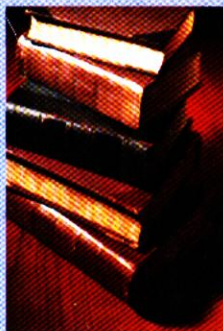




# Instilling Moral Ethics In The University Community: *A Sine Qua Non* For National Growth & Development



## 17<sup>th</sup> Public Lecture

of the Federal University of Technology,  
Owerri (FUTO), Imo State.

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**17TH PUBLIC LECTURER**



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# **INSTILLING MORAL ETHICS IN THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY: A SINE QUA NON FOR NATIONAL GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT**

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On the occasion of  
**THE 17<sup>TH</sup> PUBLIC LECTURE**  
OF THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY,  
OWERRI, NIGERIA

23<sup>rd</sup> JUNE 2010



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*Department of Microbiology  
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**Chairman and Members of the Governing Council of the  
Federal University of Technology Owerri  
The Vice Chancellor  
The Deputy Vice Chancellors  
Other Principal Officers of the University  
Deans of Schools and Directors of Units  
Distinguished Professors  
Heads of Departments  
Other Members of the Academia  
Distinguished and Special Invitees  
Members of Staff and Students of this University  
My Lords Spiritual and Temporal  
His royal Highnesses  
Representatives of the Print and Electronic media  
Ladies and Gentlemen**

## **PREAMBLE**

Sometime ago, around the 2004/2005 session, I wrote to the Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO) University Lecture Committee indicating my intention to deliver my Inaugural Lecture. I am a Medical Microbiologist, and most of my publications are on Microbiology and Biotechnology. For my Inaugural Lecture I had chosen as my topic “Diarrhoeal Diseases, Aetiology and Public Health Implications”. I was not able to give the Inaugural Lecture because of the circumstances that took place in FUTO at that time which destabilized the operations of the FUTO Lecture Series and more or less brought it to a halt. The period 2004 / 2005 was a window period for the FUTO Lecture Series. It was due to the efforts of the present Vice Chancellor of FUTO, Prof. C.O.E Onwuliri, that the University Lectures were resumed.

September 2007 was the end of my tenure at the Federal University of Technology, Owerri. I took my retirement leave and when I came back in October 2007, I requested for contract appointments which the Vice Chancellor, Prof. C.O.E Onwuliri has been magnanimous in approving for me. Along the line, the University Lecture Series Committee and the Vice Chancellor, Prof. C. O. Onwuliri, were encouraging the Professors to give one of the following lectures Convocation Lecture, Distinguished/Foundation Lecture, Inaugural Lecture Public Lecture or Valedictory Lecture while they are serving in the University, I decided to give a Public or Valedictory Lecture before my final exit from FUTO.

I considered it necessary for me to give a talk to the FUTO community before I finally leave FUTO because FUTO means a lot to me. I have received a lot from FUTO and I have given a lot to FUTO. I came to FUTO in 1981 and I have enjoyed a cordial relationship with the management, the staff and students of this great institution. I worked under five substantive and four acting vice-chancellors and I related well with all of them. One of our revered Professors here addresses me either as madam FUTO or the Queen Mother depending on which side he woke up that morning. Having made so many friends in FUTO, I will not leave FUTO nicodemously.

Having spent such a long time in the University System, I have a desire to speak on the issues that raise their ugly heads from time to time in the university communities, the issues I have been directly or indirectly involved in solving. For the present time, the issue that is of great concern to the University Community is Moral Ethics or Discipline. This informed the choice of the topic of this lecture entitled "Instilling Moral Ethics in the University Community: a *Sine Qua Non* for

National Growth & Development”.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Moral Ethics:** Morality involves deciding between conflicting values, each value having something good in it. An example is a school teacher who must decide whether to give more attention to students with learning difficulties or to give equal attention to all the students. The crux of morality is that of doing what is right. Morality has to do with good character, valued code of conduct and good conscience. The two terms moral and ethics are very often used interchangeably. Ethics has several definitions. It can be defined as a set of principles of right conduct, the rules of standards governing the conduct of a person or a member of a profession. Ethics is a code of behaviour especially of a particular group. For example; we have professional ethics such as medical and academic ethics. Ethics is the application of the moral values of human conduct. Amoral is the state or quality of being without morality or of being indifferent to moral standards. Ethics, also known as moral philosophy, is a branch of philosophy which seeks to address questions about morality.

