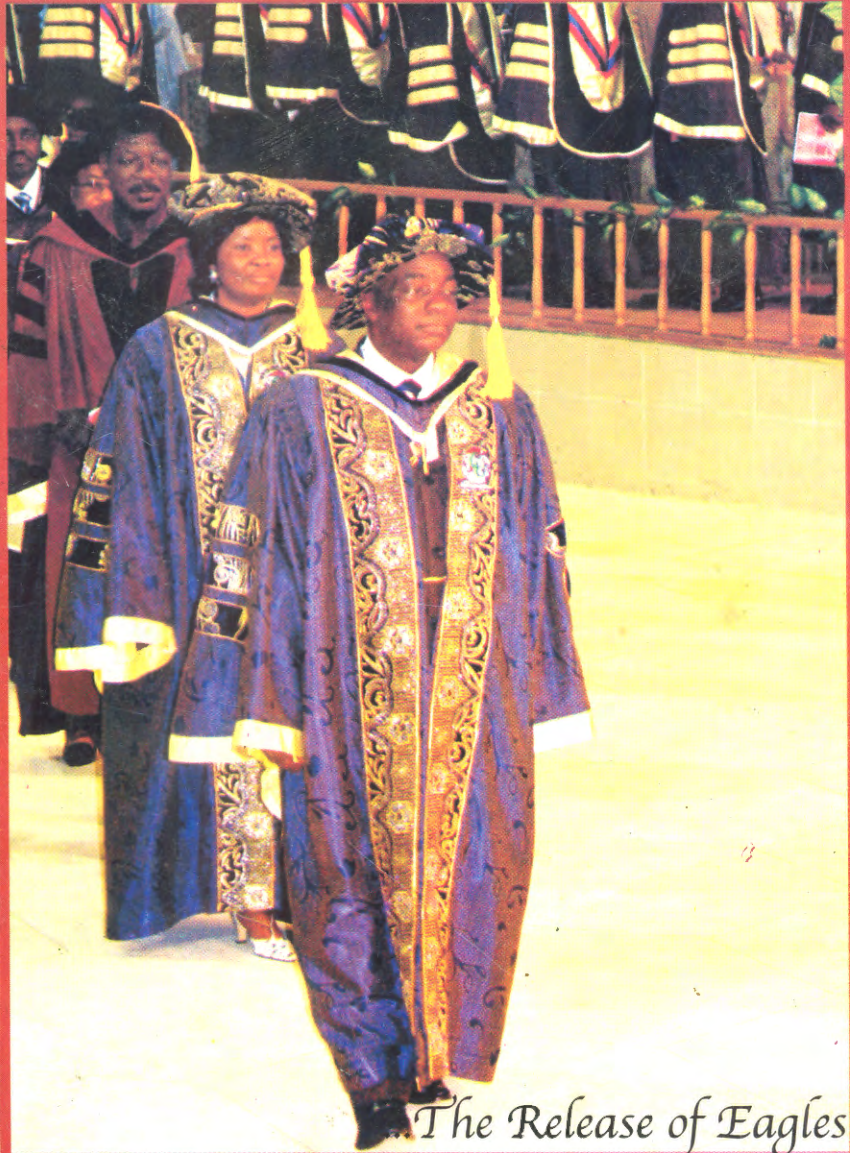
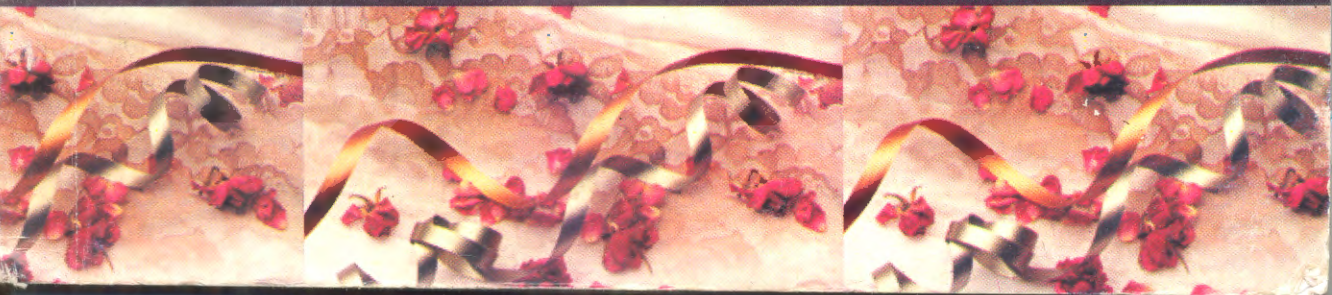
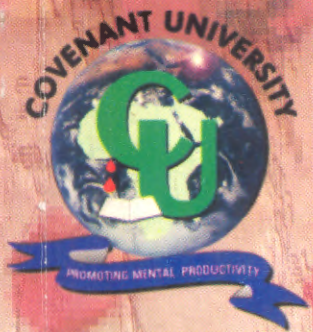


