

**VICE-CHANCELLOR'S ADDRESS TO PARENTS' FORUM, CALEB UNIVERSITY, IMOTA,
LAGOS STATE ON FRIDAY, 14 DECEMBER 2012**

Management, Guest Speaker, Staff, Dear Parents and Friends of Caleb University, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am delighted to welcome everyone to the fourth Parents' Forum of Caleb University and the third that I shall address since assuming duty as Vice-Chancellor on October 18, 2010. I specially commend those who have been regular participants in this annual meeting of key stakeholders in the Caleb Project. Barely an hour ago, we concluded our sixth matriculation ceremony. Since last year, we have coupled the ceremony with the Parents' Forum and the Christmas/Year End vacation for the convenience of our students' parents. This year, we have added a new feature in asking a great friend of the University to share his experiences with us as we seek to deepen and expand the scope of the partnership between the University and our dear Parents and other stakeholders. On your behalf, I welcome Pastor Nelson Ayodele, our guest speaker at this year's event. A final aspect of today's unique matriculation ceremony is the special get-together at the end of the Parents Forum to appreciate our parents and other guests, and to formally send forth our Registrar, Mrs Bamidele Adetutu Awere, who is on terminal leave after offering meritorious service to this University.

The Journey So Far

First, we give thanks to Jesus Christ, the Lord of Lords and the King of Glory, for making us surmount the inevitable challenges entailed in the development of a young University. Next, Management acknowledges the wholesome support and immense contributions of the Proprietor and Visitor, Prince Ola Adebogun, PhD, DSc *honoris causa*; the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Dr. Christopher Kolade, CON, Members of the Board of Trustees, the Chancellor, Brigadier-General Mobolaji Johnson (Rtd), DSc *honoris causa*; the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council, Prof. Fola Tayo, MFR, Members of the Governing Council, my predecessors in office, Management, past and present Staff, our supportive Parents, Students and all well-wishers for the successes achieved till date. I pray that the Almighty God will grant us grace to take this University to greater heights.

To the glory of God, we have completed five hitch-free academic sessions and graduated two sets of students since we commenced academic activities in January 2008. I am glad to report that all our programmes, with the exception of one, have NUC full accreditation valid till 2017. We are addressing the deficiency in our staff mix in the lone programme that has interim accreditation, which is, however, valid till 2014. In the competitive environment of higher education in Nigeria, this is a commendable

achievement. This is to the glory of God and a tribute to the cooperation and support of all stakeholders. I salute our highly dedicated teaching and non-teaching staff for their commitment. The University has reciprocated by offering them since January 2011 the Federal Government salary package regardless of the serious implications that this has for our finances. This has been justified by the retention rate of our high-quality staff, in the face of the mobility of academic staff, and the awards won by several of them. During the calendar year, Dr. Chuma Okoro, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Biological Sciences and Industrial Biotechnology won a highly coveted Petroleum Trust Development Fund Research Grant. You may recall that he had spent several months during 2011 as a research fellow at the University of Calgary, Canada, jointly sponsored by Caleb University and three major transnational oil companies. In addition, a young lecturer, Arc. Ejiga Opaluwa, won the best paper award at a Conference of African Architects on Sustainable Futures in Uganda. Other lecturers proved their mettle in academic and professional conferences and workshops. Even the Vice-Chancellor was not left out. He too presented scholarly papers at academic conferences in Israel, South Africa, Switzerland and The Netherlands during 2012. This was in addition to delivering lectures on the platform of the Caleb Leadership Academy (CLA). The CLA was designed in early 2011 to equip our students to tackle the leadership challenges facing our nation and the wider world. Another notable initiative has been the Mass Communication Forum, the brain child of Professor Nosa Owens-Ibie, Head of the Department of Mass Communication, Dean of Student Affairs and University Chaplain. This town-gown platform has brought distinguished speakers, all industry leaders, to interact with our students. Beyond sharing professional experiences, the speakers have donated generously in cash and kind to the Department. The University gratefully acknowledges the inspiring and sacrificial leadership of Professor Owens-Ibie, who I call “H-o-Dean,” and the generosity of our benefactors.

Our products have been doing us proud. Our pioneer best graduating student, Mr. Eric Tope Bakare, not only completed his national service in his parent Department (where he is retained as a Graduate Assistant) but also topped the incoming MSc class at the University of Ibadan. Misss Enobong Essien, one of our pioneer graduates, won a University of Aberdeen scholarship for the MSc/PhD programme in Microbiology and Industrial Biotechnology. I myself ran into Mr. Jubril Atanda, another pioneer student at the airport on his way to commencing his MSc Architecture programme in Cyprus. Misss Esther Miracle Adebayo won one of the highly coveted Total Nigeria PLC scholarships. The point is that our products compete favourably with the best anywhere in Nigeria and abroad.

The University has received a number of important visitors during the year, most notably, the Ambassador Plenipotentiary and Extraordinary of Japan to Nigeria, H.E. Ryuichi Shoji, who made Caleb University the first tertiary institution that he visited upon assumption of duty. His Excellency has

continued to engage with the University in exploring avenues of partnerships and book donations. The Public Affairs Section of the US Embassy also held a one-day programme during the Black History Month in February on our campus. Our students participated enthusiastically and won awards. The President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), Mr. Adedoyin Idowu Owolabi, FCA, Second Deputy Vice-President, Otunba Olufemi Deru, FCA and other members of the national and Ikorodu District Executive, led by Revd. Samson Disu, visited us only a few months ago. For the first time, our campus was one of the centres for the ICAN ATS examination held in September. The University has also taken the bold step of mobilizing its students to register for the ATS. I take this opportunity to urge parents to give the necessary support to our children, who desire to obtain the ICAN professional qualifications while still in school. I am told that the cost is about N31,000 per candidate.

Future Plans

For the immediate future, plans have been concluded to receive the NUC resource verification teams for our proposed College of Postgraduate Studies and the MSc. Architecture and B.Sc Physics-with-Electronics programmes, which should take off in 2013. Other degree programmes in Real Estate Management, Landscape Architecture and Facilities Management will be added in the course of the year. We have also concluded plans to replace our catering and internet service providers by the time our students resume in January. As well, we are about completing our bakery and water factory buildings just behind this hall. The products of these enterprises will be on sale early in the new year. On January 21, 2013, our Foundation Day Ceremony will be addressed by a distinguished speaker while the next Convocation takes place on March 9, 2013. Our parents and other stakeholders are warmly welcome to these events. Towards the Convocation, we solicit the endowment of prizes, and the donation of books, physical facilities, and workshop, studio and laboratory equipment by wellwishers, who are committed to promoting excellence in character and learning.

Appeal to Parents

I urge parents to closely monitor the spiritual and academic progress of their children and wards. They should also partner with us in the enforcement of lawful rules and regulations, especially in respect of the breach of examination and exeat regulations. We enjoin our parents to be supportive of our systems of checks and controls, which are in the best interest of our wards. Where there are doubts, they should please clarify issues with relevant authorities, who are easily accessible by telephone. It is this partnership based upon mutual understanding and close cooperation that can bring the best out of our young ones, who are destined to be the leaders of this nation and the world at large.

Conclusion

I conclude by thanking everyone for making the effort and sparing the time to attend this event. You are at liberty to tour the campus and engage with our staff and students. I wish you all journey mercies back home, a merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Thank you for listening and God bless.

Professor Ayodeji O. OLUKOJU

Fellow, Nigerian Academy of Letters

Vice-Chancellor

14 December 2012