

## **YOUR TALENT, YOUR CAREER, YOUR DESTINY**

Speech at the Dansol High School Talent Hunt/Book & Magazine Launch

By

**Professor Ayodeji O. OLUKOJU**

**Vice-Chancellor, Caleb University, Imota, Lagos State**

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My Lords Spiritual and Temporal, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Parents and Students

I thank the Proprietress, Management, Staff and Students of Dansol High School, Ikeja, Lagos State for the honour of addressing this distinguished audience of present and aspiring leaders of Nigeria and the world. I wish to acknowledge in particular the warmth and largeheartedness of our partner in the work in the Vineyard, the Proprietress of Dansol, Mrs Akinyemiju. God bless you and all of yours.

In this short speech on “Your Talent, Your Career, Your Destiny,” I shall focus on four “Gs” which our budding leaders and even we who are of the older generation should ponder – Gift, Grit, Guts and Grace. The four “Gs” actually expand on the issues of Talent, Career and Destiny. The **Gift** you have from God is your talent. Your task is to discover and develop it. You must not behave like the servant who hid the single talent that he got. Unlike him, we must heed the Biblical injunction that one should not despise the day of small beginnings. We should also note that it was a mere shepherd’s rod in Moses’ hand that God turned into the weapon for the deliverance of an entire nation. To fully develop your talent, you need **Grit**, the battling spirit and staying power without which success cannot be achieved, and **Guts**, the boldness of a Caleb, who defied overwhelming odds to affirm faith in God for victory. But above all, you will need **Grace**, the grace of God that is available through Jesus Christ. We are told that the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us to deny all ungodliness and live a sober life of righteousness, not just when we get to heaven but right from here **in this present world**.

Coming back to our theme, it is clear, that you recognize the **Gift** and **Giver** of your talent, develop your **talent** in the direction of a **career** and work with God to achieve your **destiny** – a rest for the people of God. As you develop your talent with hardwork and submission to God, you must bring focus, dedication and passion into your chosen career. I appeal to parents to allow their children to follow their passion in a God-directed way. My father, a teacher, for instance, did not heed the advice of his lawyer-friend who asked whether I could not find a better course when I was admitted into the Department of History and Archaeology, University of

Nigeria, Nsukka in September 1976. But History was a subject I loved from the secondary school largely because of the way my teacher, the late Michael Ojo Fajugbagbe of Ikoro-Ekiti, taught it – with passion and remarkable ease - and to which I dedicated myself as an undergraduate. As an aside, as a mark of appreciation, I have gone back to my alma mater to institute an annual prize in honour of each of my four outstanding teachers.

I ended up being the best graduating student in my Faculty that produced two First Class Honours graduands in my set. After my Master's degree, I commenced the PhD programme, which soon ran aground after only two years. It was only after I gave my life to Christ on Sunday July 3, 1988 that the programme was refloated when God Himself spoke to direct my way in August 1988. As they say, the rest is history. Propelled by God's power, and His grace, I earned two successive promotions, moving from the rank of Lecturer II to Senior Lecturer between 1987 and 1991 and attained the Professorship seven years later. By God's grace I have been published, attended conferences and given keynote addresses across five, held several postdoctoral fellowships, and was the first (and so far, the only) African elected to the executive committee of the global body of my professional association, the International Maritime Economic History Association in 2008. All this resulted from God working with the shepherd's rod in my hand. God is willing to work with us and the talent we have if we are ready to do His will, and diligently apply ourselves to our chosen career.

Let me conclude that after all is said and done, God wants us to fulfill our destiny in two senses. First, to make a mark in our professional and other callings, and affect other people's lives positively here on earth. Second, to make heaven our home. The Bible says, there is a rest to the people of God. I call you to focus on this ultimate rest but strive to develop your talent and career, with grit, guts and God's grace, to fulfil your final destiny. Like Caleb, we are well able to do it, but only by God's grace.

Thank you for listening. God bless.