

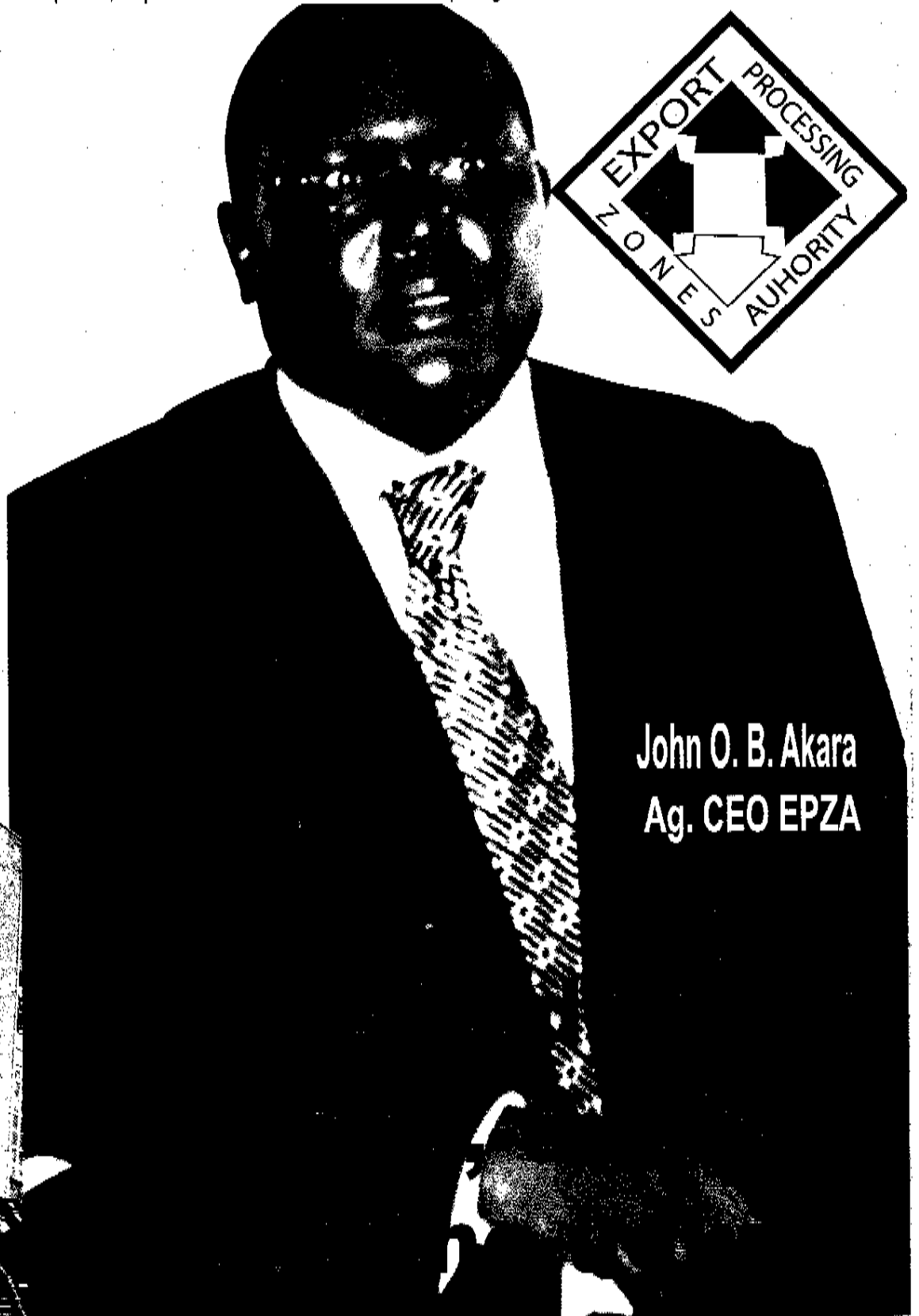
The Charismatic Leader

Spirited, inspirational and Motivational Leadership Magazine

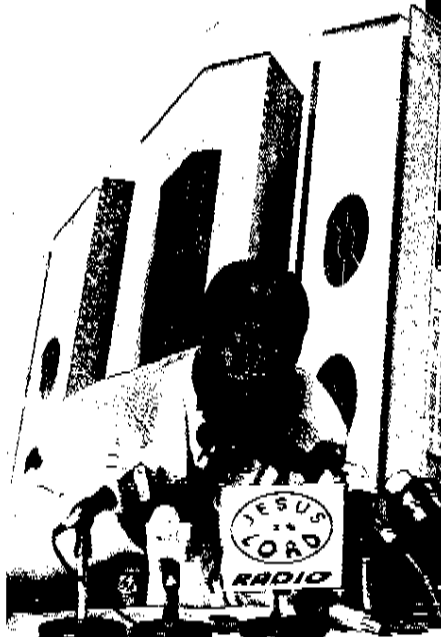


Kenya Neem Foundation
takes care of the environment

Kenya Gospel and Movie
Celebrities on why the work
begins now



John O. B. Akara
Ag. CEO EPZA



Why Can't the Church Leadership
listen to Dr. (Prophet) Owuor?



An. Samuel Malambo



Mr. Oliver Kisaaka



Mr. Mike Gitonga



Rn. Julius Mbai



Hon. G. M. B. Wamahwa



Above: Robert Kamanzi, Pr. Fred Afwai, Kenneth Ambani, and Victor Mbuvi

Kenya: the work begins now

Mukami Njiru

On the 27th December 2007, Kenyans went to vote as it has always been the tradition in Kenya. It was all usual until the results were announced, which were said to have been stolen and the country went into anarchy, pain, death and looting.

The political unrest characterized the country for the first two months and untold losses in terms of human lives and property will never be recovered. The crisis came to an end with a former UN chief Koffi Annan - arranged mediated talks in March this year. It was a relatively a brief political crisis. But the losses are unprecedented.

Unfortunately, neither side won. In any case, the displacements affected both ODM and PNU supporters, who among them were the biggest losers. However, the political consequences of the crisis are far-reaching. This crisis has led to the

highest number of otherwise known as "internally displaced persons" (IDPs).

The crisis shattered the myth entertained by Kenyans that Kenya was always a highland of peace.

The Charismatic Leader hosted several young influential Kenyans Artists for lunch and a chat.

It is no doubt that Kenyan artists are very visible and command a loyal following. How then can the local Kenyan artists take advantage of this to preach peace with a view to bringing unity to Kenya? Healing is a process and therefore not going to be a one-day affair. Now that the political solution has been found, this is when the real work begins. As long as there is calm, the artists can be able to take their music and plays, poems or stories to different parts of the country. "Kenyans have gone through too much pain," says Kenneth Muigai

Ambani, a Kenyan screen celebrity. "As the politicians do their bit, it is our duty as artists to be on our toes talking to our people and preaching unity. It is our duty to visit every constituency and remind our people that we must sit side by side like brothers, the way it was before the elections, We must face up to the truth, come up with long term solutions and ran away from our tribal cocoons. We must start thinking as Kenyans." As things stand now, it is common knowledge that the elections announcements triggered or gave opportunity for underlying issues that had been seething for a long time to be expressed, albeit violently. But issues aside, we have to mend our country. This is our country and we have to find solutions, as there is no otherwise. If there are issues, we must address how these issues began, the harm they have caused and the way forward. "The politicians

