

THE END IS THE BEGINNING

Text of the Address delivered by the Vice-Chancellor, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Professor Is-haq O. Oloyede, on the occasion of Founder's Day and 24th Convocation Ceremonies of the 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 graduands of the University of Ilorin on Thursday October 22, 2008 at the Auditorium, University of Ilorin, Ilorin.

THE END IS THE BEGINNING

It is my singular honour to welcome you back to the continuation of our 24th Convocation Ceremonies and indeed our Founder's Day. It is my joy to announce, as if you don't know, that today marks the end of the ceremonies, started last Monday. I want to thank you all, particularly our amiable Visitor, the President and Commander in Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua GCFR. I also wish to thank our landlord and host, the Governor of Kwara State, Dr. Bukola Saraki, for his generosity towards the University and his ever constant support. The support of the Emir of Ilorin and Chairman of Kwara State Council of Traditional Rulers, Alhaji Ibarahim Sulu Gambari is also highly acknowledged. By pouring the water of gratitude on our heads, as the Yoruba would say, I am sure the rest of the bodies including everyone of us here present, will be covered.

The Visitor and Chancellor sirs, if you would permit me to begin from addressing our graduands first, I would say that yesterday, I spoke on *the Beginning of the Beginning* but today, the focus of this address is *The End is the Beginning*. If this appears as a paradox it is because life itself is paradoxical. I actually got the title after reading the musings of an Indian theosophist, Jiddu Krishnamurti. The lines go thus:

The end is the beginning of all things;
Suppressed and hidden
Awaiting to be released through the rhythm
Of pain and pleasure.

Now, coordinating pain with pleasure is interesting because pain and pleasure go hand-in-hand just as the beginning and the end. Dan Brown knows as much as such that he quickly tells us in his *The Da Vinci Code* that 'pain is pleasure' and in another breath that 'pleasure is pain'. The pains of study in serious academic work over the past few years, for instance, have melted down to the pleasure of Convocation Ceremonies for our graduands and their parents. Just as I said to your colleagues yesterday, I say congratulations.

Essentially, saying that *the end is the beginning* is another way of saying that the completion of your undergraduate academic programme is not the end of university education, not to talk of the end of knowledge. My dear graduands, while congratulating you on the successful ending of your programmes, I want to sound it into your ears with a note of alacrity that in a competitive world and the new age we are living now, *the end is just the beginning*.

With the end of your programmes, you will brace up to the challenges of life. In a way, life will appear to you in its true colour, probably different like reality from the illusion that might have characterised undergraduate fantasy. We all had all such fanciful fantasies and they could be good in a way. Nevertheless, my parting words to you are that you should never admit failure in life until you have made your last attempt; and you should never make your last attempt until you have succeeded. Do not compare yourself with anyone in this world; if you compare, you are insulting yourself.

The Visitor and the Chancellor sirs, today's Convocation Ceremony is for the graduands of our Faculties of Agriculture, Engineering and Technology, Law and College of Health Sciences, including graduands of higher degrees and postgraduate diplomas. The common thread that runs through all the disciplines and the entire postgraduate programmes is: development in all its ramifications. This development may be premised on agriculture or it may be technical, legal, medical or intellectual in nature. As development is a dynamic process, I challenge you all to develop yourselves further as you set to develop our country agriculturally, technologically, legally, medically and academically.

While the number of graduands produced in the three Faculties and College for the 2006/2007 session was 1,171 (Agriculture: 238; Engineering and Technology: 429; Law: 175 and College: 330) the graduate output for the 2007/2008 session was 753 (Agriculture: 144; Engineering and Technology: 250; Law; 164; and College of Health Sciences: 195). Also, the University had 54 postgraduate diploma, 367 Masters and 19 Ph.D graduands at the end of the 2006/2007 academic session while 3 postgraduate diploma, 43 Masters and 38 Ph.D graduands were produced at the end of the just-concluded 2007/2008 session.

As a whole, the University produced 191 MB;BS; 4 first class; 469 second class upper division; 2,001 second class lower division; 1, 437 third class; 178 pass; 2 Aegrotat and 240 diploma graduands summing up to 4,681 for the 2006/2007 session. Similarly, there were 19 Ph.D, 367 Masters and 54 postgraduate diploma degree graduands, summing up to 440 higher degrees/postgraduate diplomas for the same session. The total graduate output for both undergraduate and postgraduate categories for the 2006/2007 session in the university was thus 5,121.