To conclude the definitions of moral and ethics, I think of ethics as a society accepted code of behaviour. The code is established by the society for the perceived betterment of the society; therefore, ethics is relative to society. Morality refers to a universal law which we all ought to obey. A universal law requires a universal lawgiver and that can only be God. However, the atheists also believe in morality. For them morality degenerates into a mere following of tradition or getting along with others which includes the perception of being

good. Our nation's moral foundation is weak and loose. That is why many Nigerians especially the youths lack the commitment and patriotism necessary to drive our national consciousness. No nation can survive when its moral base is bankrupt. In deed, Nigeria's moral decline has reached a crises point. Nigeria is truly a nation without moral direction plagued all around with various kinds of ills. At the present, understanding of, teaching and practicing of moral ethics in our universities will be a panacea to most of the evils that plague the Nigerian society.

Raising a moral child involves far more than simply correcting misbehaviours and encouraging positive actions. Morality includes fostering an inner conviction, the habit of doing the right thing at all times whether or not anyone else is watching. For example in the Western Countries like England, no one litters rubbish around. You can eat your banana anywhere but you cannot dispose the skin anywhere. You have to carry your banana skin until you find a dustbin to throw it into. People do this voluntarily without being policed. At the bus stop, there is no police to tell you to join the queue at the tail end.

Instilling moral ethics in our university undergraduates will require each university having an efficient counselling unit which will among other things:-

- a. Teach the undergraduate the right values of life
- b. Teach him the value of knowledge right from his first year of university.
- c. Stress learning from the first day of school, and instil in him the principle of hard work and the reward of hard work.
- d. Teach him that it is far more honourable to fail than to cheat.
- e. Teach him to be different even if everyone else is doing it

- the wrong way.
- f. Teach him how to put a smile on other people's faces.
  - g. Teach him to eschew vice for a good name is better than gold.
  - h. Teach him to close his ears to a howling mob and to defend what is right.
  - i. Teach him the consequences of his actions on the wider society.
  - j. Encourage empathy and stress the idea of contributing positively to the community.
  - k. Teach him to respect the constituted authorities by obeying and practicing the University rules and regulations.
  - l. Finally advise him to join the Campus Christian Fellowships and shun secret cult groups.

**University Community:** The Britannica Concise Encyclopaedia defined University as an institution of higher education. This discussion therefore is on instilling moral ethics in our institutions of higher education as a *sine qua non* for national growth & development. Therefore, as we discuss education, it is understood that we are also discussing it in relation to the university.

***Sine Qua Non:*** This is a Latin phrase meaning an essential element or condition, a prerequisite, indispensable, an essential condition or something that is required in advance, a panacea, without which etc.

**Education:** Education is defined as imparting and acquiring knowledge through teaching and learning, especially at a school or similar institution. Webster Dictionary defined education as

a process of educating or teaching. Education is further defined as a process or means of developing the knowledge, skill or character of human beings. From these definitions we can assume that the purpose of education is to develop the knowledge, skill and character of students. Knowledge is a body of information that exists. Knowledge arises in the mind of an individual when that person interacts with an idea or experience. Simply put Education is the acquisition of knowledge, the aggregate of all processes through which a person develops ability, skills, attitudes and other forms of behaviour with positive values in the society in which he lives. Education is a life long process, which frees a man from ignorance; education enhances the quality of an individual and enables him to build his personality in such a way that he is able to play an effective role in the development of the society to which he belongs. Ebong (1996) defined education as a powerful instrument for the development of man and the society.

## **EDUCATION AND NATIONAL GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT**

From the definitions above, education is a systematic procedure for the transfer and transformation of culture, through formal or informal training of people in a society. It deals with the mental, physical, psychological and social development of the citizens in a given society. The goal of education is manpower development, aimed at national growth and development. Growth is increase in size without scientific and technological development. Development means growth integrated with economic, scientific, political and home based technological expansion (Enamiroro, 2007)

Economic development would include improvements in material welfare, especially for persons with lowest incomes; eradication of mass poverty, illiteracy, disease and early death. Poverty could be measured by figuring how much it costs to buy basic necessities of life. A country is said to be poor if she cannot cater for her citizenry and lives in fear, like in Nigeria today.

After forty-nine years of independence, Nigeria is within the 20 poorest countries in the world and ranked 15<sup>th</sup> in the 2009 Failed States Index (Adiche 2010). Often a failed state is characterised by social, political and economic failures. This is despite the large quantity and quality of our crude oil, and despite the increased number of university graduates produced from the Nigerian Universities. What are the possible causes of underdevelopment in Nigeria? According to Nwaka (2000), national development involves much more than the state of higher education and the quality of policy advice offered. It has to contend with the many internal problems of underdevelopment especially mismanagement. For Nigeria, the many internal problems of underdevelopment will include the following ethical and moral problems corruption, greed, dishonesty, violent crimes, political killings, drug peddling and drug using, kidnapping, mismanagement of funds and other destructive behaviours. But top on the list is the inability of the Nigerian leaders to create conditions necessary for national development. These vices have crippled our national growth. The survival of this nation is seriously hanging on the balance. These vices have robbed us of our place of destiny. Vices eat up a nation like termites and this is what is happening to Nigeria. Education, I would say is the most powerful and effective instrument of socialization. If children and the youths are not properly educated, they are very likely to end up adopting

destructive social values. In the past few years, the Nigerian youths have increasingly adopted habits and tendencies that are destructive to social harmony because the values in the system tend to push them in that direction.

