



Covenant University

4<sup>th</sup> Convocation  
Ceremony

An illustration of four eagles in flight, positioned behind the word 'Convocation' in the main title.

Special Lectures  
and  
Speeches

*...The Release of Eagles 2009*

Vol. 1, No 4, June, 2009

SSN: 2006-0319

Produced by Corporate & Public Affairs, Covenant University  
Km. 10 Idiroko Road, Canaanland, P.M.B 1023, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria  
Tel: +234-1-7900724, 7901081, 7913282,7913283. Website: [www.covenantuniversity.com](http://www.covenantuniversity.com)

Published by Covenant University Km. 10 Idiroko Road, Canaanland,  
P.M.B 1023, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria  
Tel: +234-1-7900724, 7901081, 7913282,7913283. Website: [www.covenantuniversity.com](http://www.covenantuniversity.com)

# Contents

The Chancellor's Speech - <i>Dr. David Oyedepo, Chancellor, Covenant University</i>	4
The Vice-Chancellor's Address - <i>Professor Aize Obayan, Vice-Chancellor, Covenant University</i>	15
Welcome Remarks - <i>Dr. Daniel Rotimi, Registrar, Covenant University</i>	31
Reconstructing the Nigerian Education Landscape: Road Maps for Driving Innovations and Development. - <i>Professor Oye Ibidapo-Obe FAS, FA Eng., OFR</i>	33
Global Citizenry and Communication Pathways: Emerging Paradigms for Leadership and Nation Building. - <i>Dr. Victor B. Oladokun</i>	48
A Keynote Address - <i>Prof. 'dibu Ojerinde</i>	79



**Dr. Victor B. Oladokun**  
*(International Media Relations Consultant and Presenter of  
Turning Point- Christian Broadcasting Network)*

# 5

## **Global Citizenry and Communication Pathways: Emerging Paradigms for Leadership and Nation Building.**

By

**Dr. Victor B. Oladokun**

**(International Media Relations Consultant and Presenter of  
Turning Point- Christian Broadcasting Network)**

### **2. Introduction**

It is a wonderful privilege and an honour to be invited to deliver the 2009 Convocation Lecture at Covenant University. As I reviewed the list of distinguished and prominent past speakers here at Covenant University, I will admit that I was filled with a sense of awe and trepidation. Following in the footsteps of those who have laboured before me and on whose shoulders I stand, I committed to be here today on account of a great sense of responsibility and deep respect for Covenant University's leadership. I would like to use this opportunity to thank and honour Chancellor Dr. David Oyedepo; Distinguished Madam Vice-Chancellor, Professor Aize Obayan; Principal Officers of the University, and members of the Convocation Ceremony Committee for providing me with this rare and privileged opportunity to add a few footnotes to the Convocation Lecture series of this exemplary and innovative institution of academic excellence.

I had the privilege of graduating from the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University). Back in the day, Ife was acknowledged as one of Africa's most beautiful and aesthetically pleasing campuses. However, as we collectively take in the picturesque architectural beauty of our setting today, I must admit that Covenant University easily stands in a league of its own in comparison to many of our nation's institutions of higher learning. As we gather here today, I am reminded that it was only seven short years ago that the foundation stone of Covenant University was laid. It was also seven years ago that the first intake of students commenced studies at this citadel of academic excellence, innovation and creativity. Since then, hundreds of graduates, a new generation of leaders and Eagles have been released to soar in the market place.

In this very short period of time, Covenant University has been nationally and internationally recognized. Your fine institution has won numerous prestigious awards, including most recently, the 2009 *Best Private University Award*; the 2009 *Best (ICT) Information and Communication Technologies-Driven University of the Year Award*; and the 2008 *Fastest Growing Private University In Nigeria Award*. Each of these accolades is not the result of luck or happenstance, but rather the intentional, proactive and visionary foresight of Covenant University's leadership.

Kindly let me use this opportunity therefore to most sincerely salute and honour Chancellor (Dr.) David Oyedepo, who in my humble opinion stands head and shoulders above many in this great nation for his far-sighted leadership. The gathering today of this august assembly is a reflection of, and a testament to your God-endowed wisdom and your fastidious commitment to creativity, innovation and excellence.

To the graduating class of 2009, this is indeed an occasion for great celebration. I congratulate you on your stellar performance and for successfully surviving the intellectual rigours of academe. I am confident that as you go into the market place, you are doing so in the knowledge that men

and women of great minds have patiently laboured over you in instruction and in prayers. Keep in mind that more than ever before, our nation and our world needs a new generation of leaders who are imbued with a spirit of excellence and a renewed mind. I trust that at this point in your career, Covenant University's core values of *spirituality, a possibility mentality, capacity building, integrity, responsibility, diligence and sacrifice*, rather than being mere platitudes, have become deep-seated life-changing principles that you will carry with you for the rest of your lives. This being the case, I have every confidence that you will go forth from these hallowed halls of academic excellence and fulfill your God-given potential as transformational agents of change in your generation.

3. On that note, kindly let me proceed with my lecture, which is aptly titled - *Global Citizenry & Communication Pathways: Emerging Paradigms for Leadership & Nation Building*. As the title suggests, what I intend to accomplish during the course of this lecture is to create a synthesis between globalization, the competencies of global leadership, communication in a 21<sup>st</sup> century marketplace, and the compelling need for strategic foresight driven by creativity and innovation, as it pertains to nation building and organizational transformation.

