

**“THE LABOUR OF OUR HEROES PAST”**  
**Developing Visionary Leadership**  
**For Africa**

**TEXT OF A LECTURE DELIVERED BY**  
**PROFESSOR U. JOY OGWU, OFR**  
**DIRECTOR-GENERAL**  
**NIGERIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

**AT THE FIRST CONVOCATION CEREMONY OF COVENANT**  
**UNIVERSITY, OTA, JULY 25, 2006**

**“THE LABOUR OF OUR HEROES PAST”**  
**Developing Visionary Leadership**  
**For Africa**

U. Joy Ogwu, OFR

The Distinguished Chancellor, Covenant University,  
Dr. David Oyedepo,  
My dear Sister, Pastor Faith Oyedepo,  
Members of the Board of Regents, Covenant University,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Members of the academic and non-academic staff of  
Covenant University,  
Graduating Students of the Class of 2006,  
Students of Covenant University,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

**III**

My first words must be to express my deep gratitude to the Chancellor and, indeed to the entire members of the Covenant University community for nominating me to deliver the inaugural convocation lecture of this great university. It

is a great honour to have been invited to this forum. I am most grateful for this moment and for its meaning to me. I feel this the more keenly in that I am privileged to serve as one of the Regents of Covenant University. I thank you for letting me share in the pride of this momentous event. I am sure that this is a very proud moment for all of us and for the entire Covenant Community.

The weeklong convocation ceremony which commenced yesterday marks a defining moment in the long vision and short story of this university. This is because this week of celebration is a week of **Joy** and of befitting thanksgiving to God. We celebrate and rejoice because an institution that was conceived as a child of vision and faith, has within a span of four years become not only a beacon of hope for the future of tertiary education in Nigeria, but also a bastion of education for good citizenship. It was founded to raise the bar of university education from the decadence that has foisted a heavy moral burden on our universities. As Ralph Waldo Emerson so eloquently stated, "***the true test of civilization is not the census, not the size of the cities, nor the crops, but the kind of man the country turns out.***" That explains why from its inception Covenant

University has had the following as its core values: spirituality, positive mentality, capacity building, integrity, responsibility, diligence and sacrifice. The strategic integration of these core values into mainstream academic instruction anchored on an unflinching Christian ethic of being one's brother's and sister's keeper has made Covenant University the preferred choice for University education by both parents and prospective students.

Woodrow Wilson once told the men of Princeton that "It is not learning but the spirit of service that will give a college a place in the public annals of the nation." In its brief history, Covenant University has already touched the lives of people with an unusual spirit of selfless service.

The Chancellor, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I might affirm without fear of contradiction that parents and their wards have made a very strategic choice. Thus, my vantage point is not in doubt and is indeed attested to by the following facts. First, in the 2005 accreditation conducted nationwide, the National Universities Commission (NUC) approved all the 16 academic programmes presented to it by Covenant University and in addition rated it the overall best in the accreditation exercise.

Second, in January 2006, Covenant University was adjudged the best Private University in Nigeria by the National Universities Commission.

Third, the Chancellor, Dr. David Oyedepo was conferred with the Fellowship Award of the Nigerian Academy of Education in recognition of his immense contribution to the growth of education at all levels in the country. To crown this, the brand-new Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Aize Obayan was adjudged the best Vice-Chancellor of all Private Universities in Nigeria!

Do we need any further evidence to prove that Covenant University occupies an enviable position in the University system of Nigeria? Certainly not!

The acorn planted at the early beginning of this first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, sprouted on time and has grown steadily to becoming a giant oak. Perhaps, I may elaborate on this assertion. The acorn is the idea of Covenant University as envisioned by its Chancellor Bishop Oyedepo. The oak tree is Covenant University with its profound human capital, first-rate facilities and structures, and most significantly, enduring virtues. It was the great French philosopher Montesquieu

who affirmed that virtue is the crucial necessity for the survival of a free people. The Bible stated the same thing with even greater force in the book of Proverbs, "Righteousness exalteth a people." The Covenant Community is highly exalted and I look forward to the day when this can be applied to our country, our continent and indeed our race.

We look forward to the day when education blends with our culture to become an answer to internal strife. We look forward to the era when education will become both the foundation and the unifying force of our national life.

### III

The subject of my exposition is aptly titled: ***"The Labour of our Heroes Past"***.