Covenant University  
**1<sup>st</sup>**  
Convocation Ceremony  
Lectures and Speeches



*The Release of Eagles*







# Covenant University

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1st  
Convocation Ceremony  
Special Lectures  
and Speeches

*...The Release of Eagles*

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July 24 - 30, 2006

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**The  
Vision and Mission of  
Covenant University**

An Address delivered by  
**The Chancellor, Dr David Oyedepo ,**  
Covenant University, Canaanland, Ota,

**AT THE  
FIRST CONVOCATION CEREMONY OF  
COVENANT UNIVERSITY, OTA,  
JULY 28, 2006**



# 1

## **The Vision and Mission of Covenant University**

*By*

***Dr David Oyedepo,  
Chancellor, Covenant University,***

It was Martin Luther King Jr. that said "If any man has no purpose for living, he is not fit to live". In the same vein if anything has no purpose for existence it is not fit to exist.

It surely takes a well-defined vision to command an enviable result.

Ancient wisdom states "where there is no vision the people perish, but he that keeps to the vision happy is he".

Without a vision is a people made naked. This implies that vision

is the custodian of colour and beauty of destiny.

However, before proceeding with the definition of the vision and mission of Covenant University, I will like to state briefly the function of the involvement of the church in modern educational development.

What is the business of the Church with education? I believe some historical background will help in answering this question.

### **Contemporary Education in Nigeria: A Historical Perspective**

May I invite you all to explore with me the beginning of contemporary education in Nigeria and how it relates to the advent of Christianity.

The history of education in Nigeria and indeed the world at large can never start nor end outside the advent and advance of Christianity.

The first known school in Nigeria was established by Mr. and Mrs. de Graft in Badagry in 1843 and the school was named "Nursery of the Infant Church".

Though the Methodists established the first "School" in Nigeria, it was the CMS mission that made the most important early contributions. They had by 1845 established two schools in Badagry before proceeding to Abeokuta.

Samuel Ajayi Crowther, the foremost indigenous educationist, missionary and nationalist, opened the first school in Eastern Nigeria in Onitsha in 1856. The school was for girls ages 6-10.

Though the primary objective of the early Christian Missionaries was conversion, functional literacy was the essence of the established schools.



The years between 1842 and 1882 were marked by intensive missionary activities. The colonial government left the educational activity absolutely to the missions and that era is notifiably termed the era was exclusive Christian missionary education, especially in Southern Nigeria.

The educational expansion programme of the churches was on the increase up to 1929. Without doubt, the missions had good hold on their objectives for setting up the institutions.

Vocational training was, for instance, added to the educational programme. At Abeokuta for example, and later at Onitsha, Lokoja and Calabar, agriculture, carpentry, brick laying and ginnery were encouraged by the CMS, the Church of Scotland and other missions.

In Topo, near Badagry, the famous Topo Industrial School for Delinquent Children was established in 1876 by the Roman Catholic Mission.

To achieve these educational development objectives, the missions like CMS and Methodists set up management boards to help regulate curriculum, teachers' salaries and conduct.

Though by 1925, the British Government had, for the first time, clearly defined education policy, the hold of the Christian missions on the educational development of Nigeria was not on a decline as they continued to open more schools while colonial government's efforts were rather concentrated on making some significant, though irregular assistance, to some of the missions in their educational work.

In 1912, there were 59 government primary schools. Three years earlier, in 1909, the first government secondary school Kings'

College was founded in Lagos. That was exactly 50 years after the first missionary secondary school (CMS Grammar School) was established in 1859.

Other missionary secondary schools established before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were:

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| I) Saint Gregory College, Lagos (RCM)    | - 1876     |
| ii) Methodist Boys/Girls High School     | -1878/1879 |
| (iii) Baptist Boys High School (Baptist) | - 1885     |
| (iv) Hope Wadell Institute, Calabar      | - 1893     |

By 1922, total government and assisted schools were 195 with a population of 28,000 while unassisted which were largely mission schools, were 2,432 with a population of 122,000.