4. **Leadership In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century** As my point of departure, I would like to posit that in an era of hyper-change, the most critical need of our time today is leadership. However, like many other words that come into popular usage, the word 'leadership' has been bandied about so much so that it has a tendency to be misunderstood and misconstrued. If you ran a Google search for the word "Leadership" in 2006, it would have returned 20 million search results. A few days ago while completing my research for this presentation, I ran a similar Google search. In contrast to 2006, my search returned an amazing 166 million results - eight times more than three years ago. With so much interest in leadership, one would expect that there would be universal understanding and agreement of what leadership is and is not. However, the reality is that the concept of 'Leadership' is still an elusive word subject to numerous meanings

and definitions. Janda (1960) describes Leadership as a “*mysterious process.*” According to Yukl (2006), 'leadership' contains “*extraneous connotations that create ambiguity of meaning.*” In spite of such ambiguity, there is no shortage of definitions. But let me share three definitions that I feel are pertinent to this presentation.

*Rost (1983) states that,*

*“Leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes.”*

*According to a renowned SCHOLAR in the field, Warren Bennis (1989),*

*“Leadership is a function of knowing yourself, having a vision that is well communicated, building trust among colleagues, and taking effective action to realize your own leadership potential.”*

*However, within the context of nation building my preferred definition of leadership is Ciulla (2004), who states that-*

*“Leadership is not a person or a position. It is a complex moral relationship between people, based on trust, obligation, commitment, emotion, and a shared vision of the good.”*

*For too long, organizations, communities, governments, and nation states have limited the horizon of “leadership” to a person or to a position. But leadership is much more than this. It is a complex moral relationship between those who develop a vision and champion a cause, and the influence such leaders have on followers who willfully submit to and share in such a vision since it is in the interest of the common good. Leadership that is coerced and forced is not authentic leadership. Leadership that is*



*merely based on position is ephemeral and short-lived. Leadership that is not based on mutual trust, obligation, commitment and a shared vision in a common good, cannot sustain an organization let alone a nation. Regrettably, on a national level, we have not been unaccustomed to these forms of leadership.*

#### *5. Globalization & Global Leadership*

*According to Bartlett and Ghoshal (1992), today "The greatest risk ... is that companies are trying to implement third generation strategies, using second generation organizations, with first generation managers." In the early part of the 21st century, there is a compelling need to re-think what is required for global leaders to effectively do business in cultures different from their own. Only then can we develop a framework for understanding what it takes to innovate, develop new strategies, and create new organizational designs, products and services in a global market, as well as constructively and creatively develop multi-disciplinary strategic platforms that will affirm Nigeria's place in the firmament of nations.*

*Many organizations wrongly assume that leadership competencies translate from a national to a global platform. This is not necessarily the case, as we will see. There are in fact numerous leaders who are unable to make the transition to global leadership simply because they lack the required competencies and coping mechanisms for working with, and building successful cross-cultural teams. Today's academic, business and government leaders require competencies that enable them to grow and integrate their institutions, organizations and nations by leveraging skills, abilities, and mindsets on a global level. This will not happen by chance. Rather, it will be the product of concerted effort.*

#### *6. The Dark Side of Leadership*

*I do not intend to use this presentation to unpack the history of leadership studies or to expound on leadership styles, theories and models, even though they have their place. However, I would like to quickly make a few*

*distinctions with regard to the dark side of leadership, authentic (good) leadership and global leadership in order to build a foundation for the rest of the presentation.* According to Washbush & Clements (1999), our inability to acknowledge and examine the “dark side” of leadership distorts efforts to learn about leadership and promotes a blind-eye approach to studying influence attempts. We should for example be able to have a consensus of opinion that Germany's Hitler or Vietnam's Pol Pot though charismatic, influential and 'effective' were hardly the paragons of good leadership, in the mold that Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jnr., or Mandela, are. With regard to Nigeria, if any one leader who has led on the dark side comes to mind, may I suggest that you fill in the blanks!

Not too long ago, a sports article in a British newspaper caught my attention. A once-leading Premier League Soccer team that has since been relegated to the lower division had just hired a new coach. On his first day on the job the coach announced to the team – *“I am not here to play nice. I need you to get ugly!”* In other words he seemed to be saying - “Win at all costs. Do away with niceties, discard ethics and values, and push your game to the fringes of acceptable rules and regulations. Many leaders fit this profile and epitomize the dark side of leadership that often has disastrous organizational and national consequences. According to Eade (1996), despotic and autocratic leadership is a learned behavior induced by fear. To this I would add, fear of opposition, fear of contradiction, and fear of alternative ideas and opinions. In a globalized economy that is moving at hyper speed, there is no room at the top for leaders who only listen to their own counsel; who stifle creative ideas and who entrench the status quo. In the case of this particular football team, there were a number of things the new coach/leader failed to take into consideration.

I am reminded of the scripture in 1 Kings 12: 1-14, when the people of Israel pleaded with King Rehoboam, Solomon's son, to reduce the heavy yoke placed on them by his father. Rehoboam counseled with the elders who advised that he become a 'servant leader'. This is what the elders had to say-

*“If you will be a servant to these people today, and serve them, and answer them and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever.”*

Rehoboam promptly dismissed the elders. Not only did he not heed the elders' counsel, he 'got ugly' and promised to increase the yoke of his father and make life even more uncomfortable for his subjects. The new soccer coach would have done well to heed the elder's counsel in his attempt to unfreeze a losing culture, bring about change and refreeze a new winning culture. For change to take place in the aforementioned soccer team, as with many organizations and nations, a benchmarking approach would have identified new ideas and strategies, particularly from the players. Also, a more systemic approach by the organization would have allowed the team to work backwards, identify problems and thoughtfully examine the team's future in order to re-engineer and transform itself.

