, I would have urged Governor Ohakim to adopt the riposte of Mark Twain when rumours about his death reached him. He simply said "the reports of my death are greatly exaggerated."

Rationality is the opposite of faith. After all, while faith is belief in things unseen and unknown, rationality is based on logical explanations for things seeing and known. When there are no rational explanations for all these experiences in Governor Ohakim's life, some may then resort to words like luck and coincidence. Under these circumstances, I can understand Governor Ohakim's total and undiluted faith in God.

To strength his case for believing in the inexplicable hands of God in his life, Governor Ohakim gives a fairly long list of examples of events in other peoples lifes that could not be predicted or explained. The

elections of Governor Fashola in Lagos and President Yaradua in Nigeria form one set. He also added the migration from prison to Aso Villa by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, the emergence of Nelson Mandela from prison to Government House and the rise of Obama from obscurity to the White House. All these are examples of God's hand in positive achievements.

But what happens when the events are negative, horrible and unwanted like the Nigerian Civil war, the two World Wars, the Genocide and Holocaust of World War 2? Do we attribute these to God as well? This review is not going to be turned into a theological debate, especially as I am not a Reverend gentleman even thou I am the son of an Anglican Vicar and a brother of an Anglican Vicar. . A way out is perhaps to make a distinction between God causing an act and God permitting an act. God could have struck the serpent dead in the Garden of Eden but he did not. Having created Man and Woman, and having taught them right from wrong, we have to accept that He then left us alone to decide for our selves whether we want to do the right thing or not. If we do the right thing, He blesses it. If we do the wrong thing, then He allowed us to suffer the consequences.

In this book, Governor Ohakim says that he has always been motivated by a drive for service which is not necessarily the same as a drive for office, although in most cases to achieve one's goal of service, a public office could come in quite handily. His life history illustrates this. At a tender age of 25 years, he became the National President of his town Union, a post he held for nine years. Anyone who has ever held such a position would know that you make nothing materially from such a position. On the contrary, you are most likely to spend and spend out of your own pocket. And this is illustrated by an episode that is worth relating: On a visit to his home community, Okohia, he discovered that high tension NEPA lines had passed over the community. For Okohia to benefit from the electric wires, step-down transformers and step-down cables would be needed. Rather than waiting inordinately for the State Government of Chief Sam Mbakwe to embark on rural electrification, Young Ohakim persuaded the community to embark on a voluntary contribution scheme to finance the project with the promise that any funds collected by the community, he would match 50per cent on behalf of himself and his family. The community embraced the scheme enthusiastically. After two months, the community turned against the scheme because two prominent sons of the community came to mislead the community that it can tap electricity directly from the high tension wires without the need for step-down transformers and low-tension cables. Governor Ohakim mentioned the names of the two gentlemen in his book. As a poor Professorial pensioner, I would not want to be sued by mentioning their names. You have to read the book to find out their names. What Young Ohakim did is another index of his character. In his own words: "That year I went to NEPA, procured the electric meters required for my community, bought the cable, over two kilometers long of low tension cable, and fortunately, I got the government to provide a transformer and the work began in earnest" That was twenty years ago.. This episode says a lot about Governor Ohakim. Courage in naming and shaming these two gentlemen, and a firm belief in service-oriented public engagement in paying for this project from his own pocket. He put his money where his mouth was. Not a service of words but a service of conviction and action. As the dawn shows the day so does the child shows the man, says the philosophers of ancient times. At the end of his nine years, he was conferred with the chieftaincy title of "Ochinawata" (he who governs at a young age), a title that still fits.