My point of departure is that a people who have no knowledge of their past and how their past influences their present and could be a guide to their future are a people in the dark about their total environment of being. Knowledge

of our past helps to remind us of where we started and how far down the road we have travelled in our search for a better tomorrow for all of us. Knowledge of the past helps us in the present to chart the path of our future and determine the probable destination for our people. The past is, therefore, more than an account of all that has transpired. It is the key to our understanding of our present and it is a pointer to our future.

Thus, throughout human history, nations, peoples and races have advanced because they were blessed with men and women of uncommon vision; those who dreamed great dreams and developed visions that made contributions to the advancement of human civilization. Africa has its fair share of such human beings, whether in the past or the present, who as leaders in diverse areas of human endeavour, have left indelible marks on our very consciousness. They became shining stars in our firmament and continue to light our

paths to progress and development. African history is endowed with heroes and heroines of the past who made us appreciate our African-ness, our uniqueness as a race, and who continually brought to our consciousness the Black Man's immense contributions to human civilization. African history is peopled with of men and women of uncommon vision and sagacity; leaders of standing, professionals and illustrious businessmen/women, religious leaders who have left lasting and valuable legacies, iconic scholars and intellectuals who conquered all odds to carve out niches for themselves. These were the men and women, heroes and heroines of the past whose activities shaped the course of African history in particular and of human civilization in general. They are both native Africans as well as people of African descent in the Diaspora.

We must also not forget the unsung and hardly-acclaimed African heroines at home and in the Diaspora. Though the



leadership of the liberation struggles was essentially male-dominated, women played a critical role in the long years of resistance, emerging as profound catalysts for protests and challengers of alien oppression. In the general struggle for liberation, women's political struggles for liberation made a remarkable difference. In Nigeria, Margaret Ekpo and Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti led the way. The women in South Africa supported the resistance movements by organizing and involving the masses in the struggle.

We must not forget African mothers - unsung heroines who laboured and assiduously taught their children to distinguish heroes from villains, to pursue virtue instead of vice. In the process of nurturing, they brought to the consciousness of young people stories and fables; quaint notions of village elders, heroes and moonlight stories. Through story-telling and folklore they provided effective means for their offspring to understand and learn character-building

principles, values and moral truths. Some of them became indomitable pillars of the home-front.

From the African Diaspora across the Atlantic Ocean emerged illustrious and exceptional Africans such as Edward Wilmot Blyden, who later emigrated to Liberia on account of racial discrimination and became a scholar, educator, clergyman, Liberian Ambassador and a foremost Pan-Africanist; W.E.B. DuBois, great intellectual, historian and sociologist famed for surmounting great racial obstacles to become the first Black man to obtain a doctorate degree from Harvard University. His writings and life of activism greatly influenced civil rights campaign in the United States and Pan-Africanism. There was also, Marcus Garvey, the Jamaican Black nationalist whose dynamic writings and activism significantly raised racial consciousness and pride among Negroes in the Diaspora. He initiated the 'Back to Africa' movement and through it encouraged Negroes to consider returning to their roots in

the African continent. These were men of great vision whose writings and activities complemented those of other great men and early Pan-Africanists from the Diaspora. There were for example, Thomas Edward Aggrey, Joseph Casely-Hayford the Founder of the first regional movement in West Africa known as the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA) in 1920, perhaps the earliest local example of Pan-Africanism; and even great religious men like Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther who evangelized widely in West Africa and translated the Holy Bible into Yoruba language.

The work of these early, and especially post-slave trade, Black scholars, intellectuals and activists left a lasting impact on the next stage of African history and its development, i.e., the stage of nationalism and anti-colonial struggles in Africa. Their thoughts and visions defined the course that Africans had to follow. By their personal examples of overcoming contrived obstacles to attain positions that their oppressors never

thought possible, these early icons impressed upon the next generation that Africans need not accept an inferior status but must strive to stamp their relevance on the world stage. They led us to the realization that with a defined focus and clear vision all obstacles are surmountable. From them we learnt the invaluable lesson about what an indomitable human spirit can accomplish, that a people need not remain shackled to the limitations of the past but should seek to rise to the challenge of the moment in order to claim the future. In fact, they set worthy examples and thus threw down the gauntlet which the next generation of Africans proudly picked up. From them we received the inspiration to forge ahead, to move with dexterity, in the knowledge that victory is a certainty if we do not relent.