In the June 2009 Edition of the Harvard Business Review, Sean Silverthorne identifies 10 traits of bad leaders.

1. They lack energy and enthusiasm
2. Accept their own mediocre performance
3. Lack clear vision and directions
4. Have poor judgment
5. Don't collaborate
6. Don't walk the talk
7. Resist New Ideas
8. Don't learn from their mistakes
9. Lack interpersonal skills
10. Fail to develop others

We are all witnesses to businesses, institutions, organizations, and nations that never grow or reach their full potential on account of the quality of their

leadership. Here in Nigeria and in many nations of our dear continent we have had our own fair share of leaders who have been derelict in their responsibilities and failed to deliver on the hopes and expectations of those they had the privilege and honor to lead.

### **7. Characteristics of Authentic (Good) Leadership:**

While there is no one-size-fits-all definition of leadership, when authentic leadership occurs it is unmistakable and it leads to changes in organizations and changes in nations! Yukl (2006) and Winston (2002) identify a number of 'universal' characteristics of good leaders-

- Honesty and integrity (Act Consistent with Values)
- Kindness and compassion
- Humility (They serve others and causes greater than themselves)
- Righteousness (They do what is right before God & man)
- Purposefulness (They intuitively know why they have been called to lead)
- Courageous (They are willing to take bold risks)
- Develop Teams (They are not one-man wrecking teams)
- Justice and fairness
- Effective Communication
- Vision

### **8. CHANGE**

Change is a short and simple six-letter word that is evocative in its simplicity, but nevertheless is also not easily defined. Probably even more difficult to determine specifically is why some organizations and nations change successfully and why others don't. Your Excellencies, Honourable Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, Board of Regents, Ladies and Gentlemen, the reason why I believe it is important for us to make distinctions between authentic and bad leadership is that the ability of organizations and nations to change and reconfigure themselves, hinges on the quality of leadership. In a world characterized by hyper-speed, change is the currency for those who intend to successfully compete in the global market space.

It used to be, for example, that education was something you accomplished in approximately 16 years, and then you were done! Today by contrast, life-long learning is the norm for individuals, leaders, and organizations that intend to remain on the cutting edge of what is happening globally. While I have already congratulated the class of 2009 for its accomplishments, let me also say in this global dispensation, “Your lifelong journey of learning has only just begun!”

According to Canton (2006), more technological innovations have been created in the last 25 years, than there has been in the last 10,000. It is estimated that over the next 25 years, the rate of change scientifically and technologically will increase four to five times more than what the world has experienced between 1909 and 2009. That is an amazing level of exponential increase that has implications for global citizens, global leaders, transnational corporations and individual nations.

### **9. Questions**

The first set of questions that were drilled into me as a student in Communication School were: “Why, What, Where, When, and Who?” If you were assigned a news piece and you received satisfactory answers to these five pivotal questions, you had a good chance of writing a pretty good story. As Global leaders and change agents, these are the very same questions I believe we need to constantly ask, anticipate and respond to. Within the context of global leadership and national development, these five questions can be unpacked as follows –

### **10. Unpacking the Questions**

- **WHY** is change happening?
- **WHERE** is change happening?
- **WHO** is driving change?
- **WHAT** mindset is required?
- **WHEN** will change happen?

### **11. WHY: Knowledge Obsolescence**

In the Age of Unreason, Handy (1998) states, "*If life is changing fundamentally, ... then creativity in our social order will be of immense importance. The status quo can't be the way forward, nor will the status quo slightly amended, be the best way forward.*" Suffice to say, the world, as we know it, is changing at hyper speed and the future that is coming will be vastly different from what we ordinarily expect it to be, regardless of discipline and area of influence. Why? The bottom-line reason is the obsolescence of knowledge! The life span of usable information has become shorter. As quickly as knowledge is created, not long thereafter does it become obsolete. What this means is that as leaders we are constantly involved in an on-going process of learning and unlearning.

### **12. WHERE Are the New Horizons of Change**

**While we admittedly cannot know the future with certainty, we must act in the face of uncertainty.** In *The Extreme Future: The Top Trends That Will Reshape the World for the Next 5, 10 and 20 Years*, James Canton (2006) predicts some of the following major trends—

- *Fuel Alternatives:* The high costs of oil will compel the West to develop and invent new and alternative energy sources. The consequence of this could be economic stagnation in OPEC countries and increased terrorism. The race to develop alternative sources of energy is already in high gear, so as a matter of national policy what strategies can Nigeria, as an oil-dependent economy develop in the face of what now seems inevitable?
- *An Innovation Economy:* The global economy will soon be driven by four power tools namely, Nanotechnology, Biotech, IT and Neurotechnology.
- *Longevity Medicine:* Scientific breakthroughs in Nanotechnology, Neurotechnology and Genomics, will radically extend life spans well over a hundred years, and in the process transform markets and societies.

Artificial Intelligence and Robotics: Two of the most anticipated technological breakthroughs in the not-too-distant future are what scientists and inventors have dubbed the Singularity – a coming together of a number of disruptive technologies; and Creation Machines – computers that will have the power to create knowledge. Both breakthroughs, if and when they occur will have profound consequences for the world we live in.