By the 20<sup>th</sup> century the advancement in contribution to education became overwhelming as was beyond the "big four" (i.e. the Methodist, the CMS, the Baptists, the Roman Catholics) as many other missions were born and there was an explosion of both primary and secondary education in Nigeria.

It was these education explosions that were largely responsible for the move towards Nigerian Independence and to a larger extent the economic growth and development of the nation in the past decades.

### **The Evolution of Higher Education**

However, between 1930 and 1950 due to accentuated demand by the people for more educational facilities, there was an historic expansion in education. This explosion was in spite of the worldwide depressions of 1929 -1935, the Second World War between 1930 - 1950 and the Nigerian Nationalist Movement, which spanned the period and led to self- government and independence between 1952 and 1960.



It is consequently appropriate to briefly trace here the development of Nigerian higher education which was firmly established during this period.

The Fourah Bay College which has played a pioneer and conspicuous role in the history of higher education in West Africa was founded in 1827 by the Church Missionary Society to "train ministers, teachers, and lay workers for the church."

The institution more than any other in or out of West Africa is known to have opened the way to higher education for students, not only in Nigeria but also from all former British colonies.

The college is known not only to have produced scores of West African clergymen, school principals, teachers and civil servants, from Bishop S. A. Crowther, its first Nigerian graduate (who also acted as its principal several times), Nigerian graduates of the college continue to occupy influential positions in Nigeria! From its inception till 1950 (over 100 years) more than 50% of the student's population were said to be Nigerians.

Therefore, following the trend of history, the present wave of mission involvement in promoting higher education can be easily understood - That was where it all began.

This is due to the service-oriented nature of the Christian mission which is much more committed to investing into lives than the quest for financial returns which is the driving force of the business sector. I therefore believe that Christian missions will be increasingly involved in contributing to the educational development of our great nation.

As the pressure for higher education opportunity mounted, the Elliot's Commission was set up and while submitting its report in

1943 it recommended the establishment of Ibadan University College which started in 1948.

Admission was strictly contingent on job vacancy and its entrance standard was known to be considerably higher than that required by Cambridge School Certificate.

The First indigenous administrative machinery to examine higher education in Nigeria was the Ashby Commission Report issued in October 1960.

Apart from its liberal recommendation on the establishment of higher education in Nigeria, it also recommended that "the new Nigerian Universities should be independent of one another and each should confer its own degrees."

### **The Influence of the Church in Contemporary Education: A Global Perspective**

There is perhaps no better way to prove the above assertions than to study the cases of universities all over the world that had worked by the elicited perspective. It is particularly instructive to understand the purpose and influence of higher education in the American nation.

For example, Christians started the first 150 colleges in America and they were all founded on very strong biblical principles. It should therefore not become a surprise that the nation enjoyed rich Christian heritage that built such a huge human capital for her as education and Christianity went together like hand in a glove. Many of American founding fathers were graduates of these Christian universities. This experience was consequently and lavishly reflected in the American constitution with effects that had generated deep ripples across decades and generations until



the percolation of secular humanism.

Should you not have wondered why Greek intellectualism, which came much earlier before America discovered the power of knowledge and gave birth to great philosophers like Socrates, Aristotle, and Plato, has much less positive influence of knowledge and technological identity. Whenever Biblical background is missing, education can not be profitable. Have you thought about the fact that most of the landmark inventions of all times were by ordinary men who were committed thinkers and who had rob their little minds with that of the only wise God? For the Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens (Prov. 3:19).

### A Short Tour of Some World-Class -Universities.

1. **Harvard University (oldest institution of higher learning in the US.**
  - Established 1642 (the first new academic building was completed in 1644).
  - Original establishment purpose: To advance learning and perpetuate it to posterity: **dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to the churches.**
  - Leadership: the first non-clergy president was elected in 1708 i.e. 166 years after its establishment.
  - Christian culture. Harvard made it a basic rule for learning that every student must understand that the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ is the only foundation for all sound knowledge and learning.
  
2. **Yale University**
  - Established 1701. The institution is also founded on Christian doctrine and actually instructed her students to obtain the clearest conception of divine things and enforced concrete regulations to lead them to a saving knowledge of

God in His son Jesus Christ.