Following closely after these visionary leaders, the African nationalists of the latter era undoubtedly had their work pre-designed for them. There were only two options open to

them: to follow in the footsteps of these exceptionally courageous and far-sighted men and build upon their accomplishments, or to let the continent and the Black race down by their lack of enterprise.

Learning from these forerunners fired the imagination of the next generation of Pan-Africanists and helped to shape, clarify and sharpen their own visions of a glorious Africa and its position in world politics and its worthy if uncelebrated contributions to human civilization. And thus arose in the various colonies a new crop of nationalists and Pan-Africanists across the African continent, men of great conviction and dedication who made the liberation of Africa the cardinal *raison d'etre* of their existence.

We had such men as Kwame Nkrumah, whose Pan-Africanist posture grew beyond Ghana and who was an early advocate of a continental government for the whole of Africa; Julius

Nyerere whose espousal of Ujamaa as a form of African Socialism brought the virtues of African Cooperativeness among the people of Tanzania; Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia, Amilcar Cabral in Guinea-Bissau and Ahmed Sekou Toure in Guinea, who led their respective countries to independence against all odds. These men obtained independence for their states, thus beginning Africa's march to progress. Nigeria was blessed with committed nationalists such as Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Malam Aminu Kano, Chief Anthony Enahoro, and Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, Dennis Osadebey and Michael Imoudu. These were the men who opposed British imperialism, sometimes at great personal risks, and obtained independence for Nigeria. For them, Nigeria's independence was a significant victory for Africa because the country as the largest collection of Black people in a single country was to serve as a beacon of hope and leadership for the rest of the continent and indeed for the entire Black race.

## [IIII]

Forged in the crucible of suffering and deprivation, and working under the most severe political, socio-economic and legal constraints in the colonies, the new set of African nationalists assumed the struggle for African recognition further by actually advocating freedom and political independence for Africans as a matter of right rather than as a privilege to be bestowed at the behest of the foreign colonialists. They articulated their position with meticulous care, honed their skills and drew the line in the sand for the colonialists, making total independence a non-negotiable and irreducible demand. They formed political groupings and associations, at both national and regional levels, to press their demands for independence in a non-violent manner. In the struggle for independence, many of them served jail

sentences, scores endured the most harrowing deprivations of personal liberties, while others had to pay the supreme price with their lives, all for the noble cause of liberating their race from unwarranted oppression and denial of its humanity. Subjected to the most ruthless treatment and harshness that colonial rule could muster, and thus thoroughly savaged for making a demand that was not at all illegitimate, the political movements in the colonies were gradually compelled to change from their initial peaceful tactics in direct response to colonial brutalization. Revolutionary movements surfaced, armed struggle became the only option left for the nationalists in a number of cases, forcing otherwise gentlemen scholars and political figures like Amilcar Cabral, Eduardo Mondlane, Agostinho Neto, into violent resistance against colonial rule. Even in South Africa, the African National Congress, Africa's oldest existing political party, was forced underground to launch an armed struggle



as Apartheid rule became increasingly vicious in the early 1960s.

We must acknowledge that the labours of the past heroes yielded the most significant dividends when in 1960 alone, seventeen (17) African countries became independent. Many more countries followed in quick succession for total independence had become unstoppable, and the wind of freedom was blowing. There was no doubt that Africa had finally arrived as a major regional actor on the world stage.

The nationalists who struggled against colonialism eventually achieved the much desired political independence for African people to determine their own destinies; they propagated and promoted the Pan-Africanist ideology and brought into existence the Organization of African Unity in 1963; they did not allow the euphoria of independence to distract them from continuing the war against all forms racial

discrimination and prejudice. In the process they propelled the world to declare Apartheid a crime against humanity, they struggled to ensure that Africans got the respect that they deserve, and ensured that the rights and privileges of the people were protected. In the cultural sphere, the past heroes selflessly sought the restoration of the dignity of the African person, promoted and encouraged the spirit of African brotherhood and the universal brotherhood of all Black people; they promoted and preserved African culture, way of life, dressing, food, habits and names.