### **13. WHO are global change agents?**

I do not want to belabour the rôle of technology as a change agent especially since this is a well-trodden path in academe, business and government. Rather, what I do suggest is that there are other dominant and overarching global change agents who, as a matter of necessity, utilize relevant technologies to bring about development and transformation. These agents of change include –

- **Academic Institutions**
- **Civil Society**
- **Global or Transnational Corporations**
- **Governments**
- **Intergovernmental Organizations**
- **Faith-Based Organizations**

Working in concert, each change agent is a potent and powerful driver of sustainability and national development. In the increasingly networked global environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is imperative that leaders within these spheres of potential influence and transformation recognize the need for new ways of leading, that is - thinking, communicating, acting, collaborating and influencing. To do this effectively, it will require a Global Mindset!

### **14. WHAT? A GLOBAL MINDSET**

*Global leaders have a global mindset. They are able to connect the dots about what is happening in their own organizations, in their own countries, in other*

organizations and in other regions of the world. Global citizens and leaders have "global passports not just in their pockets but also in their minds!" What is a global Mindset? According to Global Futurist Professor Mansour Javidan, "a Global Mindset is a set of individual attributes that enable and facilitate global leadership." What are these attributes or competencies and how do they help global leaders anticipate and prepare for the future?

### *15. Global Competencies: A Definition*

Tina Jokinen (2005) provides a definition of global competences that I find to be apt, succinct and applicable, "... those universal qualities that enable individuals to perform their job outside their own national as well as organizational culture, no matter what their educational or ethnic background is, what functional area their job description represents, or what organization they come from."

We can unpack this quotation in many ways. But before we do it is worth reviewing this definition once again. So what are those universal or critical leadership competencies that are so necessary for navigating our disciplines, our organizations and our nation through the terrain of the global market?

### *16. Ten Competencies of Global Citizens and Leaders*

1. **Visionary.** They use multiple Strategic Foresight tools to scan the world for trends in every direction.
2. **Knowledgeable** about the world and the businesses they are involved in because they have learnt to ask more questions than provide answers. They have also learnt to limit their presuppositions and assumptions.
3. **No Fear of Failure**
4. **Culturally Savvy.** They understand and respect cultural differences and are aware of their own biases.



5. **Systems thinkers.** They are adept at handling cognitive complexity. They are problem solvers who are able to see the whole picture rather than just the parts.
6. **Worldwide Network of contacts and partners**
7. **Creative & innovative.** Open to new ideas
8. **Inspire and Build Trust** among followers, other peers and other leaders, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, culture or gender differences.
9. **Psychologically sound and confident**
10. **Effective Communicators.** They are able to clearly communicate and translate vision and strategy in a way that energizes others to action. After all, this is what global influence is all about. As global leaders, we may have the best concepts, ideas and strategies, but if we cannot communicate them effectively, the best of visions are simply DOA – Dead On Arrival!

Covenant University is a testament to this type of visionary global leadership. Once again honourable Chancellor and Vice Chancellor congratulations for translating what is in the mind, into the heart of those you lead and into concrete reality. Taking a cue from Nicholls (1994), global leadership can be exercised and categorized in three different ways –

- **Strategic leadership of the head**, which is concerned with path finding and culture building
- **Supervisory leadership of the hands** in which one adapts a leadership style to a given situation in order to create an effective organization and

- ***Inspiring leadership of the heart*** that engages people; provides energetic vision; and transforms followers and their beliefs by building a psychological ground for common action.

### **18. Communicating Globally: Road Signs**

My goal is not to dwell on the technical and technological aspects of communication but rather the human (that is personal and relational) aspects. My thesis is that in a global environment, both human and technological aspects of communication must come together. However, in a world driven more and more by technology, people are still the ones who make a difference. Since the pathways we adopt must be true to the humanitarian construct, we cannot afford to become overly seduced by technology or multi-media.

Although I consider myself to be a decent driver, on more than a few occasions while driving in a foreign country, I have been left confused by road signs. To locals the signs made perfect sense, but to me they did not. The symbols or the language used were foreign to me. I had no frame of reference. In such situations I tend to second-guess my driving skills and fear ending up in an unintended destination. Unlike local residents who seemingly drive around without a care in the world, by contrast I have had to very consciously depend on all my physical, mental and emotional faculties to simply navigate successfully. In many respects, so it is with communication in the global market place. We've all found ourselves in situations where we have had to (a) decipher cultural cues different from our own, (b) ensure that messages are communicated properly and (c) that the meaning of communication is properly understood within context.

As with many of the unfamiliar road signs I have come across, Gudykunst and Kim (2002) in *Communicating With Strangers: An Approach to Intercultural Communication*, note that "messages can be transmitted from one person to

another, but meanings cannot." It is the responsibility of the messenger to communicate meaning. Admittedly, this can be a challenge in a cross-cultural global environment. Cultural immersion is more than the acquisition of linguistic skills and frequent travel. Anthropologist Edward T. Hall notes in *Silent Language*, that "communication constitutes the core of culture" and "culture is communication and communication is culture." In *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values*, Dutch writer Geerte Hofstede describes culture as a "collective programming of the mind." According to Hall (1959) culture can be segmented into Monochronic and Polychronic systems, with each representing very distinct cultural attitudes toward time and communication. This distinction is critical for leaders attempting to understand and be understood when communicating cross culturally.

**Monochronic cultures** tend to perceive 'time' as a structured resource not be wasted, and is generally representative of countries such as the United States, Germany, Switzerland and other Scandinavian countries. It is logical to suggest that in the West, a longer tradition and familiarity with scientific management and business efficiency techniques such as Frederick Winslow Taylor and Frank B. Gilbreth's "*Time and Motion Studies*" has helped to entrench a Monochronic organizational culture that is characterized by linearity, a sense of immediacy, short-term relationships and a constant pre-occupation with the future--what I would term as the '*What Next?*' syndrome!