### 3. Princeton University

Other American institutions that excelled by Christian foundation are Princeton University which demanded that every student attend worship in the College Hall morning and evening at the hours appointed and that they must behave with gravity and reverence during service. It was also mandatory for every student to attend Sunday service.

### 4. Columbia University

Similarly, Columbia University would not accept any student that could not render in English the gospel from Greek.

All of these universities never shifted on their Christian values and standards. This can be seen in their rules, regulations and even staff constitutions. It is instructive that America today owes her sustaining values to these institutions.

What is more, these Christian institutions with unwavering commitment to Biblical principles are also the leading universities in the world today.

Rank	University
1	Harvard
2	Cambridge
3	Stanford
4	University of California Berkeley
5	M.I.T. Boston
6	California Institute of Technology
7	Columbia
8	Princeton
9	University of Chicago
10	Oxford
11	Yale
12	Cornell University



All of the above details I believe must have helped in answering this question.

We can now proceed to look at one subject: The Visions and Mission of Covenant University.

How did Covenant University come about?

What is Covenant University out to achieve and how is Covenant University going about this?

As I began to observe the obvious decadence in the educational system of the nation, the uncertainties in the schedule of university, the incessant interruptions of the academic calendar and the poor quality of graduate turnout, passion began to burn in my soul, which I believe was a form of gestation which eventually led to the birth of Covenant University vision.

My passion for change began to grow by the day, particularly as the situation in our universities began to grow worse with cultism and other evil vices.

Subsequently, after we acquire this property for the ministry, and in the process of allocating the land for various uses, that I connected with tangibility of the Covenant University vision as we clearly earmarked the present site of the campus on the ground breaking service day for Canaanland back in August 1998.

The vision of Covenant University has been carefully captured in a three-fold mandate as follows:

#### **Our Mandate**

- “Raising a new generation of leaders through a qualitative and life-applicable training system that focuses on value and skill development.”
- “Raising a new generation of leaders through a broad-

based qualitative education built on sound biblical principles culminating in the birth of path-finders, pace-setters and trail-blazers.”

- “Raising a new generation of leaders who shall redeem the battered image of the black race and restore her lost glory as these trained army of reformers begin to build the old waste, repair the wasted cities and raise the desolation of many generations.”

However, in order for us to achieve this set goals we must build on a very strong platform.

It was this demand that led to the crafting of the founding philosophy of Covenant University which in the main emphasizes a needed departure from the tradition of schooling to dynamics of learning and living.

### **The Founding Philosophy of Covenant University**

A departure from 'Form' to 'Skill'

A departure from 'knowledge' to 'empowerment'

A departure from 'figures' to 'future-building'

A departure from 'legalism' to 'realism'

A departure from 'points' to 'facts'

A departure from 'mathe-matics' to 'life-matics'.

How then do we achieve this laudable objective?

### **Our Core Values**

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, our leadership thrust as a university is built on a set of values which we refer to as our core values. That is a Covenant University culture put in place to secure the colourful future of our students. These includes:

#### **Spirituality**

This refers to instilling the fear of God into the life of men and



women in the university, particularly our core product; the students. It is an understanding that no one can have genuine feeling for men without the fear of God. This is why the fear of God is a fundamental requirement for effective leadership.

We believe the fear of God is fundamental to a successful career in leadership and since our vision and mission is to raise a new generation of leaders, which is considered the greatest need of this generation, particularly in our part of the world. The fear of God therefore remains a non-negotiable factor in the pursuit of our mandate.

### **Possibility Mentality**

At Covenant University, we believe that the mental picture of a man is what defines his actual future. Our mission is to stimulate the dream of royalty and dream of dignity into our students so that they can begin to develop a royal attitude, cultivate royal habits and form royal character so as to fulfill the Covenant University dream of raising a new generation of leaders.

James Allen once said "a man is literally what he thinks". It was Manley Snergy that said, "sow a thought, reap an act, sow an act reap a habit, sow a habit reap a character and sow a character reap a destiny".

### **Capacity Building**

Capacity here centres around skill development and we believe that lack of skill can kill any dream. While spirituality and mentality position man for leadership, it is capacity that enables him to deliver.

Capacity in this context can be defined as possessing the ability to deliver a given task. This is why Covenant University will remain committed to academic excellence and continue to drive our students through the crucible of personal development in pursuit

of their individual dreams. It is skill that turns trash into treasure. Our mission is to inculcate an untiring quest for capacity building, enhancement of professional capabilities and personal development into our students.

