

Address of the Vice Chancellor

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at

**The 2006/2007 Academic Session Matriculation Ceremony of
Covenant University, Canaan Land, Ota
Nigeria**

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**Text of the Vice-Chancellor's Speech at the Matriculation Ceremony of
Covenant University, on the 12th of January 2007**

The Chancellor and Chairman Board of Regents of Covenant University, - Dr David Oyedepo,
Our Beloved Mummy -Pastor Mrs Faith Oyedepo,
Distinguished Members of the Board of Regents, Covenant University,
Our Royal Fathers here present,
All Principal Officers of Covenant University,
Members of the Senate of the University,
Faculty and Staff of Covenant University,
Kings and Queens of Hebron, our own dear Students,
Representatives from other Universities
Special and Invited Guest,
All Parents here present,
Members of the Press,
The Matriculants – undergraduate and post-graduates students, the reason for this gathering,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

It is indeed a great privilege to welcome you to the fifth undergraduate and 4th postgraduate matriculation ceremony of Covenant University, as well as the first combined postgraduate and matriculation exercise of the University, a clear reflection of our growth as a University.

In welcoming you, let me state that by your presence you are becoming part of an age old tradition dating back to over 800 years ago when the University of Bologna, the world's first University was established. Whereby by the act of matriculation the student was provided a formal process of entering and becoming a student of the University. In the case of Covenant University you are also being inducted today to be a part of the process whereby a new set of students are offered the opportunity to have a pride of placement into the Hall of fame which the Covenant University Graduate

and Alumni is fast becoming and we are confident will become even more so in the years ahead.

At Covenant University you are becoming part of a University built on the highest ideals of what a University stands for while responding to the modern world by meeting the very clear challenges presented by the evolving world paradigms we live in and in the process helping to redefine the University of tomorrow and more importantly the university product we expect our matriculants to become.

About 150 years ago John Henry Newman addressing the question of what Is a University? said

“a University is a place of concourse, whither students come from every quarter for every kind of knowledge... It is a place where inquiry is pushed forward, and discoveries verified and perfected, and rashness rendered innocuous, and error exposed, by the collision of mind with mind, and knowledge with knowledge. It is the place where the professor becomes eloquent, and is a missionary and a preacher, displaying his science in its most complete and most winning form, pouring it forth with the zeal of enthusiasm, and lighting up his own love of it in the breasts of his hearers... It is a seat of wisdom, a light of the world, a minister of the faith, an Alma Mater of the rising generation.”

The American Association of University Professors expressed this beautifully in 1915:

“All true universities, whether public or private, are public trusts designed to advance knowledge by safeguarding the free inquiry of impartial teachers and scholars. Their independence is essential because the university provides knowledge not only to its students, but also to the public agency in need of expert guidance and the general society in need of greater knowledge...”

These postulations remain true today even though we may need to make it relevant not only to our times but also to our environment. This becomes more essential than ever as we recall the words of a great African Statesman; Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, who said:

“We must in the development of our universities bear in mind that once it has been planted in the African soil it must take root amidst African traditions and cultures”.

In addition to these foundational University premises we at Covenant University under the leadership of the Chancellor are also aware of unique challenges facing the

product of the modern day African University by the evolving patterns and trends of the modern world.

Today we live in a world that has become a global village or in the words of Thomas Friedman an “a flat world... old hierarchies are being changed.. the playing field is being levelled” a world in which boundaries and distance are gradually giving way as communication and technology enhance interactions across the physical divides which separated ancient man. This rapidly shrinking world has also become a Supernova of rapid development with discoveries and new ideas emerging at a rate never before known to man while the access to knowledge is being democratised across boundaries. In this new world there is no doubt that Africa has tended to take a back seat, a situation which we are committed to changing by redefining and refining the idea of a University for our time.

WHAT THEN IS COVENANT UNIVERSITY?

Covenant University is a growing, dynamic vision-birther, vision driven University, founded on a Christian mission ethos and committed to pioneering excellence at the cutting edge of learning. Our mandate as a University is to revolutionize the educational landscape of Africa. Ours is indeed a rescue mission in education, driven on the platform of Christian ethos and life transforming values. The integration of the fundamental requirements stipulated by academic and professional quality assurance bodies, a global-outlook and impact driven learning emphasis, provides a powerful synergy for empowerment in enabling the inculcation of intellectual and creative abilities via a platform of a solid commitment to self-discovery.

In the words of the Chancellor of Covenant University Dr David Oyedepo.

“The core emphasis and goal of the mission of Covenant University is the provision of an alternative to existing regimented training programme of the Nigerian educational system, by promoting integrated education which is life applicable and life promoting.”

We are driven by the compelling vision of raising a new generation of Leaders for the African Continent on the platform of a Holistic, Human Development and integrated

learning curriculum, in order to raise Total Men who will go out to develop their world. Our Core-Values of Spirituality, Positive Mentality, Capacity Building, Integrity, Responsibility, Diligence and Sacrifice are what defines our commitment to excellence.

As a University, we look back with gratitude to God for the many achievements in our short developmental history which continue to validate our base for relevance. In this time, we have emerged as a University of reference. This has culminated in a number of national and international recognitions the most recent being our invitation to the Commonwealth Education Partnership, with this; we have become a recognized university note among Universities in the 52 nation states of the Commonwealth. This is in addition to its emerging research platform for addressing challenges of our immediate context and community impact drive in a way that connect Universities to their immediate and external context when addressing the idea of a University from a global context of influence. Our graduating class also have via our total graduate programme an innovative addition to the higher education curriculum are packaged for the world of work and the demands of the realities of the external contexts of the Universities thereby ensuring a bridge relationship between Universities and the societal contexts where our students will eventually function. Our commitment to Human capacity development is built on our commitment to the restoration of the dignity of the Black man. It is in this regard that staff and faculty have continued to operate in a context where potentials are given full expression and performance adequately rewarded and motivated for performance and continuous improvement.