**Polychronic cultures** in contrast, are much more fluid, less structured, comfortable with the past rather than the future, and more in tune with relationships rather than tasks and deadlines. Polychronic cultures tend to be representative of countries, in Africa, the Middle East, South East Asia and a number of developing countries in Latin America. This explains why we generally tend to favor relationships over a rigid commitment to time schedules.

Global leaders understand, appreciate, respect and work within both cultures

with ease and do not get bent out of shape because their expectations have not been met.

Having made these distinctions, it is tempting to make generalizations. Global leaders however, are savvy enough to avoid this trap, recognizing that some cultures tend to have a mixture of both Monochronic and Polychronic cultures; that there are cultures within cultures; and due to the forces of globalization, cultures are in perpetual states of flux. For example, even though one can make generalizations about a Nigerian culture, the fact is, the country is a mosaic of hundreds of hybrid cultures and languages. There is particular way of 'being,' doing and communicating in Lagos that is different from say Oshogbo, Irukepe, Bida, or Ilela in Sokoto.

As an open system subject to adaptation and change, Weiss (1993) also makes the point that *"culture is open to foreignness ... and composed of elements having an unlimited number of meanings and interpretations."* Great Britain for example has on the-face-of-it, been a relatively homogenous nation of hybrid English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish cultures. At the same time, increased immigration from Africa, Asia and other parts of Europe, is creating a new ethnic, social and religious diversity, so much so that Britain is now, having to re-define itself on multiple levels – ethnically, religiously, socially and economically! The point is that in spite of seeming homogeneity, culture is not static but constantly evolving depending on the number of new inputs/ideas and the cross-fertilization between them.

### **Obstacles to Cross-Cultural Communication**

In *"Its Not what you say...its what you do"*, Laurence Haughton's 2002 survey of more than 12,000 senior and middle managers and frontline-workers, suggests that an astonishing 50% of American employees have a sense of working without a specific sense of direction. Such numbers are alarming especially when one considers that many of the organizations included in the survey operate globally. Among some of the factors Houghton identifies as being responsible for communication alienation are the fact that

people tend to be vague (contradictory, unclear, with inconsistent expectations) and that they do not allow sufficient enough time for *thinking*. There are many other reasons why communication and culture can become cross-wired.

- **Communication 'ceilings' and 'floors'**. Communication and information is stratified and not easily integrated across all levels
- **Age and status barriers**. In many cultures, a certain amount of deference is given to age and status. In such instances, a subordinate and 'boss' will tend not to engage in meaningful and in-depth conversations.
- **Face-saving mechanisms**. In some Asian and African cultures, a subordinate would rather lie rather than contradict someone considered superior, since doing otherwise would be culturally offensive.

Edward T. Hall makes the point is that “culture is communication and communication is culture.” This being the case, communication competencies are pre-requisites for influencing, coaching, mentoring, articulating vision and values, and developing goals and objectives. Global and cross-cultural leaders intending change should find some of the following proficiencies useful.

- ***Empathy/awareness***. Showing genuine interest in the culture of others and not coming across as culturally intolerant, superior or ignorant and being aware of one's own cultural predispositions.
- ***Cultural awareness***
- ***Good verbal and writing skills***. Leaders must learn to Keep It Short and Simple! In an age characterized by 'information-overload', good verbal and writing should be devoid of ambiguity and unnecessary jargon. The opening verse of the Bible in Genesis 1:1 – *In the*

*beginning, God created the heavens and the earth* - is a statement of profound simplicity. A complex scenario distilled to its essence in one simple sentence!

### **19. WHEN: Strategic Foresight**

When will change happen is the domain of Strategic Foresight – the ability to act while there is choice or long before your competitors are able to.

### **20. Value of Strategic Foresight**

For Global leaders, there is tremendous value to Strategic Foresight. Permit me to use the ill-fated transatlantic voyage of the Titanic as an illustration. On the eve of its launch on May 31, 1911 as it prepared for its voyage from Southampton, England to New York, an unknown employee of the White Star Line that owned the famous British ship is quoted to have said, *"Not even God Himself could sink this ship."* At the time, the Titanic was the most sophisticated and most technologically advanced ship that had ever been made. It was thought to be unsinkable. Tragically, shortly after setting off on its maiden voyage an iceberg sank it! Simple human error tragically cost hundreds of passengers their lives.

As it was with the Titanic, so it is with leadership in every sphere. Many times as leaders, the tip of the iceberg becomes our perceived reality and the limit of our horizons. However, what Strategic Foresight enables us to see is more than the tip of the iceberg. We are able to take in the full dimensions, depths, and contours of what lies ahead on the horizon. The question for us today, is what are the limits of our horizons. Are we just seeing the tip of what is considered to be reality or are we anticipating the challenges and opportunities that lie within and beyond our respective spheres of influence?

### **21. Seven Reasons for Strategic Blindness**

There are multiple reasons for strategic blindness. They include –

- Inability to act due to a limited horizon
- Busyness and a pre-occupation with the present

- Assumptions about how we see the world
- Fear of Failure & Repercussion
- Corporate Political Correctness
- Continuity
- Ignoring Intuition

Strategic blindness tends to be the norm in organizations where knowledge is not dispersed up or down through the organization, either because the boss or leader considers himself to be a sole repository of wisdom and knowledge; or because deliberate attempts are made not to filter information through the organization. As the saying goes, "*knowledge is power.*" Some leaders are acutely aware of this axiom and go to great lengths to ensure that empowerment through knowledge does not take place. The consequences of strategic blindness can be severe including internal rot, passivity, and the status quo; a loss of competitive advantage; **organizational dysfunction**; brain drain and a loss of intellectual capital to other organizations or other nations.