Kenya: the work begins now

have reached a political solution, but on the ground it is another story," says Robert Kamanzi a Nairobi based music producer who relocated from the then war torn Burundi. He has seen it all before, he knows the repercussions and he has come up with a very sound advice. "Whatever grudge one has against his brother cannot go away just like that. Some change of one's mindset has to come about." On that note, the main message that the artists aim to pass on to the people is that God works in mysterious ways. Sad as it may be, it is good that these underlying issues came out so that they may be dealt with now. Otherwise, we would not have known how serious things were. But God never does things without solutions. "There is always a solution and we, artists, are His messengers so we have to go back to the people and preach peace and understanding. After all, it is God who put us together and none of us chose where or when to be born. If He didn't want us to co-exist, He would not have put us together in the first place," says rKey. God knows that we can get along with each other. He knows that it is possible to work things out, whatever it is. And in working things out, we become close. That is the message that Kenyan artists have to preach because Kenyans have to live side by side. "In countries like Tanzania, you never hear introductions like, 'mimi ni M'Sukuma, M'Nyamwezi, M'Songea etc.," adds Mr. Ambani. "They have all these tribes yes, they could even be more than our forty two, but they speak Tanzanian. They speak as Tanzanians." It is good to be proud of one's ethnic identity. It is good to be proud of being a Kalenjin, Luhya, Kikuyu, Mzungu and etc. It amounts to being a Kenyan. But above all, the Kenyan factor should prevail. A good example of a Kenyan identity is Pastor Fred Afwai, Country Director of Global Education Fund, a US based NGO running students' sponsorship program. "We don't look at the student's ethnic background. As long as they are academically qualified and needy, we sponsor them," says Pastor Afwai. "We are currently looking for schools that can accommodate students from all Kenyan communities." So far some of their students from the Luo and Luhya communities have been admitted in schools in Machakos district. They also

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hold periodical meetings with all their students as they are in different schools. But these students don't come together as people from a certain community or from a particular school. They gather together as beneficiaries of the Global Educational Fund. "If we can encourage and have more of such umbrellas that bind people for different causes, then it is possible to have a firm Kenyan umbrella," says Pastor Afwai. People need to learn that loss of lives is not worth the elections, political affiliations, or these other material things. Once you start shedding blood, that blood calls out for more blood in form of revenge and it can go on for years. Whatever you do now will affect your children and the generations to come. You shed blood now and your grandchild will have to pay for it. "It is therefore our duty as artists to preach and take Christ's love to the people," says rKey. "Jesus already shed blood for us. Why should we shed more? Jesus paid the price and everything else can be worked out. People must understand that in war there are not winners. In Rwanda, everyone was a loser. You can't be a winner if half the people are dead." The artists aim to reach out to the people and bring back hope. Those who lost everything and those who are awaiting resettlement may have lost hope. Under most circumstances, a hopeless person is a very dangerous person. One never knows what they might resort to. On the other hand, those who committed the crimes need to know that it is not too

late for them. God can and is willing to forgive them. But these crimes must not be repeated. Artists unanimously agreed that the form of National ID's should be rechecked and changed to reflect their effort to make a one Kenya. "We must therefore address our leaders so that the Kenyan ID card can cease to be tribal," says rKey. "This is because one does not apply for an ID card on ethnic grounds but as a Kenyan. It is a Kenyan ID card." This can go a long way in negating tribalism because no one will honor or dishonor on just by looking at your ID card. It will also be less frustrating for Nairobi born Kenyans to attain an ID card. Yes, we do have a Nairobi tribe. It consists of Kenyans whose rural or ethnic roots were uprooted a long time ago. Even before their parents were born. When the application forms demand that these people fill in 'their' rural locations, villages, and etc, they get really frustrated. Why force people to 'belong' to a place they've seen only in their geography books? Why can't they be accepted for who they are? Plain Kenyans! "Today in Burundi everyone is Burundian. In Rwanda everyone is Rwandese," says Mr. Kamanzi, who is also a music writer. "Everyone there is a human being and identification on tribal lines is like walking on red hot metal. We should therefore teach people to be National not tribal." Kenya should borrow a leaf from Rwanda Ken Ambani, though, says we have a little problem. "The problem with our politicians is that they are opportunists and the easiest way for them to rule is by dividing us. That's what they learnt from their predecessors, the British colonialists, segmentation." As Africans and owners of the land, why should we continue swallowing that prescription forty years after independence? We have never changed the way the colonialists looked at us, packaged us and stored us in various segments of this country, in tribal cocoons. "We must keep reminding the politicians that are some of the issues that need to be dealt with," says Ken. "They must stop dividing and ruling and concentrate on development and empowerment all Kenyans." A challenge to all artists, therefore, is to come up with lyrics and scripts, to come up with plays, stories and poems that address these issues.