There is still another episode that I have to mention and this involves the circumstances under which a market in Anara community in Imo state was named after him. At one time there was a conflict within the community which had lasted for about twenty years. Such was the intensity of the conflict that a lot of lives had been lost in the process. Hence many prominent sons and daughters steered clear of the conflict. Even though he did not come from the community, for reasons which he did not state, he decided to get involved and after forty-seven peace meetings and conferences, hosted at his own expense at his Burma Retreat Country home, which lasted for a year, the crisis was resolved. This was between 1992 and 1993. Not last year, not five years ago but seventeen years ago, long before he started campaigning for public office. It was simply pure pure community service. Impressed with this self-less service, the Anara community conferred the title of Omeudo (the peacemaker) and named the town market after him. Why has he brought all these issues up? Hear him, "I chose to tell this story today, not to be applauded or to attract adulation, but to show that, for me, service is a natural calling, and to underscore my belief that respect can be earned and not bought".

Two points need to be made here. One has already been made which is that all these community activities took place when Governor Ohakim was not running for office. The second point which is related to the first is that all the funds spent on these two occasions were not Government funds. They were personal funds spent at a time when Governor Ohakim was not running for office or in office. I have no idea what Governor Ohakim was worth before he became Governor. Only the Code of Conduct Bureau will know this. But a young man who twenty years ago was able to buy two kilometers of NEPA cables and who owned a Burma Retreat Country Home is not a poor man. But it was not money made from being in government office. Therefore what he plowed back into the community was not only personal funds but was also substantial funds. This was personal social responsibility at its best.

Let me use this opportunity to touch on a related issue which is corporate social responsibility. Like everything that happens, Nigerians are being taken for a ride on this issue. How much in percentage terms of annual profit do corporations plow back into Nigeria under the corporate social responsibility hubris? I once made a proposal that the President should initiate an annual ceremony where corporations which made substantial contribution under the corporate social responsibility should be ranked on diamond, gold, silver and bronze categories. I furthered advocated that those in the Diamond and Gold categories should be given preference when they bid for contracts and should have an annual dinner with the President. Maybe Governor Ohakim can borrow one of the ideas which is to give preference to companies who plow some of their profits back into Imo when he is awarding contracts. At least those companies will show that they share his values of community and social service.

Some of the other issues dealt with by Governor Ohakim I will classify into three groups. The first are the issues relating to the state of Nigeria at independence and when the rain started falling on our heads; the second relates with what is wrong with us now and the third relates to how we can get to the promised land.

The first part is a bit problematic to deal with. On one hand Governor Ohakim admired our founding fathers: Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo and the Sardauna of Sokoto for fighting for Nigeria independence and for motivating us to dream dreams and have visions. He praised them for their economic and social programmes. But he upbraids them for stagnating Nigerian politics on the level of ethnic antagonism.

This story of ethnicism being the bane of Nigerian politics has been well documented in this book and elsewhere. But Governor Ohakim trailed into dangerous and controversial grounds when he sought to identify the source of ethnic nationalism into Nigerian politics. In this book, Governor Ohakim seems to have placed the blame on the Yoruba when he started his analysis on ethnic nationalism by informing his readers that in 1942, the first pan-Yoruba association was formed called the Yoruba Literary Society. It was followed in 1945 by the formation of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa. Then Governor Ohakim informs us that in 1931 the Urhobo Brotherly Society which later became the Urhobo Progress Union was formed while the Igbo Union which later became the Igbo State Union was formed in 1936. So, if I were to arrange this in historical terms, the 1931 of the Urhobo Brotherly Society came before the 1936 Igbo Union which then came before the 1942 Yoruba Literary Society. So can the last organization to be formed be blamed for a phenomenon introduced eleven years before it formed its own? I don't intend to go beyond this because it is an argument that has never done us any good and that will not now do us any good.

I am indeed grateful to Governor Ohakim for the best sociological explanation for the rationale behind the formation of ethnic associations when he wrote "So in truth, the colonial and urban origin of ethnicity becomes clear when it is understood

Suffice it to say that no matter how altruistic the motives were for the introduction of ethnic nationalism into our political ... it has been abused and used to import negative recriminations into our body politic to the detriment of the growth of a Nigerian identity. The time to stop this debate as to who introduced ethnic nationalism into Nigeria is now. We will never agree, so let us simply leave it alone.