### **Integrity**

Lack of accountability in my view is the bane of leadership in our nation. When truth is off the street, destinies are trampled under feet. There is need to recapture the virtue of integrity in our society today.

Someone has said, "people hear what you say, but they will only end up doing what you do". Leadership by example therefore is the greatest need of our time. Until you can boldly say "follow me" you are not qualified to lead. This takes hard work, not of flesh and blood, not of strength and vigour, but of heart and conscience. It is working on oneself to be worthy of one's vocation.

### **Responsibility**

It was Malcom Forbes that said "a man who enjoys responsibility usually gets it. A man who usually likes exercising authority usually loses it." We are committed to inculcating a sense of responsibility to our students. We expect them to respond to issues as demanded not as convenient. We believe in the place of discipline for effective leadership.

It was George Washington that said, "Discipline is the soul of an army, it makes small number formidable, it procures success to the weak and esteem to all". Here at Covenant University, our students are not permitted to do what they like but they are compelled to do what is right at all times.

### **Diligence**

Nothing enhances worth like work. Every high flyer is known to be a hard worker. You cannot eat your cake and have it. You cannot



make omelet without breaking eggs. Every leader is a worker and every committed worker is a potential leader.

Here at Covenant University, we believe in the dignity of labour. We extol the servant-leadership philosophy. We believe that commitment is the greatest qualifier for attainment. We believe that no one is committed to lead without taking the lead. And we believe that taking the lead demands that one goes the extra-mile. This is why hard work is one of our celebrated core values. We expect all our students to be hard workers, tireless workers and creative workers. *“Sees thou a man that is diligent in his business, he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men” (Prov. 22:29).*

Where you find yourself tomorrow is a function of your diligence today. Nothing works like hard work.

### **Sacrifice**

Every great leader of all time has a story rooted in sacrifice. Sacrifice is the ultimate price for outstanding leadership. It is quality sacrifice that defines great leadership. No one can get out of life more than what he is willing to put into it. Jesus Christ paid the ultimate price at the cross, gave his life a ransom. Today, about 2/3 of the world population still subscribe to His leadership, 2,000 years after He departed the planet earth.

You cannot lead a cause indeed for which you are not willing to give all you've got. Sacrifice in our view is going the extra-mile, paying the extra price and giving it all it takes within and even beyond your powers to deliver the goods. Our students are being trained to raise altar of sacrifice in the pursuit of their dreams and vision. You cannot impact the world without paying a global price. It is sacrifice that makes stars. Every star carries a scar of sacrifice.

These core values when fully bought into by faculty staff and students, shall provide an effective and valuable process that

fosters on the desired change. We are already moving fast into turning it into our guiding concept, giving language and expression to our unique destinations of all-round, world class excellence in research, teaching and community services. The reception, the articulation, the adoption and the sharing of the vision by all key players in the University is our approach for accelerating the pace of dynamic change for the transformation of our community or society.

### **Our Uniqueness**

A set of programmes is vitally unique to us at Covenant University and they help to define the uniqueness of this institution. These include:

#### **Total Man Concept (TMC)**

TMC is unique and novel in Africa. The fundamental philosophy of TMC is premised on accessing the total make-up of human kind from the spirit, soul and body dimensions. CU believes that it is not just enough to offer an education/learning package which will stimulate students intellectually, but rather a package that will instill values of character and integrity in the students in relation to the needs of mankind in all aspects of life. Emphasis is also placed on learning and teaching within a conducive environment. On the physical dimension the students are made to engage in different sporting activities to enhance their physical fitness.

#### **Entrepreneurial Development Studies (EDS)**

Also, we have an in-built Entrepreneurial Development Studies (EDS), which makes learning not only pedagogical but practical and life- applicable as well as practitioner-based. The focus of the Entrepreneurial Development Studies programme is to inculcate in the students the spirit and discipline of enterprise and entrepreneurship. The scope covers all CU students at various levels and programmes. Externally, Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) investors, the youths, women and other



members of the immediate community also benefit from the programme. EDS, has established a village where the practical side of entrepreneurship is demonstrated. Each student is expected to develop some entrepreneurial skills in selected areas. The CU Community Bank is central in the actualization of the rich entrepreneurial programmes of the university.

### **Faculty Support Programme (FSP)**

Covenant University is perhaps the only tertiary institution in this part of the world where faculty members, as a matter of deliberate policy, relate with their students in such diverse and vital areas as knowing their menu list, study programmes, career prospects and expectations as well as their challenges. In short, faculty members do not only impart knowledge through teaching, research and community service but go the extra-mile to interact with their students in fulfillment of one of our founding objectives of serving as *in loco parentis*. This laudable idea is packaged under the Covenant University's Faculty Support Programmes (FSP).