## **WHY INSTIL MORAL VALUES?**

The concept of national development (economical, political or social) is said to bring with it valuable and positive changes that improves the living standards of the people, as it creates employment opportunities and equality of opportunities and reduces poverty among other things. The achievement of these objectives hinges on the character and attitudes (moral compass) of the leaders entrusted with the management of the society. Moral education involves educating for character and for good moral values. Respect and responsibility are the two fundamental moral values that a society should teach its citizens. Other values are honesty, fairness, tolerance, prudence, self discipline, helpfulness, compassion, cooperation, courage and other democratic values.

However, rule of law, equality of opportunities, due process, representative government, checks and balances and democratic decision making are procedural values that define democracy. Taking responsibility for the things we do wrong as well as the things we do right is the way to move the society forward. Presently, corruption drives and shapes social values in Nigeria and for some individuals the quest for easy money is a justification for breaking the laws of the land and distorting policies directed towards national development. Nevertheless, morality would not be important to the young ones if it does not

matter to the adults. Morality must begin from the top of the organization. Because of the moral decadence among the youths many of them do not seem to realize that cheating (dishonesty) in public examinations; campus gang violence and prostitution are anti-social behaviours. Without good moral upbringing of the youths today, the nation will not produce good leaders to manage its affairs tomorrow. Without moral upbringing, our institutions of higher learning will continue to mass produce youths who are insensitive to the destruction of the nations' pipelines, the nations' electrical cables and the nations' human lives

Moral education promotes moral development which promotes critical thinking and moral reasoning which positively impacts national development. The founding fathers of American democracy had noted that moral education is essential for the success of a democratic society. Thomas Jefferson had noted that good character and loyalty to these democratic virtues must be instilled in the people at an early age. Ethical education should include education to enable the citizens develop critical political awareness to guide their actions, to know what is good, to desire what is good and to do what is good. Other attributes of ethical education will include educating the citizens to respect others and have regard for the law of the land and taking responsibility for ones actions in public and private life for the public good. The success of any democratic system depends on the individual's ability to analyse problems and make thoughtful decisions. For Nigeria to become a truly democratic society, and for it to develop economically, the citizens must possess the appropriate character and integrity to administer the laws of the land. Moral ethics must be instilled in the environment where the instruction is given. We need the knowledge and understanding of moral ethics to fight the corruption that has

paralysed this nation socially, economically, politically and spiritually.

## **CAN UNIVERSITIES INSTIL MORAL VALUES AMONG STUDENTS?**

It is not everyone that thinks that a University education should have anything to do with inculcating moral values in the students. Writing in the *Chronicles of Higher Education* in 2003, Stanley Fish, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Science at the University of Illinois in Chicago reminded his fellow University teachers that when it comes to having an effect on students, that they might just make them good researchers because they cannot make them good people and warned them not to try (Steinfel, 2004).

In 1997 John Mearsheimer, a professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, delivering the Annual Aims of the Education address, summarized those aims as teaching students to think critically, broadening their intellectual horizons, promoting their self awareness and their capacity to understand their own strengths and limitations. According to the professor, there are two goals that the University does not pursue. One of these “non-aims” was “providing the truth”. He expects the student to figure out the truth, if there is one. The second non-aim was the University

Providing the students with moral guidance .What Professor Mearsheimer was saying is that it is not the responsibility of the University to instil moral values in the students (Steinfel, 2004).

Some elite Universities these days operate on this belief that there is a clear separation between intellectual and moral



purpose. They pursue the former while largely ignoring the latter. However, this should not be true of the Nigerian Universities where University degrees are awarded to students who have been found worthy both in learning and in character. Learning has to do with intellectual purpose while character has to do with moral purpose. The two must go together to produce a wholesome individual and they cannot be separated.

### **ARE THERE PROCEDURES FOR INSTILLING MORAL ETHICS IN UNIVERSITY COMMUNITIES?**

Yes, there are provisions for instilling moral ethics in the University Communities in Nigeria. This is provided both at the University and at the National levels.

At the University level, every University has an Academic Regulation for Undergraduate Students. This document contains all that the student needs to know in order to carry out his studies effectively and graduate unmolested. Each section usually spells out the punishment that goes with the failure to adhere to that particular rule and regulation.