But we must address the unforeseen consequences of ethnic nationalism. The concepts of zoning, rotation, federal character etc are off springs of ethnic nationalism and have led us down dangerous paths. Recognising that we are a collection of different nationalities is one thing, recognizing that to achieve unity and our potential, we must harness all competent hands is one thing but to push it further to the extent that posts are now zoned at federal level, state level, local Government level and even ward level is simply ludicrous. More alarming is the fact that these zoning and rotation formulae have been extended from the political sphere into religious and educational and judicial sectors. It is now affecting appointment of Vice-Chancellors and judges. Where will it end?

One of the grievances held by Governor Ohakim against the Imo state PDP is the fact that under the zoning formula adopted, the PDP should have zoned its Gubernatorial posts in both the 2003 and 2007 elections to Okigwe senatorial zone. According to Governor Ohakim, there ARE THREE SENATORIAL DISTRICTS IN Imo state and they are Orlu, Okigwe and Owerri. In the 1979 elections, Chief Mbakwe from

Okiwe Senatorial district won the elections. In the 1991 elections, Owerri zone won the elections in the person of Chief Enwerem, although I am in a dilemma as to how to interpret Governor Ohakim's statement that "many Okigwe aspirants(withdrew) or put up a feeble appearance." Was it the kind of feeble appearance that Alex Ekwueme, Abubakar Rimi and others put up against Obasanjo in the PDP primaries in 1999 and 2003? Once there is a breach in an undertaking, it is difficult to claim that the undertaking is still intact. Achike Udenwa from Orlu zone won in 1999 and 2003. Governor Ohakim was therefore taken aback when come 2007, new entrants from Orlu threw their hats into the Gubernatorial ring when it should be the turn of Okigwe. Of one thing I am still not sure. Was the grievance of Governor Ohakim based on the grounds that morality demands that an agreement should be honoured or was it based on the firm belief that zoning is one of the ingredients in the political system that will take Imo and Nigeria to the promised land.?

What is not often realized is that the inordinate desire of every village to become a state and every village to become a diocese is a variant of this zoning virus. Forgetting that zones are artificial creations, they now become invested with characteristics and qualities based on perceived delusional grievances to set them apart.

I will return to this issue when dealing with the prescription of Governor Ohakim for the way forward for Nigeria.

Governor Ohakim has catalogued very extensively and thoroughly the ills of the Nigerian system that I don't want to go through the list again. But while Governor Ohakim pin pointedly asked the question: "What went wrong?", and he answered "Leadership went wrong". A major point of omission is that Governor Ohakim failed to identify when the rain started to fall on our head. We must be very clear about this or else we will misdiagnose Nigerian problems and we will continue to miss the road.

At independence, Nigeria was a Federation of three regions. The terms of the Federal structure were painstakingly reached after a series of constitutional conferences held over several years by our founding fathers, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Sir Ahmadu Bello. It is not as if the terms of the constitution were completely acceptable to the three gentlemen and the interests that they represented. But after the give and take, it was the best compromise that was achievable. The system worked pretty well for the first two years. The regions competed with each other in a cooperative way which would explain the similarity in social welfare programmes, agricultural development schemes and educational policies. The fact that the federation itself was a delicate balancing of three legs kept everyone in check with the result that there was a lack of extremism in inter-regional relationships. And then came the regional crisis in the Western region in 1962. This was followed by the Declaration of Emergency and the appointment of a Federal Administrator to administer the West, the treasonable felony trial which resulted in the jailing of Chief Obafemi Awolowo. The civil insurrection that followed in the West led to the coup detat which led to the civil war. The point to be made clear is that before the political crisis in the West, parties ran elections and governments on clearly articulated manifestos. The civil service and the judiciary were functional and efficient. After the crisis in the West, norms disintegrated, the season of election rigging became rampart and the function

of government was no longer governance but looting. That was when the rain started falling on our heads and it has not stopped since.