## 22. Seeing Strategically

The ability to see strategically can be likened to a Chess Grandmaster who through foresight and creative moves is able to think many steps ahead of the game. In similar fashion, speed, surprise, cunning, outmaneuvering, and high mobility are instruments of war and peace that great tacticians, military strategists and thinkers such as Nicholo Machiavelli, Napoleon Bonaparte, Alexander the Great and Sun Tzu have put to good use for centuries. Writing in the *Art of War*, the great Chinese general and writer Sun Tzu provides an apt phrase with regard to 'seeing' strategically.

*"A General must see alone and know alone, meaning that he must see what others do not see and know what others do not know. Seeing what others do not see is called brilliance, knowing what others do not know is called genius"*

The best defense is often a good offense. Leaders who are preoccupied

primarily with the status quo may never have the time to recover in the event of sudden change or adverse conditions.

The dynamics of change in every discipline and the imperatives of national development require that we develop new strategies, structures, systems and new ways of 'seeing.' The new leadership paradigm for organizations and nations mandates a need to anticipate the future rather than the problems of the past. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there is a need for educational institutions, corporate organizations and nations to anticipate "unknown unknowns" in advance.

How can leaders see and anticipate critical unknowns long before they appear on the horizon?

1. **Developing new and fresh assumptions** that accommodate alternative points of view and avoid groupthink. The renowned Management consultant Peter Drucker once said, "*The difficulty in times of turbulence is not the turbulence, but responding with yesterday's logic.*" In today's knowledge economy, no organization or nation can emerge successfully without strategic foresight.
2. **Mind-mapping** to improve cognitive biases and thinking pathologies as well as to explain and reduce complexity.
3. **Anticipatory foresight tools** to scan the horizon by developing a holistic information gathering system on governments, technology, national and global regulatory policies, media, financial, social and political trends
4. **Scenarios** to anticipate possible futures
5. **Enhanced knowledge sharing and communication capabilities**



6. **Organizational learning** by moving decision making to lower levels of hierarchy
7. **Resource Allocation** to strategic foresight and warning systems
8. **Connecting the future to an organization's strategic interests**
9. **Removing obstacles**

#### **24. Innovation & Creativity**

As people of faith, we accept, acknowledge and believe that our God is the God of Creativity and limitless possibilities. We also believe that we are children of a creative God and therefore the seeds of creativity are embedded in the fabric of our DNA. There is a temptation to think that technology is what provides an edge. This is not the case. Technology is simply a tool. The only competitive edge any nation, business, or organization has in the 21<sup>st</sup> first century is knowledge born out of creativity and innovation.

#### **25. Dreaming the Impossible**

As the saying goes, "Every new idea is an impossibility until it is born." In many ways, there is an element of strategic thinking and seeing that parallels dreaming about the seemingly impossible. Because strategic thinking is concerned with a future that has not yet arrived, not everyone will see what it is that you can see in the distant horizon. One of the reasons for organizational and national inertia, is simply because those who are saddled with the responsibility of seeing the future, cannot!

#### **26. Seven Ways of "Seeing" Strategically**

Global leaders are those who develop multiple ways of 'seeing' strategically-

1. **Seeing Ahead:** Is what strategic foresight is all about and what

- conveys a competitive advantage.
2. **Seeing Behind:** Involves learning from the successes and failures of the past
  3. **Seeing Below:** Is seeing at a deep level rather at a surface level
  4. **Seeing Beside:** Is the ability to surface and avoid blind spots
  5. **Seeing Beyond:** is confined to connecting the dots in the present in order to understand the implications for the future.
  6. **Seeing Above:** Is to look to the Lord who provides wisdom, creativity, innovative ideas and knowledge
  7. **Seeing Ideas Through:** Is the capacity for developing strategies that implement innovative ideas

## 27. Attitude

Global leadership transcends styles, models, behaviors and the value formations that we each bring to the table. Much of global leadership is about our cognitive abilities to lead organizations into the future and our attitudes. My submission is that Academic Aptitude + Attitude = ALTITUDE (National Development). Again, the iceberg offers us an excellent analogy. It is estimated that only 30% of an iceberg is visible above the surface of the water. The remaining 70% - the larger, more destructive and deadly portion of the iceberg - lies below the surface! So it is with attitude, only the tip of who we are tends to be on public display. The greater part of who we are tends to lie beneath the surface. Untransformed by the spirit of God, it is as destructive as the iceberg. Knowledge, degrees, diplomas, certificates and awards are great, but of what use is knowledge when the heart is not transformed? The attitude we talk about is what the Spirit of God develops in us while we are on our knees behind closed doors. We need to recognize that God has privileged us for such a time as this. That everything we have – knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies – have been provided for one thing and one thing only - to establish God's kingdom here on earth and to be an instrument of His mercy and grace. We cannot, and we must not buy into the illusion that says - “our positions, titles, opportunities and resources are for our own self-indulgence and nothing more. In short, we need a connection to humanity.