As for the 2007/2008 academic session, the University produced 71 MB;BS; 5 first class; 408 second class upper division; 1,771 second class lower division; 945 third class; 105 pass and 182 diploma graduands making a total 3,487 graduands for the first degree and diplomas. In the same vein, the University produced 38 Ph.D, 43 Masters and 3 postgraduate diploma

graduands making a total of 84 higher degree and postgraduate diploma graduands for the session. The total graduate output for both the undergraduate and postgraduate categories for the 2007/2008 session was therefore 3,571.

As a concerned Professor of Islamic Studies, I want to observe that the current economic crises and the crash in the global stock market have implications for development. The root-cause of the economic meltdown is corporate greed and interest or usury. Any economic system based on usury is destructive as it robs Peter to pay Paul. The two great books of Religion, the Qu'ran and the Bible are unequivocal in describing interest as evil. It is high time the world sought viable alternative models so that crises of this nature would be averted. But as long as the backbone of the global economy is usury, crises such as those ravaging the global stock market in particular and the formal economic sector in general, are bound to be imminent.

At the University of Ilorin, our tradition is not to do things just because it is popular. Our position is that honorary degrees are not ordinary and that beneficiaries must have performed extra-ordinary feats to deserve them. While the University is appreciative of the support and assistance of many public-spirited individuals and bodies who have contributed immensely to the University, the university has introduced several layers of appreciating our donors. By the time the university is ready for the awards, everybody will agree with us that the recipients are truly deserving of the honours.

Over the last one year, the University has moved further, as expected, from the great point it was when Providence saddled us with leadership. We have internationalized the system with linkages and collaborations with the University of Ghana, Legon, the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, Oxford University, United Kingdom, the University of Fort Hare, South Africa, World Health Organisation as we have re-activated our membership of the Association of African Universities, the Association of Commonwealth Universities, the International Association of University Presidents and the International Association of Bandwidth among others. We have provided wireless internet environment, activated power-powered electricity, facilitated computer acquisition, backed up municipal services, prioritized staff welfare, resuscitated student unionism, motivated excellence in staff and students, constructed buildings, refurbished hostels, graded roads, planted trees and sustained stable academic calendar. While awards and recognitions are given to staff, it is the fortune of the University that its current or past academic staff are heading at least 7 Nigerian universities as Vice-Chancellors.

All these could not have happened without the support of Allah. All these could not have been without the sterling leadership qualities of the former Chairman of Council, Emeritus Professor Ayo Banjo, a harmonious blending of academic depth and administrative forthrightness who was preceded by a visionary officer, a giant general and a principled politician, General

Salihu Ibrahim. It is also true that all these would not have been actualized without the firm foundation and strong structure left behind by my predecessor, the amiable and versatile Professor S.O.O. Amali, who was equally fortunate to have been preceded by a man of courage and abundant energy, Professor S.O. AbdulRaheem. As a matter of fact, the fortunate University of Ilorin is where it is today as a result of the hardwork of its successive Vice-Chancellors. From the pioneering efforts of the founding Principal, Professor Tekana Tamuno, the foundation Vice-Chancellors, Professors O.O. Akinkugbe, A.O.Adesola to the consolidating contributions of Professors S.A. Toye, A. Adeniyi and J.O. Oyinloye, the University has always been lucky with its qualitative leadership.

It is our hope that the university will continue to wax stronger and the labours of our heroes past shall never be in vain. Part of our development of the established legacy is that our graduands will have their certificates with many security features, including the passport-sized photograph. Those who have not submitted their passport photographs should do so.

The Visitor, the Chancellor sirs, our convocation used to hold on Saturday but the university Senate took a decision to return to our Founder's Day tradition, which is October 23. Henceforth, our convocation ceremonies will be marking our Founder's Day. I would also add that the University Act, Section 5, Sub-section 4 stipulates that "The Council shall ensure ... that an annual report is published by the university" and this is what has informed long convocation addresses, which should ostensibly cover the entire report of the university. Giving an account of a whole year within 2 or 3 hours may not be feasible. The need for an Annual Report is crucial and the concept of university autonomy does not foreclose accountability in the system.

In addition to external recognitions of staff contained in the Annual Report, Dr. O. S. Balogun was appointed as MD, Lower Niger River Basin Development Authority. It is our hope to sustain the Annual Report. It is our hope that the long Convocation Address will fade out with time and Annual Report will replace it. I, on behalf the University of Ilorin, respectfully present the Annual Report of the University to the Visitor.

Thank you and may God make *the end* of this Convocation *the beginning* of greater achievements in the lives of our graduands.