

**VICE-CHANCELLOR'S ADDRESS TO ACADEMIC STAFF OF CALEB UNIVERSITY, IMOTA, LAGOS STATE ON
WEDNESDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2010**

Dear Colleagues,

First, I thank the Almighty God for His sundry blessings upon us all and for all that we have accomplished by His grace. Second, I wish to appreciate the Chancellor, Prince Ola Adebogun, Members of the Board of Trustees, the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council, Professor 'Nimbe Adedipe, Members of the Governing Council, Deans, Academic and Administrative staff, and students of this University for the warm reception and tremendous support that they have accorded me since my assumption of duty on Monday, October 18, 2010. I also acknowledge my indebtedness to all those who laid the foundation upon which we are building this edifice. In addition to the aforementioned, I would wish to commend Professor T.O. Tayo, our pioneer Vice-Chancellor, the former Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor A.I. Akinwande, the former Registrar, Prince Bola Taiwo and the staff of the Registry, led by Mr. Abimbola Olulesi, whose contributions can only be duly appreciated and rewarded by God. Let me at this juncture specially recognize the veterans among us – Professors Akinwande, Ajayi, Adebona, Adu, Amusa and Adewunmi – whose presence in our midst is so reassuring. On behalf of the Chancellor, BOT and Governing Council, I wish to congratulate everyone on the resounding success of this University at the end of the last Accreditation Exercise. For the record, no programme offered at Caleb University was denied accreditation.

Since my assumption of duty, I have met with various stakeholders – the Chancellor, Pro-Chancellor, representatives of the BOT and Council, University Senate and Management and our students. I have also undertaken a facility tour of the Colleges, Registry, Library, Bursary and students' hostels. The Chapel has even organized a reception for me. As you are aware, we have taken some tentative steps on staff and student matters, and, only yesterday, we successfully crossed the Rubicon of NUC/ARCON Staff and Facility Census of our Architecture programme. Though I have met with many of you formally and informally, I considered it necessary to interact with you as a body for the purpose of sharing my vision for Caleb University, spelling out steps that will be taken from now onwards, to get a feedback and harmonize our strategies.

I wish to assure everyone that even before I arrived here, I was fairly conversant with the challenges faced by staff and students of this University. It was precisely because I saw the opportunities in those challenges that I took up this appointment. My attitude to life is that life itself is war and only those who

are prepared for daily battles will survive. Moreover, I have an optimistic (half-full glass), 'can-do' attitude, always hoping for the best while making due allowance for worst-case scenarios. Indeed, I believe that stumbling blocks are stepping stones in disguise. Even when I was adjudged the best candidate for this position, I was subsequently interviewed by a three-man body representing BOT and Council before assumption of duty to harmonise our strategies for the development of Caleb University. I also had sessions with the Chancellor and Pro-Chancellor to further fine-tune our strategies. I am glad to say that we are working in the same direction with the same set of goals and aspirations. I shall now outline some of the things that we need to work on in the meantime to take Caleb to greater heights.

First, the thorny issue of staff salaries had been resolved before I arrived but I am now mandated to announce that full compliance with the Federal wage package will begin on January 1, 2011. This is not a political promise.

Second, we need to re-brand the University urgently. To this end, I have directed that all staff must place their curriculum vitae on the website. I cannot over-emphasize the importance of this. I take serious exception to the attitude of some staff, who did not comply with the November 5 deadline. I am making Friday, 12 November 2010, the final deadline after which appropriate sanctions will be imposed on defaulters. My own cv is already on our website. As leaders, we are obliged to lead by example. We are in the process of producing the next issue of our Newsletter, which should henceforth appear more regularly.

Third, for staff development, we are making budgetary provision for a research grants scheme, which will give priority to staff on PhD programmes. There will be even-handed allocation across Colleges and Departments, with allowance for gender representation.

Fourth, for capacity building, there will be budgetary provision for foreign and local Learned Conference attendance. The criteria for disbursement will soon be spelt out. In addition, there will be internal ICT-focused capacity building workshops for staff.

Fifth, College and Departmental Seminars, Colloquia, Workshops and Conferences will be encouraged. COPAS has blazed the trail and would have mounted a second one today but for this meeting.

Sixth, as from year 2011, we hope to have journals in Colleges which have the human and institutional capacity for them. The Administration will support journals of international standards, which will have web hosting and visibility.

Seventh, staff recruitment is being undertaken to address the gap analysis and strengthen Departments and Colleges. Our strategy is to fast-track appointments and head-hunt for talented but ethically sound people who will add value to Caleb University.

Eighth, we are in the process of providing a Senior Staff Common Room, which is a hallmark of normal academic life on campus.

Ninth, we expect to institute and expand our partnerships which will be properly two-way affairs, while providing vertical (local-global) and horizontal (local-local) linkages.

Tenth, we intend to start postgraduate programmes in those Colleges, such as COPAS, where we have the human capacity, physical infrastructure, equipment and external linkages. This means that we would have to develop a College of Postgraduate Studies.

However, there are challenges to confront. First, there must be total commitment on the part of everyone. Having interacted with our students, I sensed the need for us to tackle a certain level of inferiority complex, defeatist attitude and cynicism, which can only hinder rather than help. I, therefore, urge us as moulders of character to develop a positive, can-do attitude that our pioneering work here demands. When we lead exemplary and challenging lives as teachers and leaders, our students will be challenged to follow our lead. It goes without saying that it is the quality of the academic staff of a University that ultimately determines its ranking. Coupled with this is the synergy of the academic, administrative and technical staff in a common drive to achieve common goals. Second, our low student enrolment poses a big challenge to our ambitious schemes. We are currently making concerted efforts to recruit fresh students but we have a more elaborate plan for next year's exercise. If only we can cross the 2,000-student enrolment threshold, most of the plans that we have outlined will be easily achievable without undue recourse to the BOT and Council. Please, let us work together to achieve this goal.

Like the Biblical Caleb, I believe that we are WELL ABLE TO DO IT through the power of God.

Thank you for listening and God bless.

Professor Ayodeji O. Olukoju

Vice-Chancellor, Caleb University, Imota, Lagos State

10 November 2010.