Realizing that political liberation without mental and psychological liberation would be incomplete, the post-independence nationalists promoted the value of education as a vital instrument of political and socio-economic emancipation. This they did by establishing schools, colleges, polytechnics and universities. Nigeria's first generation post-independence leaders were exemplars in this regard. Chief

Obafemi Awolowo introduced free education in the Western region, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Ahmadu Bello established universities and other institutions of higher education, provided scholarships and incentives for advanced overseas training for their citizens. From only one University College (Ibadan) at independence, the Nigerian university system has today grown to about 70 Federal, state-owned and private universities, in addition to numerous polytechnics and colleges of education dotted across the country.

The African leaders of that generation led the people by personal example and motivated them by their selflessness and remarkable self-discipline. Convinced of their historic mission and the enormous responsibilities that Providence had placed upon them to chart a good course for Africa, they diligently pursued their vision without distraction, emphasized creativity and self-reliance as principles to emulate, allowed wisdom to determine their developmental

goals, objectives and priorities, and demonstrated judicious utilization of resources for development. Though not saints by any stretch of the imagination, but many of these leaders stood out as honest, transparent and hard working. Julius Nyerere for example, towered above many in this regard with his humility, simplicity and modesty. They encouraged the spirit of self-reliance, promoted the dignity of labour through abhorrence of every form of mental laziness and discouragement of indolence. Above all, they emphasized transparency, responsibility and accountability as cardinal principles of governance. For them, democratic politics was about how to live together, not who gets what. Politics was never envisioned as special interest groups or losers as we know it today. It was about the rights and responsibilities of operating in a participatory democracy. They placed country and continent before party. They placed the next generation before the next election. Their expansive vision of democracy elevated them above any politics of division or

conflict. They envisioned an African where freedom is inseparable from Economic, political, social opportunity and upward mobility.

From the vision and activities of these post-colonial leaders, there was the expectation that Africa had finally begun the journey to the proverbial El Dorado, and that it was just a matter of a few decades before it would get there. Little did anyone suspect that Africa was destined to endure long years in the political wilderness before moving anywhere near the Promised Land. Hardly had the euphoria of independence and the celebrations of freedom fully subsided than many an African state succumbed to the lawlessness of authoritarian one-party rule while others fell into military dictatorship. The progressive march to democracy which was begun by the early Pan-Africanists from the Diaspora and the early nationalists in the colonies was effectively halted.

It would seem, from that moment on, that Africa was doomed to continue in misery, only that this time around it was not in the hands of foreign colonizers anymore but actually in the hands of Africans themselves. Africans now had rulers rather than leaders of the people who proceeded to plunder rather than develop their states, and who inexorably set the hands of the African clock backward for many decades to come. Many African leaders allowed themselves to become proxies of foreign governments, especially of the principal ideological adversaries of the Cold War era. In no time at all, the superpowers were allowed to export their rivalries to Africa, using Africans as cannon-fodders in proxy wars across the continent from Congo to Chad, Sudan, Angola, Mozambique, to mention a but few. Coup d'etats and violent overthrow of governments soon became the norm and Africa was defined as a continent of despots and tyrants. Kwame Nkrumah was overthrown in 1966, and his ideas and visions for a prosperous and united

Africa were buried as soldiers serially took over power in Ghana in quick succession. The dreams of Nnamdi Azikiwe, Ahmadu Bello, Obafemi Awolowo and Dennis Osadebey for a great and prosperous Nigeria leading the African continent and the Black race were swiftly put aside as military adventurers took over power in turns, for a period spanning 29 years in all. In between these serial military incursions, the country also experienced a devastating fratricidal war which lasted from 1967 to 1970.

The situation was not much different in the rest of the continent where lawless and unaccountable rule had become the norm. With ruthless militarization of politics came the complete decimation of Africa's political economy as the virtues of participatory democracy and good governance took flight. In the decades of military rule and one-party dictatorship, responsible and accountable governance became an alien philosophy, respect for and protection of

fundamental human rights and freedoms were non-existent, the resources of the state meant for development were plundered for personal aggrandizement, and the peoples' hopes and aspirations for the good life from political independence were subsequently aborted. Maladministration and nepotism, greed and extreme corruption, the get-rich-quick syndrome, absence of respect for the dignity of labour, unfortunately became the very hallmarks of governance. Africa had arrived at the era of the locusts. In short, the African state had not only been disconnected from the original noble vision of its founding fathers but it had actually begun to yield to the depredations of its leaders and the rapaciousness of members of the ruling classes. In the years of authoritarian and unaccountable rule, many African states were literally sundered by ethnic and sectarian strife, insurrections and civil wars, from Nigeria to the Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Democratic Republic of Congo. These brought in their wake the hitherto



