

**GOODWILL MESSAGE FROM CALEB UNIVERSITY, IMOTA, LAGOS STATE ON THE
OCCASION OF A COURTESY CALL ON DR. DAVID BONAVENTURE ALENCHENU MARK,
GCON, PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA ON THURSDAY,
21 JULY 2011**

Your Excellency

Distinguished Senators of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a privilege and great honour to have this session with the President of the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. On behalf of the Chancellor, Caleb University, Dr. Oladega Adebogun, the Chair and Members of the Board of Trustees, the Chair and Members of the Governing Council, Management, Staff and Students of Caleb University, Imota, Lagos State, I hereby congratulate our amiable host, Dr. David Bonaventure Alenchenu Mark, GCON, the President of the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, on his double re-election as a Senator and as President of the Senate. The latter distinction is unprecedented. The double honour, building on a meritorious military career, in the course of which our host served in various capacities, including the governorship of a State, is worthy of celebration. We pray that he will fulfil his God-given ministry at a critical juncture in Nigeria's history. What is not in doubt is the Distinguished Senator's experience in governance, in both the executive and legislative arms of government. It is for this reason that we, as a young University, would wish to associate with him in his personal and official capacities as partners in progress towards making our country greater.

For the record, Caleb University, a private Christian University, was licensed by the Federal Government in 2007. It took off in January 2008 from a mini-campus at Magodo in Lagos, but relocated, in November 2009, to the permanent site at Imota, just east of Ikorodu, in Lagos State. The University has just produced its first set of graduands, who shall proceed on national youth service in November, 2011. Our course offerings cover diverse disciplines in the Arts, Social and Management Sciences, Pure and Applied Sciences, and Environmental Sciences and Management. We are the only full-fledged private university in Lagos State.

As we felicitate with the Distinguished Senator, we should not fail to draw attention to the saying that "to whom much is given, from him much is required." Accordingly, we would like to outline some areas in

which our young and ambitious institution can leverage on our Distinguished Senator's considerable weight as a nation-builder.

First, we humbly request him to associate with us in a very tangible way, such as by delivering the first in our Distinguished Lectures Series. To be sure, a State Governor has consented to fire the first shot, but, in accordance with protocol, he would be willing to give way if a higher authority is willing to undertake the task. If His Excellency is agreeable, a date in November or early December 2011, when the first semester would be well under way, can be considered. Second, His Excellency might wish to adopt and endow that Distinguished Lectures Series, or a Public Policy Dialogue Series, which can be named after him. Third, if he is willing, he could endow some other initiative – a Chair or a Centre for Good Governance or Public Administration. Fourth, he could honour us by gracing our maiden Convocation on January 21, 2012, which is our Foundation Day. With such assurance, the Senate of Caleb University would take appropriate steps to make his participation a memorable one.

Finally, we hope we can count on His Excellency to lend his weighty support to the clamour by private universities in Nigeria for access to research grants and other intervention initiatives of the Federal Government (such as the ETF), for the promotion of research, production of much-needed PhDs and entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities. All universities draw from, and contribute to, the same labour pool. Any encouragement given to private universities, such as Caleb University, in any of these aspects, would advance the cause of human capacity development and institution-building, the pillars of national greatness. It was in appreciation of the immeasurable benefits of State support for, and partnership with, private initiatives that Regional/State governments of the Federation gave grants-in-aid to Mission schools. Such a noble precedent, we pray, should be extended to private universities.

In conclusion, we wish the Senate President good health and divine wisdom in directing the affairs of the upper chamber of the federal legislature. We trust God to empower him and other Distinguished Senators, not least Senator Gbenga Ashafa, in whose District Caleb University is located, to make immeasurable contributions to transforming Nigeria into the giant of Africa in truth and in deed.

Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria! Long Live the Senate! Long Live Caleb University!

Thank you and God bless.

Professor Ayodeji Olukoju

Vice-Chancellor