



Covenant University

1st
Convocation Ceremony
Special Lectures
and Speeches

...The Release of Eagles

July 24 - 30, 2006



**As
The Eagles
Are Released...**

A Speech delivered by
The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Aize Obayan
Covenant University, Canaanland, Ota,

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

**AS
THE EAGLES
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It was Peter Senge of Harvard of University who said "if any idea about leadership has inspired organizations for thousands of years it is the capacity to hold a shared picture of the future we seek to create" At Covenant University with the release of eagles at this the First Convocation ceremony we declare that the future starts now.

Your Excellency, The President and Commander-in-Chief, Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo

Your Excellency, Otunba Gbenga Daniel, The Executive Governor of Ogun State

The Hon. Minister of Education, Dr. Obiageli Ezekwesili and other Members of the Federal Executive Council here present
Hon. Members of Senate and Federal House of Representatives here present

Your Royal Majesties here present

Chancellor and Chairman of Board of Regents of Coven
The Vice-Chancellors of other Universities here present
Deputy Vice-Chancellors here present
The Registrars of other Universities here present
Dean of Colleges and School of Postgraduate Studies
Members of Senate
Members of the Diplomat Corps
My Lords (Temporal and Spiritual)
Graduands and Students
Gentlemen of the Press
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Four years ago this University opened its doors or rather gates to its pioneer students (about 1400), over 700 of who are graduating today excluding those in the Engineering and Building sciences. The Class of 2006 is made up of 724 persons in 17 disciplines viz Accounting, Business Administration, Industrial Relations and Human Resource Management, Marketing, Economics, Banking and Finance, International Relations, Policy and Strategic Studies, Political Science, Psychology, English Language, Literature in English, Mass Communication, Public Relations and Advertising (The first ever such programme in any Nigerian University), Sociology, Computer Science and Management Information Systems. It is indeed with great pleasure therefore that I welcome you to this the first ever convocation of Covenant University here at Canaan Land, Ota tagged "The release of Eagles"

From, its inception as vividly expressed by the Visioner and Chancellor Dr David Oyedepo, Covenant University opened with an ambitious vision to foster a revolution in the educational landscape of Africa.

As part of this revolution we set out under the visionary leadership of the Chancellor to effect new standards for academic performance and output from the Nigerian University system. For

a start we became the first University in Nigerian University History to start on its permanent site with all the 1325 students fully accommodated.

We innovated in our curriculum by introducing for the first time in any Nigerian University the concept of the Total Man with the determined objective of bringing up students who would have not only academic know-how but would also be competent at dealing with the essential issues relating to life and living. Today this programme has become a major subject of discourse as Nigerian Universities seek ways to bring out graduates with a robust and positive perception capable of dealing with our society's many challenges.

We innovated again by introducing from 100 level the Entrepreneurial Development Studies programme designed to provide our students with entrepreneurial skills to operate in today's world either in a self employed capacity or working in a different work context. We are pleased to note that following our lead this programme will become a compulsory part of the University curriculum across Nigeria from 2007.

The University under the leadership of the Chancellor also set to provide students with possibility consciousness and the University Chaplaincy worked to provide them with the God connectedness required for success in life.

We were under God's favour able to provide an enabling learning environment with up to date facilities, a stable calendar, a serene setting and a continuously innovative curriculum backed by leading edge technology. All this against a backdrop of discipline and the strict maintenance of a code of conduct designed to prepare these graduands for dealing with the external environment as Kings and Queens.

To this high octane diet we were privileged to add the influx of very high quality, high calibre and highly dedicated staff at all levels all fired by a commitment to attain our revolutionary vision.

The preliminary results have been humbling and the glory must go to God; The University attained accreditation in all programmes presented at the first time of asking and emerged

overall best in the exercise; Our students have continued to win awards around the world; our academics have continued to spearhead new pathways in research and development with this University hosting four truly International conferences in the last 15 months.

In the last six weeks as we prepared our eagles we have initialled them in engaging the society at large by the introduction of the Total Graduate programme and the Community Service initiatives. The feedback and response from the host communities has indeed being outstanding. This is why as we release these eagles into their flights we see them as the vanguard of a new generation destined to change Africa and restore the dignity of the Black man.

Today as well we are also proud to produce our first set of Postgraduate students. We are particularly pleased that these are the products of the Covenant University YATRAP programme. YATRAP which is short for Young Academics Training Programme is a special initiative of Covenant University by which young and brilliant candidates are identified and processed through our postgraduate programmes to ensure that the University has available to it a young and growing crop of academics in the not so distant future developed through the system and manifesting the core values of the institution thus effectively addressing the widely growing challenge of the ageing professoriate which is currently affecting the University system in Nigeria. It is exciting to note today that the programme has proved highly successful with 21 of them graduating today with Masters degrees in such specialisations as Accounting, Banking and Finance, Psychology, Computer and Management Information Science, Civil Engineering, Public Relations, Sociology, Psychology, Marketing, Business Administration and Economics.

I am pleased to announce that their performance as a group has justified the rationale for the programme as all 21 of them did brilliantly well and qualified for the Ph.D which they will now embark on as part of their programme. As they carry our hopes forward we celebrate them and are confident that with the

potential they have shown our future is in capable hands as an academic institution.

To the undergraduate graduating set, today you begin the journey we and you have worked so hard to prepare you for. We know that without a doubt you are a *unique group* with unique endowments and we are confident you will make us proud. In the words of Tony Blair "*The time for talking is past, it is time to do*"

To the many people who have contributed to making this University what it is today; the consortium who prepared the original document and Academic brief, the Advisory Council, who helped to shape its content, the Board of Regents, who provided the necessary drive and support, we wish to appreciate you all. I also at this pint specially recognize the contributions of the pionieer Vice- Chancellor of Covenant University, Professor Bola Ayeni for charting academic pathways essential for laying the foundational bricks for the many achievement we celebrate today. At an occasion of this nature, while celebrating our very first convocation, it important to recognize and appreciate the role of the Nigerian Universities Commission and especially the outgoing Executive Secretary, Professor Peter Okebukola for their support and active faith in our visionary contexts at every point. So many others have contributed that we cannot list them all. To each and everyone we say thank you.

To the parents of the Graduands today, I say, hearty congratulations. I salute your tenacity and commitment and celebrate your role in bringing this day to pass. It has indeed been a privilege to partner with you in this great venture, once again, Congratulations.

To the Chancellor who caught the vision and has given so much in drive, commitment, personal involvement and more than we can ever say, I on behalf of the Management and Staff of this University wish to salute your vision sir and say at this solemn and joyous occasion that it has been a privilege to share in this great work.

Thank you sir for allowing us to be partakers in this great and obviously divinely inspired assignment

In closing let me say without equivocation that It has been a wonderful experience having the pioneer set here at Covenant University. Together we have walked visionary pathways as revealed by God Himself, to our Dear Chancellor, Dr David Oyedepo and yet today release you we must, for Eagles must fly and fly you must because it is your time to soar!

Thank you all.

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