TO OUR PARENTS

To our parents we congratulate on this most worthy investment of sending your child and ward to Covenant University. Let me welcome you on board as a Covenant Parent as we partner together to raise a new generation of leaders. Our goal is not pedestrian but visionary, you have not brought your children and ward to a university that just provides a certificate but rather is in the act of producing visioners and revolutionaries for our times. We would therefore need you TO identify with us by

imbibing the core values we represent, reinforcing them in your relationship in your wards and representing them even in the context of the home. As Partners we would welcome and expect you to make positive impact and contribution to our continued drive for excellent performance and the raising of a disciplined army of world changers

TO THE EXTERNAL COMMUNITIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL

COMMUNITY - We are aware that to fully actualize the Covenant University dream we would need to establish effective, strategic partnerships with relevant significant others who we believe have important roles to play in helping us achieve our goals. Let me therefore seize these opportunity to invite some of you represented here to become partners with us as stakeholders. We would therefore be open to any relationship which would be instrumental to help us achieve our objectives, an objective which we are sure would be of mutual benefit to the relevant sectors of our world. We are pleased to note that we are already having meaningful partnerships in each of these areas but as an organisation with very serious commitment to high growth and performance we will always remain open to any enriching partnership.

It is especially noteworthy that this matriculation comes right on the heels of the first Convocation ceremony **dubbed the release of eagles where the culture and tradition of releasing eagles was instituted.** The feedback about the quality and conduct of our graduates has been most humbling and empowering. The reports from the field is that our graduates are making impact and adding value to the different contexts where they are serving, thereby justifying the tag of “eagles” By this matriculation therefore, all matriculants are being admitted as eaglets to be prepared, nurtured, developed and eventually released to take your place in the eternal skies, soaring to inspire a world desperate for meaningful change and direction.

TO OUR MATRICULATING STUDENTS

Therefore to our matriculating students, as we formally receive you into this University, you are being inducted into a place where we would expect you to develop world visions and the ambitions to provide solutions to a world very much in

need of solution providers, trailblazers and torch bearers of dynamic reforms and societal, national and continental renaissance and reconstruction. During your stay here you will be given education on the cutting edge, embodying best practice across programmes, you will also be fired up in zeal, vision and undying passion by the curriculum and ethos of the University in becoming Total men and women and by the adherence to our strict code of conduct we would expect to teach you the value of disciplined and dignified conduct providing you in the words of the Chancellor royal rules to groom you for your Kingship and Queenship status.

To our Postgraduate matriculants, our commitment to the creation and expansion of the knowledge frontiers in ensuring that breakthroughs and new paradigms are developed indicate that you have a key role in the continuing evolution of Covenant University, as John Perry Miller, Dean of the Yale University Graduate School from 1961 to 1969, describing the purpose of post graduate education, to lead "forth each successive generation to greater knowledge, greater understanding and greater mastery of themselves and of the world." In this pursuit, we combine "a respect for the inherited body of knowledge and values with a curiosity and disciplined skepticism [that] seeks to perfect this heritage." You are therefore as co-labourers to a world that is fast losing its borders, while expanding its knowledge base and this is your opportunity to entrench the contribution from the African context by the theoretical concepts and theories you will postulate and solutions that would add value to the quality of life of the people of Africa in particular and the world at large

APPRECIATION

Permit me to take a few seconds to appreciate the Principal Officers, Faculty and Staff of Covenant University who continue to work hard and demonstrate unusual dimensions of commitment and service in actualization of the Covenant University. We are excited about the expansions of our staff base with the continuous recruitment of high caliber staff and distinguished professors which is an essential component of the U niversity's quality and efficiency base .

At this point may I respectfully and humbly recognize and acknowledge the Chancellor of Covenant University for his obedience to an obviously Heavenly vision and his dedication to driving the fulfilment on a day in day out basis. His passion and exemplary leadership in carving out a unique place fuelled by visionary perspective of transformation and change continues to not only inspire us, but provide us very real, visible and palpable leadership in his actions, his thoughts, decisions and of course his deeds in living his creed. We are privileged to have him as a worthy and notable leader indeed

Finally I wish to give thanks and Praise to the most high God who alone is worthy of praise and who enables us all to fulfil the wonderful concept he has given in Covenant University. To him and to him alone be all the glory.

In conclusion let me leave you all with excerpts written by the Black American poet Maya Angelou

'On the Pulse of Morning' written in 1993

*... Lift U p you Eyes U pon This day breaking for you. G ive birth aga in To the dream
Women, Children, Men, Take it into the palms of your hands.*

Mold it into the shape of your most Private need, Sculpt it into The image of your most public self. Lift up your hearts

Each new hour holds new chances For new beginnings. Do not be wedded forever To fear, yoked eternally To brutishness... .

The Horizon Leans Forward, Offering you space to place new steps of change, Here, on the pulse of this fine day You may have the courage

To look up and out and upon me, the Rock, the River, the Tree, your country,

No less to Midas than the mendicant. No less to you now than the mastodon then.

Here on the Pulse of This New Day You may have the grace to look up and out And in to your sister's eyes and in to Your brother's face, your country And say sim ply Very simply With hope Good morning.

Thank you for Listening and God Bless you.

Prof. Aize O.I. Obayan,
Vice-Chancellor,
Covenant University.