unknown phenomenon of warlords, mercenaries and child soldiers, and the concomitant proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In many cases where there was still civil rule, politics turned into zero-sum contests between political parties and between individuals for the capturing of the state and its resources, creating an atmosphere of intolerance of opposition and encouraging electoral malpractices, such as, election rigging, and even the use of thuggery and intimidation against political opponents to gain and retain political power. Contemporary African politics became a complete negation of the original dreams of the early nationalists who had believed that with political independence all other benefits of modern civilization would be available to the people. Politics turned bizarre as politicians went berserk, and the continent regressed and retrogressed until it became a basket case relying on external assistance for survival.

Africa was to endure this slide into backward rule for a few more decades until the most recent and dramatic changes in the configuration of world politics. The end of the Cold War and its attendant rivalries, and the eventual victory of Western liberal values of capitalism and democracy over Communism, has resulted in what is called the "third wave" of democratization across the globe. The resultant universalization of Western liberal democracy means that Africa can no longer continue with rabid dictatorship if it wants to remain active and relevant in global affairs. In any case, the principal custodians of world order have made the adoption of liberal democracy a political conditionality for developing countries to enjoy foreign aid, debt relief and foreign direct investment. Indeed, the post-Cold War era has zero tolerance for the type of crude dictatorship to which Africa was subjected from the mid-1960s until the early 1990s.

The implication from the above is that the Western form of democracy is now the irreducible minimum condition for nation-states to remain relevant in the world, and Africa is being compelled to adapt to this global current. Gradually and inexorably, the old anti-democratic order is giving way to the new democratic era. It is already accepted that Africans should move beyond their brand of authoritarian, one-party system and military dictatorships that had stifled progress and development for so long. It is also indisputable that the continent now requires a new generation of post-Cold War leaders with a democratic mindset.

Africa requires a new crop of committed nationalists and Pan-Africanists who can once again rekindle the fire of our imagination as their predecessors did. A new set of dedicated African leaders who will give us hope. People who will translate our hopes into reality, people who will liberate Africa from the shackles of ignorance, superstition and

fatalism. Men and women who will convert our despair into hope, give us beauty in the place of ashes, and place Africa in the centre of the world. Africa urgently requires a new crop of forward-looking, bold and imaginative leaders in all spheres ---- politics, economics, business, the professions, ---- not just to re-invent the dreams and visions of our heroes past, but actually to give birth to renewed visions of Africa's development and greatness. Africa must evolve new leaders who will help us regain the original dreams of independence, reverse the horrors of slavery and internal colonialism of the recent past, and lead Africa forward to its manifest destiny as the cradle of civilization. We must all learn many things from our heroes past, how to educate our offspring, how to elect our representatives, how to organize our economic life, so that it will lead to prosperity not abject poverty.

Though our tribes and tongues may differ as Africans, we can march on together in brotherhood and unity, for in unity lies

the strength of Africa. We must make Africa to come of age and take its rightful place in world affairs. Accomplishing this requires the work of God-fearing people who as our new leaders will take Africa to the Promised Land. Africans must now seek a new generation of leaders to replace the Nelson Mandelas and Desmond Tutus.

## **[IV]**

How then do we re-invent the dream of a great, prosperous and glorious Africa? How can we rekindle hope and, once again, fire the imagination of our people? Let us not forget that the political struggles of ex-slaves once made Sierra Leone a centre of excellence in education with the establishment of Fourah Bay College, West Africa's first university. Let us not forget that the early nationalists like Nnamdi Azikiwe in West Africa established printing presses, and published newspapers and magazines. Let us not forget

that Obafemi Awolowo established the first television service in the whole of the African continent, that Cocoa House, Ibadan, was the tallest structure in the whole of West Africa at the time it was built. And that the dogged and unwavering commitment of people in Southern Africa to liberation crushed the evil of apartheid and racism in Africa.