If you submit this book to a referendum by Nigerians, the part of the book that will have 100% acclaim is the part dealing with how rotten the present system is. He catalogues the decay in the educational system, the economy, the infrastructural system, the agricultural system, the health system and even the value system. The most painful is the decay in the value system. You can repair all other systems within a generation. You can repair and build more hospitals, more schools, more universities, more roads, plant more agricultural plantations – all of these within three to ten years, or should we say within two terms of a civilian administration. But how long would it take to repair the damage down to centuries old value system? Respect for elders, honesty, probity, efficiency, merit, tolerance, law and order, tradition. These were the attributes of the centuries old system which we inherited from our ancestors. What have we replaced them with? Greed, Corruption, bought chieftaincy titles, bought knighthoods from the church, 419 awards and degrees by NGOs, magazines and fake foreign-based universities specially set up to sell those awards and degrees. Our kinsmen and women who left town unknown, five years ago, suddenly return as multimillionaires, and nobody ask questions. Instead, they are garlanded with the sacred titles of the land. In ancient times, it would be regarded as taboo to honour a man or woman whose source of wealth was unknown. How long will it take to repair this value system? Fifty years, one hundred years, five hundred years? The fact is nobody truly knows. The Russian and Chinese revolutions, even though they replaced decadent civilizations with more disciplined ones were not really a throw back to the past. But one thing is certain, it is going to take a major upheaval to repair the damage we have inflicted on our selves.

Governor Ohakim zeroes in on money as the primary agent that has polluted the system. And he gives pretty ugly examples: One example deserves to be quoted in full:

**“Alas, out of the murk came crawling the old demons of godfatherism, cronyism, favouritism, factionalism, several other forebears and products of injustice and inequality, especially those spewing forth from our number one national enemy: money politics! Ironically the stage for our fresh disappointment with the party was set by a proposition from one of the party’s peacemakers, Alhaji Kassim Imam. The party chieftain and member of the reconciliation committee set up after the 2003 elections, had in a proposal similar to that reached at the Berlin Conference of 1885, where Africa was portioned among European nations for “effective occupation”, muted the idea of partitioning Imo state to some men and women in the state. The sheme proposed the ceding of the total control of local government areas (LGAs) in the state to particular people in the state. It suggested that once a council, for instance, had been ceded to a person, he then decided who got what, from ward chairmen down to secretaries and clerks. Local Government Areas were carved out in Imo State to party leaders such as elder statesman Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu, Senator Arthur Nzeribe, Dr. (Mrs) Kelma Chikwe, Chief Hope Uzodinma, and even to a serving bank executive, Austine Obigwe... My own LGA was ceded to Ifeanyi Araraume.”**

I have quoted this passage in full using Governor Ohakim’s words because I feel a sense of outrage, enormous outrage and immense shame that things could have come to this in a part of Nigeria. I am not

from Imo state and I am not a member of the PDP. But this was an abominable arrangement, probably characterizing a feudal system of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. I am not surprised at all at the sense of injustice that Governor Ohakim felt and still feels over these shenanigans.

Analysing the role of money in politics is not an easy one. Permit me to say simply that it is not the use of money in politics that is egregious, (and Governor Ohakim makes this point as well), it is the abuse of money in politics that is reprehensible. Politics needs money. The cost of politics all over the world is phenomenal. There is no doubt that money influences politics. I have no objection to this as long as on the day of the election, whether primaries or general, the sanctity of the vote and voter is maintained. I will even go as far as to say that as immoral as it may sound, I have no objection to people collecting money from politicians provided that on election day, nobody's thug will be standing by to put a gun at the head of a voter, telling him how to vote.

God-fatherism, often associated with money politics is not in itself pernicious. Barack Obama has a political Godfather who is steeped in Chicago politics. If you know Chicago politics, you will know how dirty it is. And to have a godfather there is to have a wheeler-dealer. But the joy of Obama's Godfather does not lie in what he will make financially and directly from Obama. If Obama corruptly touches a dollar of the US government, he would go to jail. The gains to his Godfather are indirect even if financial. People know that he knows the President. The Godfather can secure appointments, legitimately, for acquaintances, friends and family members without breaking the law. And that is his reward. In other words, he is a one-man public relations firm or lobbyist. How many people knew that at the same time that Secretary of State Collin Powell was in office, his son was also Chairman of a powerful Federal Government Commission?