### **Towards Total Graduate (TTG)**

Another important aspect of the evolving learning culture at Covenant University is the crowning programme for our graduating class, known as Towards a Total Graduate (TTG). This is a unique approach to ensuring that students of Covenant University are turned out as being worthy in character and in leadership at the point of graduation. The course, which is integrated into the University's holistic and life-applicable curriculum, is designed to specially package the student and deliver him to his world upon graduation, as an agent of change, set to take charge of his environment and break the barriers of limitation confronting our nation and continent at large. Some of the unique subjects offered at TTG course include: *The World of Work, Dynamics of Economic Dignity, Success Concepts, Life Long Learning, Principles of Integrity, Marriage and Family, and Total Quality Management*. Others are *Principles*

*of Total Health, Business Management Principles, Christian Work Ethics and Wisdom that Works.* Every student of Covenant University is expected to fulfill the requirements of this programme.

### **Our Plan for the Future**

Our plan for the future includes the following:

- i) To vigorously pursue the vision and mission of Covenant University for academic excellence and leadership development through institutional entrenchment of our core values.
- ii) A commitment to developing our capacities to such level that Covenant University shall be rated among the world-class universities in no distant future.
- iii) To pioneer excellence in the university's statutory functions and right at the frontiers of knowledge in the world.
- iv) To continue to produce quality graduates through the entrenchment of our custom-built programmes.

In furtherance of all the above our specific strategies shall include:

- Pioneering teaching excellence by implementing teaching quality assessment, communication and skills development.
- Formulate and implement a research policy for the University in areas of immediate needs for the community or people and by developing training programmes for research skills.
- Make efficient use of all financial and manpower resources through intensive development and utilization of staff skills.
- Overcome staff shortage in critical areas by embarking on an intensive head hunt and implementation of reward parameters that promote productivity and excellence.
- Intensify our student development initiatives by establishment of self-development mentoring programmes and establishment of skills development centers.



- Conscious outreaches to make higher education relevant by relating with real life issues and providing relevant models of education as vehicle for restoration of dignity of man.

We will be achieving greater external / community impact through organizing of more topical public lectures, media campaigns and other outreach programmes.

### **A WORD FOR OUR GRADUANTS**

May I in conclusion say to our graduating kings and queens, remember where you come from which is Covenant University,

Remember our values and share them

Wherever you may choose to go, uphold your supremacy

Fight for the cause that is right.

Your alammata, Covenant University, and your nation, always hold dear.

May the good Lord bless and keep you all.

### **Conclusion**

May I at this point salute the Proprietors of this University, that is the Living Faith Church Worldwide, also known as Winners' Chapel, a Community of strange men and women, deeply sold out to God - a peculiar people in deed!

A people with a sense of mission, indescribable commitment, unwavering dedication to the cause of Christ and Humanity. Worshipers at Winners are no mere members but committed followers. Every Winner is a potential leader by all standards.

I am privileged to lead this army of dedicated followers and these emerging leaders. Today, thousands within this mission are employers of labour and tens of thousands are self employed! You have demystified Christianity by your practical commitment to the pursuit of life and purpose.

Only four years ago, we stood together to embark on the Vision of establishing a world Class University. Today, four years after, the first fruits are here before our very eyes! The colossal edifice that

our joint collaboration with God has built stands out today as an eloquent global testimony.

People from all walks of life around the world travel long distances to experience the beauty of our ever serene Campus. Congratulations! God is proud of you and so am I.

May I make it known to this august assembly that the entirety of the Covenant University project has been executed debt-free and stress-free, all because the Proprietors stood up to the challenge willingly, cheerfully and sacrificially.

I salute the unity of faith prevailing in the Winners' Family, the unity of purpose and the implicit trust that you have all reposed in my leadership.

I salute once again this noble army of God's people!

Shall we all rise and give a standing ovation to the Proprietors of Covenant University, The Living Faith Family, also known as the Winners' Chapel International. Thank you.

Again I want to thank the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria who is ably represented by the Honourable Minister of Education, members of the Board of Regents, the Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission - Prof. Peter Okebukola and the convocation keynote speaker Dr. Mensa Otobil among many other prominent personalities present at this historic convocation.

Thank you ALL!