There is no doubt that Africa has lost valuable time and is thus lagging behind the rest of the world in terms of human development indices, and ability to meet the challenges of a globalizing world. But then, all hope is not lost. Africa can accelerate and fast-track the implementation of the various development blueprints and thereby move consciously towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015. Africa's hope for the future lies in a new awakening among individuals and groups within the various countries, especially in the area of developing a new generation of honest, dedicated, focused, transparent and selfless leaders to give us

a new orientation and direction. This is what you at Covenant University represent.

At the political level, we must make conscious efforts to clean up our politics and elect only those who will regard public office as a service and a call to duty, who will hold themselves accountable to the electorate and respect the rule of law. Who will protect the fundamental rights and basic freedoms of the people, and bring the benefits of democratic rule and development to the mass of the people of Africa. The electorate must be sensitized to reject inducements in exchange for their priceless vote. Because the electorate is generally uneducated, the task of enlightenment and mass mobilization for concrete political action in defence of democracy and good governance must fall on the civil society. It is in this regard that the pivotal role of civil society organizations in raising the consciousness of the people cannot be over-emphasized. Even in advanced democracies

like that of the United States of America, the activities of civil society groups and human rights defenders such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples (NAACP) and the National Urban League, and organized labour unions such as the American Federation of Labours-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) are vital in making American democracy work for the benefit of the mass of the people. In our circumstances, we must not fail to acknowledge the efforts of several civil society organizations such as the Civil Liberties Organization (CLO), Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR), Constitutional Rights Project (CRP), Association of Democratic Lawyers (ADL) and others in ending military rule and enthroning the present civilian dispensation.

Religious organizations also have a critical role to play in reaching the soul of the ordinary people. They must endeavour to raise our society's consciousness to the need to



embrace the time-honoured virtues of honesty, hard work, and dignity of labour, respect for others, and commitment to the common good. The Church must teach, emphasize and impart the noble qualities of selfless leadership exhibited by the greatest teacher, our Lord Jesus. Educational institutions undoubtedly must play a great part in shaping the character of future leaders through the provision of liberal education and morals that will steer them away from today's pervasive culture of intolerance, intimidation, harassment, brigandage, violence and cultism in many higher institutions across the land.

## **[VI]**

Our nation, indeed our continent, Africa, has valuable lessons to learn from the quest of Covenant University to raise and nurture a new generation of progressive, morally upright and confident leaders in all areas of human endeavour through its

seven core values of Spirituality, Integrity, Mentality, Commitment, Responsibility, Diligence and Sacrifice. There can be no nobler attributes than these. Indeed, these virtues constitute the most potent catalysts for Africa's relevance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. Covenant University is setting the pace. It is lighting the path to Africa's progress and development through the provision of quality education and equipping tomorrow's leaders with the requisite moral attributes. For this, we owe the greatest debt of gratitude to the Chancellor, Bishop David Oyedepo for his vision and faith – for it is an act of faith and vision to be committed to youth. Indeed, if we are to construct an imaginative and creative scenario for our national development for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, our faith in that successful future rests on our confidence in our youth. “The Youth of a Nation”, said Disraeli, “are the trustees of posterity.” Indeed, you are our most important Resource. You leave here with a deeper insight into your

responsibilities, your heroes past and your own inherent dignity. The greatness of the land that produced you will be re-enforced only by you.

It is often said that a great nation is one which breeds great people. A great people flower not from wealth and power, but from a society which spurs them to the fullness of the genius. That is the Great Society you will help to build. "Every man", stated Woodrow Wilson, "sent out from a University should be a man of his nation as well as a man of his time." And so my young friends, I will urge you with the same exhortation that St. Paul used in a letter to his young friend Timothy: "O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you!" And I would add, use what has been entrusted to you to help humanity.

John F.K. once advised as he inaugurated the Peace Corps – "ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can

do for your country.” These were great words, but now Covenant University has taught you to enlarge your concept of patriotism and self-sacrifice. John F. Kennedy’s words could be rephrased as: “Ask not what humanity can do for you, but what you can do for humanity.”

To accomplish this task, you must keep the Covenant Vision and Dream alive. Today, you are living out part of that vision. As you are released from the **Covenant ‘Nest’**, I say to you, ***fly, Covenant Eagles, fly, you shall not grow weary!*** As trustees of our posterity, you must ensure ***that “the labour of our heroes past shall never be in vain.”***

May God sustain us all.