As an architect, the Chancellor of Covenant University, Dr. David Oyedepo, could have been content to set up a thriving architectural practice that revolved around “me, myself and I”. Instead, he has used his God-given determination, desire, drive, diligence and discipline in the service of humanity – raising up a new generation of thought-leaders who are transformed in their minds, in their thinking and in their hearts. A new generation with an attitudinal shift.

I submit to you today that what is needed to take us to the summit of national development is not an overabundance of degrees, be they Bachelor, Graduate or Doctoral degrees, but how much heart we have and the extent to which our minds are transformed. Only then can we truly serve humanity and in the process fulfill our God-given destinies.

## **28. Christ Centered Global Leadership**

Navigating the future via strategic thinking and strategic foresight, is not only necessary, it is wise. Polak (1973) states that-

*“... Whereas all experiences are of the past, all decisions are about the future. It is the great task of human knowledge to bridge this gap and to find those patterns in the past, which can be projected into the future as realistic images”.*

'Globalization' is not necessarily the harbinger of economic prosperity and political stability that its proponents have pumped it up to be. Globalization has consequences and not all of them are necessarily positive. Futurist and activist, Richard Slaughter in *Towards A Wise Culture: Four Classic Future Texts* (2005),

- Makes a compelling argument against “exploitation”
- Calls for higher levels of human connectedness and
- Calls for the creation of an alternative global culture/future that is characterized by an “others-centeredness,” rather than a

preoccupation with self.

In other words, what we need is an alternative global leadership culture that is transfused with “interpersonal awareness” and social responsibility. We must develop business models that are 'future resilient', that identifies opportunities and meets the critical needs of people.

In recent years, I have keenly followed the development of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates through the media and through personal visits to this 'miracle in the desert'. However, in spite of the glitz, glamour and gold, there seems to be a compelling need for a wise and alternative future. On a number of fronts, Dubai has begun to unravel in public view. Asian (particularly Indian and Filipino) migrant workers who have helped make Dubai the Las Vegas of the Middle East, are housed in corporate squatter camps; work in temperatures that can only be described as “hellish” while locals seek refuge from the burning sun in daily siestas; have their passports impounded on arrival; commit suicide in increasing numbers each year.

Today, being too “Dubai” has become a buzzword for excess, greed, and all that is unpalatable about globalization. Dubai's man made islands have become environmental disasters. In a nation that is one of the most parched in the world, its internationally renowned golf course requires 3-4 million gallons of water a day to keep the courses lush and green. Worse however, is the level of man's inhumanity to man in this desert oasis! Dubai in short is sitting on a ticking time bomb because its business model is not future resilient. It is not in my opinion based on an interpersonal awareness that uplifts humanity, especially those at the bottom of the pyramid that Jesus would have called the “very least of these my brethren” (Matthew 25:40).

Here in Nigeria, we have our own Dubai. It is tragic that more than forty years after Nigeria found oil in the Niger Delta, millions who live on the soil where this precious resource is found live in abject poverty and degradation. I know the Niger Delta well. I did my National Youth Service in the then Bendel State and traveled extensively between the swamps and creeks of the Delta. On

some level, things have changed. On many others, they have not. Equity and justice demand a fair resolution to the crisis in the Delta. The plight of the people in this region is intertwined with Nigeria's future destiny.

Canton (2006) suggests that the five key drivers of the future that will shape globalization will be—

- Energy
- Ethnic conflict
- Global health care
- Pandemic control
- Global terrorism and crime and the
- Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

May I submit that each one of these critical drivers find expression in one form or the other in the Niger Delta. How the crisis in this region is resolved by force or equitably has great implications for Nigeria's future development.

For leaders attempting to anticipate and prepare for the future, how do we deal with and respond to these issues? Why is an understanding of the extreme future important and necessary?

## **29. National Development and Global Issues**

One of the most significant issues confronting the globe today is that of future sustainability. Even if there is no universal agreement on the science underpinning global warming, there does seem to be collective agreement with regard to sustainable national and global development, which the UNDP's 1987 Brundtland Commission defines as the as the ability of "*current generations ... [to] meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.*" As Hughes and Johnson (2005) note, "European and American life-styles cannot be adopted by a global population...without destroying the environmental systems of the planet." The 2003 World Summit on the Information Society has already linked sustainable development to technology development and a knowledge society, with the understanding that an ICT revolution will lead to societal shifts from resource-based economies to knowledge and service-dominated economies.

In addition to sustainable global development, there are other critical global issues on the horizon requiring intervention and wise foresight -

- Human Trafficking and slavery
- Poverty
- Unemployment
- Migrations from the poor under-developed South to the more affluent North
- Nuclear proliferation

### 30. Social Change and Forecasting

Global leaders who do not have a good grasp of the many dimensions of social change are more likely than not to literally grope in the dark with regard to understanding what is going on, influencing or responding creatively to social change, or cognitively understanding the worldviews of those advocating change. Bishop (2002) outlines 9 theories for understanding planned and unplanned alterations to social phenomena including – Progress, Ideas, Technology, Markets, Cycles, Conflicts, Power, Evolution and Complexity. An awareness of each of these theories provides leaders with conceptual frameworks with which to frame what is going on.

Many nations and organizations operate under false assumptions such as –

- ***We have no competition:*** I am sure most of you will recall that not too long ago Nigeria was the dominant continental power in soccer. We had excellent coaches, training facilities and resources. Many of our soccer players plied their trade with the very best in Europe. But suddenly minnows such as Mozambique, Benin and Togo began to give us a serious run for our money. Something had shifted had shifted in the environment. Seemingly overnight, we were no longer “King of the Hill”. As our dear literary giant Chinua Achebe (1958) once famously wrote – “Things fall apart, the center cannot

hold.” Things indeed started falling apart once we began to believe our own press, thinking we had no competition. The problem was that the competition was not asleep but creatively active. As it is in the world of soccer where there are no “big boys” and “small boys” so it is with regard to organizational and national development. In a global environment, competition is accelerating and the future is waiting for no one.

