

# Why Kenyans should read from the same script

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As the clock ticks towards 2012, I am reminded of a small matter that I had brought forth in the Leadership Challenge section of our organizational newsletter (Newtimes E-Newsletter) in October 2010. Not long before, Bishop Margaret Wanjiru had recaptured her Starehe Constituency seat, which covers the Central Business District.

Further, it was soon after the promulgation of our current Constitution. Seemingly, the said matter was relevant then as it is, even now. Thus, in view of the ongoing trends regarding appointment of senior public servants, it may be worthwhile reproducing the then communication.

Accordingly, "one of the foremost philosophers in this world goes by the name Socrates and lived in ancient Greece. This famous Greek is the man behind the Socratic wisdom of inspiring change. During his time, Socrates, kept on questioning whatever was happening to the society. In the process of sharing his thoughts and feelings, Socrates was constantly getting huge followings, especially from the youth.

Regrettably, his popularity and ideas pricked the then political elite the wrong way. Eventually, this man of immense wisdom was sentenced to death through drinking a heavy dose of poison. Despite his physical death, the spirit of Socrates refused to die. Many years since, we still widely apply the Socratic wisdom.

It is this wisdom that brings change. We keep on asking ourselves why we do things this way or that way. Why not improve? What would happen if we change this or that way? How would we do things differently? The same questioning has led Kenya into getting where it is today. Indeed, some courageous Kenyans continued challenging the situation as the rest of us watched in consternation. Eventually, it became a national movement of seeking change, whose benefits we are now enjoying.

So, those people who keep questioning with a view to bringing change in our homes, organisations, and national situation become agents of change and therefore leaders in their own rights. As expected of leaders, they take risks, challenge the situation, share their vision, influence others, innovate and finally bring progress. Unfortunately, change of direction sometimes creates discomfort for some.

Whereas it is the wish of most people to hang onto known comfort zones, it is worthwhile realising that our situations have changed, probably for good. Ethical leadership and governance as prescribed by Chapter 6 of the new constitutional order may soon take shape, if the spirit and intent is realised. Did you read like me that, leadership in this country's public sector will now be about service to the people?

Meanwhile, the electoral conquest of Bishop Margaret Wanjiru, my city MP, is admirable. Allow me therefore to share some thoughts with her as my representative in the August House. In any case, I have no other route of reaching this all important house.

"Hon Bishop, much as you have done a great job therefore your re-election, your profile

can invaluablely escalate if, we can reason together. Notably, new ideas and principles on ethics and leadership have been outlined in Chapter 6 of the new Constitution. You can actually play a leading role in entrenching these ideas.

But, as a guide, I will refer you to the three stanzas of the National Anthem, which were sung during the promulgation of our new Constitution, on 27th August 2010. Personally, I have on many occasions guided my training delegates in singing this anthem during various sessions. The consensus arrived after analysis of the experience is that, our nation has great hidden values. Did you know that our national values actually exist in the national anthem?

Hon Bishop, these values in the national anthem are not only very prayerful, but also borrow heavily from the "ten commandments, "which you are fully conversant with. As you consider the values therefore, I hope and pray that the Holy Spirit will guide and use you in pursuing the necessary legislation of entrenching the same, in the context of chapter 6 of our Constitution. More importantly, I urge you to carefully consider each detail of our national anthem in this endeavor. Indeed, I am convinced that this approach could easily eliminate most of the ethics and governance challenges, which have consistently threatened our continuity as a united nation.

Hon Bishop, as your constituent, you are assured of my full support (and that of many others) in 2012, if you can successfully execute this project, which is very close to my heart. Ideally, it may benefit all of us, if you can be an agent of transforming ethics and leadership through fortification of national values, for permanent positive change." Kind regards,  
Central Business District Constituent.

In the meantime, we have in the recent past witnessed numerous lost opportunities especially during the ongoing recruitment of senior public servants. Some candidates have become casualties of ethical dilemmas, which they had encountered along their career paths. And since there were no guiding national values, those concerned only followed their own conscience and philosophies, which sometimes led them into doing what they are now being crucified on.

Even more worrying is the fact that we are soon becoming a devolved nation where administration will largely revolve around counties. Without common national guiding values, how shall we be identifying with the Kenyan statehood? A likely scenario is that majority may conveniently withdraw into counties, thereby entrenching retrogressive ethnicity which may not auger well for a progressive Kenyan state. In this regard, fortifying of the new constitutional order, calls for a strategic entrenchment of national values, so that all Kenyans can be reading from the same script.

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