There is this story told about a gentleman who had worked tirelessly for the election of President John F. Kennedy. When appointments were being made, Kennedy asked him what he wanted. An Ambassadorship, Board Membership or what? The man replied: Nothing, just a picture of the two of us together. Just that? Kennedy asked incredulously. The man replied Yes, just that. I am going to open a public relations firm and hang copies of that picture in every room in my office, including the reception area. When clients come in and see the picture, the word will soon go around how influential I am, being a friend of the President

Governor Ohakim has also pointed out that Nigeria had political godfathers during the First Republic. But the difference between Obama's Godfather, Nigerian First Republic Godfathers and present-day Nigerian godfathers is the difference between light and darkness. Obama's godfather and Nigerian First Republic godfathers adopted their godsons because they shared their visions, admired their successes and wished them well. Present day Nigerian godfathers as epitomised by Adedibu and Chris Uba couldn't care less about the visions and dreams of their protégés. In fact, they are suspicious of people with visions. What they are interested in is the looting of the state treasuries with the godfathers being the looters-in-chief.

Where do we go from here? Governor Ohakim believes that he and Governor Fashola of Lagos represent a new breed of servant leaders defining a servant leader as. He identifies determination, a sense of

mission, a belief in being right than being popular as part of the attributes of a servant leader. He identifies such programmes as urban renewal in Lagos and Imo as evidence of far-sighted and determined leadership.

What I find very instructive and interesting is Governor Ohakim's pantheon of heroes. They are drawn from the universal landscape, Nigeria, Africa and the World. His domestic heroes include Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Mrs Oby Ezekwesili, Professor Charles Soludo, Hon. Goodluck Opiah, who is the Speaker of Imo State House of Assembly, Alhaji Aliko Dangote, Mr. Fola Adeola, Tayo Aderinokun, Chief Mike Adenuga, Rev. Father Matthew Hassan Kukah, Professor Dora Akunyili. I hope the future will not make the Governor have a re-think about his heroes. From South-East Asia namely Singapore, Malaysia and South Korea. What all these nations have in common is characterised by the title of Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew book on Singapore "From Third World to First World". These three countries witnessed phenomenal growth over three decades. There is another common factor. The three leaders were either straightforward dictators or neo-democrats. Governor Ohakim admits this much. Another common characteristic is lack of term limit. Lee Kuan Yew, Mahattmar of Malaya and General Park spent ages in office. Another common factor they shared was that they were mono-nationality. Singapore is primarily Chinese, South Korea is made up of Koreans while Malaya is made up of Malays. An interesting aside is in fact that Malaya and Singapore were one country before ethnic tension tore them apart into two very different nations. Another factor worth mentioning is that Lee Kuan Yew made it absolutely clear that the development of Singapore was by disregarding World Bank and IMF economic prescriptions for third world countries. He went further to advice Third World countries which want to develop to learn to disregard the World Bank and the IMF. How does Governor Ohakim manage to admire Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew on one hand, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and Mrs Oby Ezekwesili (both World Bank figures) on the other hand? This is one of those contradictions that he left unexplained.

Governor Ohakim also picks heroes from Africa namely Nelson Mandela of South Africa, Mwalimu Nelson Nyerere of Tanzania and Sir Seretse Khama of Botswana. The Governor is sport on on Sir Seretse because he was not only a democrat but he also developed Botswana, thus proving that democracy and development can go hand-in-hand. But, and there is always a but, Botswana is mono-cultural, made up of Basotos only.

His admiration for Madiba Mandela rests on the fact that Mandela has a "forgiven spirit and the wisdom that reconciled South Africa after a long term reign of apartheid." But Nelson Mandela pretty much left things the way they were. In Nigeria, Mandela will be called reactionary, conservative, stooge and other names to boot.