- ***The Cost of Entry is too High:*** In capital extensive enterprises another false assumption is that the cost of entry will prohibit or limit competition. Social change theories can help leaders think at a very deep level about what micro and macro level issues and risks they are confronted with. For example, what disruptive technologies could become a change driver for academic institutions? In Nigeria where there is an aggressive move toward the development of ICT, what impact will it have on the delivery of education? Will we see a major shift toward online delivery of content and instruction? Will doors be open to enroll hundreds of thousands of students within and outside Nigeria? I believe so.

### 32. The Quest of Every Generation

I would like to posit that every generation desires three things –

- (a) ***An understanding of its place in history.*** In the first decade of the 21st Century, global change continues to accelerate at incomprehensible speed. Our global village is contracting and becoming a global hamlet! The coordinates through which we view history – time and space – are being transformed as events and trends unfold in real time. Thanks to satellite TV, IPTV, the Internet, networked environments, and a plethora of social networking and blogging tools such as *Facebook*, *Myspace*,

*Meebo, Del.icio.us, LinkedIn, Connotea, Twitter, Second Life, YouTube, and Teacher Tube*, to mention a few, the creation, distribution and acquisition of information and knowledge continues to increase exponentially. I suggest that our desire for information and our desire to be connected relationally are in many respects linked to a search for how we each fit into the mix.

**(b) *A desire to confront challenges and fix problems.*** Today our nation, our continent and our world need creative and innovative solutions to confront and solve many critical challenges including global warming, pollution, poverty, terrorism; cyber crimes, energy, water and food shortages; human trafficking, pandemics, overpopulation, conflicts and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. I believe that godly wisdom can provide us with the instruction, insight and foresight we need as thought leaders to put our nation and the world back together again. I am confident that Covenant University's creative, applied and multi-disciplinary academic curriculum, will in concert with its mission statement, result in the emergence of a new generation of leaders; the creation of new knowledge; a commitment to human development; and a visionary as well as holistic approach to nation building that is anchored in the **total** liberation of man – Body, Soul and Spirit.

**(c) *A need for success and significance:*** Permit me to revisit the story of the Tower of Babel. The Bible records in Genesis 11:1-9, that the people of the world communicated with one language and that they were determined to build a city and a tower that would reach the heavens. They wanted to make a statement. They wanted to be successful and they wanted to be significant. In short, they wanted to make a name, not for God, but for themselves! This mindset turned out to have unforeseen consequences because as the text suggests, God evaluated the people's vision, their goals and their strategies and in an instant, scattered them by confusing their



language. In the closing moments of this presentation, I ask us as thought leaders, who are we trying to make a name for? For ourselves, or to bring glory to God by fulfilling His kingdom mandate here on earth? Our respective answers will more likely than not determine the extent to which God can and will use each one of us to bring about organizational and national transformation in our generation.

### **In Closing**

For almost 20 years as a media practitioner I have been on a journey. A professional journey, that has taken me through many cities and nations. Among some of my favorite destinations have been Costa Rica for its Eco-Tourism; Dubai for its ability to catapult itself in thirty years from a desert fishing village to a global center of creativity and innovation; China for its bold modernization drive; Israel and Egypt for their antiquity; and of course Nigeria for its resilience and entrepreneurial spirit and also because it is an emerging diamond in the rough. His Excellency Governor Fashola of Lagos State has through tremendous strategic thinking turned a city that was once considered a hopeless case into an economic capital we can all be proud of. My wife and I have had an opportunity to be honored guests on the picturesque and cutting-edge campus of Covenant University. We are greatly impressed by what we see and know without a shadow of doubt that Nigeria's future is bright and filled with abundant opportunities with which to enhance our national development, if we make the right choices along the way. Leadership after all is not a position, but a process – an unfolding journey. How far this enterprise called Nigeria goes and the type of nation we collectively build will depend on whether or not we make the right choices for good. I am confident we will.

To quote the 19<sup>th</sup> Century poet and educator R.L. Sharp, "Isn't it strange that princes and clowns, each of us, is given a bag of tools, a shapeless mass and a book of rules and each must make before life is done a stumbling block or a

stepping stone.

In closing, I can think of no better admonishment. As graduating students, you have been given the TOOLS of knowledge, skill, strategies and techniques. The SHAPELESS MASS before you are the opportunities that lie ahead and what you will make of them. You have also received a book of rules – God's eternal Word, the Bible, to build you up and fashion you daily into the image of God and His Son Jesus Christ. It is my prayer for you today that as emerging global citizens and leaders, you will not become stumbling blocks, but stepping-stones for national development.

At the end of this week, the world waits for you. Go forth as Eagles. Soar as high as God has destined you to, above obstacles, and glide in the midst of global turbulence. Go forth as a new generation of leaders and fulfill your manifest destiny. To the Class of 2009 and your supportive family members, I say once again, congratulations!

For granting me this great honor my deepest gratitude goes once more to Chancellor Dr. David Oyedepo; the Board of Regents; Distinguished Madam Vice-Chancellor, Professor Aize Obayan; Principal Officers of the University, and members of the Convocation Ceremony Committee for affording me this rare privilege.

Thank you and God Bless.