

‘WHO DARES, WINS’

CHAIRMAN’S ADDRESS AT THE VALEDICTORY/GRADUATION/PRIZE-GIVING DAY CELEBRATION OF KITH AND KIN INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE, IBESHE, IKORODU, LAGOS STATE, WEDNESDAY, JULY 17, 2013

Distinguished Guest of Honour, Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, The Chief Learning Officer, Chief Kaoli Olusanya, Chairman and Members of Board of Governors, Schools Administrator (Dr. Adeoye), Principal (Mrs Ale), Parents, Staff and Students of Kith and Kin International College, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, Gentlemen of the Press.

I thank God on behalf of the organizers of this programme and all participants for making this event possible. This is the day that the Lord has made and we rejoice and are glad in it. I also appreciate the CLO, Schools Administrator, Principal, staff and students of Kith and Kin for inviting me to be part of this occasion. As you all know, Jesus Christ is the true chairman of this event and I am merely His representative. I rejoice with our graduands, parents and guardians on this occasion. May your joy be full in Jesus Name.

The theme of this year’s event is: “Dare to be Different: Embracing Challenges and Realizing Opportunities.” Hence, my short address is entitled **“Who Dares, Wins.”**

A common behavioural trait in most human beings is the preference for the easy way out, the tendency to conform and subscribe to the herd instinct. Many people love to jump on the bandwagon. Indeed, in some societies, conformity is the norm. However, history teaches us that achievers and inventors made a difference by departing from the norm and experimenting with new ideas and methods.

From the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible, only those who took exceptional steps and dared to be different by facing down challenges and harnessing opportunities wrote their names into the history books. Caleb and Joshua distinguished themselves by making a bold declaration of faith and refusing to walk by sight like the ten other emissaries. Daniel opted for an austere diet and consecration while his peers gorged

themselves on the dainties of the king's kitchen. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego defied the king's idolatrous decree, passed through literal fire and came out eternal heroes of faith. Hannah went into agonizing prayer while others were feasting.

History has documented how great men and women took unusual steps of faith and uncommon courage to face the peculiar challenges of their time and exploited the opportunities in those challenges. China is what it is today because Mao developed and applied what he called Theory of the Mass Line to mobilize his people, throw off the yoke of foreign rule and liberate the country from the shackles of backward, feudal agrarianism. He successfully launched a revolution of peasants which catapulted China into a socialist republic without passing through the capitalist stage that Karl Marx had predicted. Josef Stalin, Winston Churchill and Charles de Gaulle defied daunting odds to rid their countries of actual or looming German occupation. The fairy tale of Barak Obama's meteoric ascendancy to the US Presidency is well known. It is encapsulated in the title of his book: *Audacity of Hope*. Obama opted for study and self-development while some other children of failed biracial marriages and scions of single parents took to drugs, truancy and delinquency. He was audacious and tenacious in embracing the challenges of his skin colour and socio-economic condition, and mined the opportunities that intellect, diligence and strategic positioning offered him. As they say, the rest is history.

So, what will history say about you? The question that I regularly ask my students in the Caleb Leadership Academy is: Do you want to be the hammer or the anvil? I challenge our graduands who are going to the next phase of their lives to see the opportunity in every challenge, to devise new methods for solving old problems, to innovate and create, and determine to make a mark in their various professions. But it is not a matter for wishful thinking or day dreaming. It entails Decision and Determination. You must yield your lives to the Lord and Saviour, walk in obedience to His Will, pray like Hannah without giving up and work tirelessly like Apostle Paul till the goal is attained. Working with God by faith and righteous living, you will discover that nothing shall be impossible. I pray that you succeed beyond your wildest imaginations in Jesus Name.

Before I conclude, permit me to say something about Caleb University, Imota, where we have demonstrated the daring spirit that I have just spoken about. The following are some of the things that define us:

- Only private university in Lagos State that has ever awarded NUC-accredited bachelor's degrees – thrice in a row; no other private university is currently running undergraduate programmes
- Only private university in Lagos State running **both** undergraduate **and** postgraduate degree programmes: our MSc Architecture programme has just taken off
- Fair, transparent selection of Vice-Chancellor: a merit-driven system
- Head-hunting and merit-driven recruitment of staff
- No redundancy: every new staff is recruited to multi-task
- Fixed school fees since 2008, covering both tuition and accommodation
- Text-messaging of students' results to parents and guardians
- Encouragement of flagship programmes; rationalization of unviable ones
- All programmes have NUC accreditation; NIA and ICAN accreditation of relevant programmes
- High academic and disciplinary standard – every certificate issued by us is credible and valid (A Caleb First Class in Industrial Chemistry topped the entrance examination into the University of Ibadan MSc class in 2012)
- Certificates ready for collection on the day of graduation
- Consensual administrative system
- Prudent/judicious financial management
- No strikes or closures; we have concluded another session and are set for another in October – all on schedule

I challenge everyone today, especially our graduands, to have the spirit of Caleb, Joshua and Obama: **dare to be different, for who dares, wins!**

I thank you for listening. God bless.

Professor Ayodeji Olukoju

Fellow, Nigerian Academy of Letters

Vice-Chancellor, Caleb University, Imota, Lagos State

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