Mwalimu Nyerere presided over a one-party system and did not allow for internal democracy even within the one-party system. But I must concede to the Governor's point that he was incredibly honest and austere.

The danger of asking a scholar to review a book is that scholars are masters at deconstructing. We take words, sentences, paragraphs etc and try to read meanings into them in an attempt at getting behind what was really in the authors mind as he was writing the book. Of course, authors try to protect

themselves by protesting that the interpretation was not what they had in mind or that the interpretation had carried logic too far. Therefore let me enter a caveat here by stating that I am prepared to accept upfront any disclaimer by Governor Ohakim that my deconstruction of his work had carried logic beyond the logical interpretation or as the late Dr. Mbadiwe might have put it, the Professor has carried logic beyond logic.

Having identified the phenomenal growth of South Korea whose per capita income grew from \$100.00 in 1963 to \$10,000.00 in 1995 to \$24,000.00 in 2007, Governor Ohakim wrote: "what's not often mentioned is the important role of a military ruler who laid good institutional and policy framework for the exponential growth of South Korea. He is General Park Chung-Lee who was military Head of State from 1961-1979 (a total of 18yrs. Who will accept that in Nigeria, where we believe that everybody was born to be President or Governor or Senator or Minister?)...What made General Park a great leader? He was a visionary leader who offered his country men and women a definitive and compelling vision and rolled up the sleeves to make the vision real" As for Malaya, it was the Malay intolerance of the drive of the Chinese that led Mohathir Mohammed, the Prime Minister of Malaysia to drive the Chinese out of the Federation.

So where do all these leave us? Governor Ohakim's political heroes were not beneficiaries of zoning, federal character, power rotation or any such abracadabra that characterise Nigerian politics. The one thing that can be said for them was that they delivered. Governor Ohakim states clearly: "I am not a fan of Machiavelli's the end justifies-the-means philosophy of life". But I will leave you to reconcile what his heroes look like with his declaration.

Early on at the beginning of this review article, I said that Governor Ohakim was taking a risk writing a book so early into his administration as he would be laying down a vision by which he wished to be judged. It is also evident that his heroes are achievers. Governor Ohakim has measured up to the task by given details of what he is doing to match action with words in Imo State. His campaign manifesto was titled "THE MAN AND HIS MANIFESTO". After he won, he got the stakeholders to come together and adopt a document called "THE NEW FACE OF IMO—STRATEGIC PATHWAY". First issue which he has tackled was the clean up of Owerri which has graduated from being "one huge refuse dump" using the words of the Governor to becoming by 2008 "the cleanest city in the country" according to the Federal Ministry of Environment, Housing and Urban Development.

Another project which the Governor describes as "one of our flagship projects" is the IMO WONDER LAKE PROJECT which is projected as the biggest and best tourist location in West Africa,

Another project is the opening of a trading floor of the Nigerian Stock Exchange

Another project is the floating of a N200 billion bond from the market to execute a plethora of development projects.

True to his word of not embarking on an ego trip, Governor Ohakim has taken deliberate steps to keep "alive and functional, the schemes and projects of previous administrations of the state that are viable and tailored to bring lasting development to the state". Such projects include the resuscitation of

Adapalm, the oil palm plantation, and the Umuna 34-hectare fish farm first established in the 1980s by Chief Sam Mbakwe.

Another project was the setting up of the Imo Job Centre and its subsidiary, the Finishing School, to tackle the problem of unemployment.

If I were to mention not to talk of discussing all the policy initiatives of the Ohakim administration I would have to write another book on the projects.

The vision behind all these projects was put by the Governor this way: "In Imo, we are laying the foundation for long term growth and economic stability. We are shunning the allure of popular flash-in-the pan projects that bring immediate glory but add no value to our society. We are initiating projects that will stand the state firm on its feet for life"

As extensive as this review article is, it has not covered all the details that should be covered because this is a book that is full of details especially on the projects that he has embarked upon since his assumption of office. What I have sought to do is to give you the general flavor laced with tantalizing bits of the details.

HAPPY READING AND THANK YOU.