Anyone who is familiar with the University system will agree that there are rules and regulations on undergraduate registration and matriculation, adding and dropping of courses, indebtedness to the University, class period and attendance, withdrawal from the University for Academic Reasons including rules and regulations governing the conducts of examinations, examination malpractices and what constitutes minor or gross misconducts. However, some of these rules and regulations have become moribund presently. There are rules and regulations governing the stay of the students from their first year in the University to their graduation. There are

attendant punishments for the breaking of any of those rules but for most of the time, they are ineffective. Why? We will address this later.

There are rules and regulations governing the conditions of appointment for both the junior and for the senior staff. There are disciplinary measures to be invoked against any employee involved in a minor or gross misconduct.

What I am trying to say here is that the Universities have set in motion processes for the disciplining of both the students and the staff but these are for most of the time only in writing. In addition, there are also procedures for the removal and discipline of academic, administrative and professional staff. The processes are on ground but for most of the time, only in writing. Like in all Nigerian matters, the proposals and policies are usually good but the problems are the implementation of the proposals and policies. The Universities have the regulations that would enable it to instil moral ethics in the University community, but the problem is having the gut, the ability or the boldness to implement these rules and regulations mainly because of pressure from within and outside the Universities.

At the National Level, concern for quality education in Nigerian University system has led to the creation of the National University Commission (NUC) by the Federal Government. NUC is the external statutory agency mandated to maintain academic standards in Nigerian Universities. NUC was empowered by the enabling decrees to accredit programmes taught in Nigerian Universities.

In 1989, the Commission produced the Minimum Academic Standard (MAS) for undergraduate programmes in Nigerian

Universities. Basically therefore, the quality assurance function of NUC consists of setting the Minimum Academic Standards (MAS) for all the programmes taught in the Nigerian Universities and the accreditation of such programmes.

In 1990/91, the Commission conducted a comprehensive accreditation exercise in all the Nigerian Universities to ensure that the minimum academic standards were met.

In 2002, the Commission hosted the stake holder's conference on Curricula Review for University Education in order to reposition the curricula to respond to current and future requirements of Nigerian economy. Since the first accreditation exercise, programmes that became newly matured have been evaluated for accreditation and there have been accreditation visitations and re-visitations by NUC to the Nigerian Universities. The private Universities were not left out as many of them went through the 2005 accreditation exercise. The Commission also added ranking of the Universities as a way of jolting up standards and maintaining quality. The Universities work hard to be at the top of the list in the next ranking exercise.

In 2007, MAS was reviewed and this revision culminated in Benchmarks for Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS). Finally a department of Quality Assurance was created in the NUC Secretariat with the bid to maintain quality in all the Nigerian Universities.

In order to ensure that all these laudable efforts of NUC achieved significant changes in the Nigerian University system, Internal Quality Assurance mechanisms were created

in the individual institutions to ensure continuous monitoring and improvement. This is meant to be a multilevel responsibility involving every member of the academic department, faculties/school and the Senate. A quality assurance workshop, for the University Community was organized in FUTO by the Director of Quality Assurance, Professor (Rev. Fr.) L. C. Asiegbu on the 12<sup>th</sup> of May 2009. The workshop was well attended and it is expected that this workshop will be organised at the faculty and departmental levels. The whole aim is to improve standard and arrest the falling standard of education in our university system and a way of instilling discipline in the University System.

However, the problem with these accreditation exercises is that they are not carried out without the “Nigerian factor”. There is corruption in the conduct of the accreditation exercises. Universities will usually hire or borrow what they need to pass the accreditation, be it personnel (professors) or equipment to show to the accreditation team. What we do not realise is the fact that this conduct is counter productive. Why should we continue to complain of lack of these facilities on our campuses when we have already shown them to the accreditation team? Suffice it to mention here that the members of accreditation team are aware of the tricks being played by the universities because they do the same in their own universities.

## **HISTORICAL TRENDS IN NIGERIA'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

The first University in Nigeria started functioning in 1948 as a College of the University of London. The University College, Ibadan, evolved out of the desire of the British government to

establish Universities or University Colleges in the Commonwealth, particularly in West Africa, during the Second World War. It was for this purpose that Elliot and Asquith Commissions were set up in 1943 and 1959 respectively. The Elliot Commission in its majority and minority reports recommended the establishment of a University College in Nigeria. The Asquith Commission on the other hand focused its report on the fundamental principles which were to guide the development of institutions of higher learning and for the University College established at Ibadan. The report also emphasized the principles of residential university, high academic standards in admissions, staffing and employment. It is worth mentioning that as an affiliate of the University of London, the University College Ibadan was structured after the parent university. After its metamorphosis as an autonomous university, the same structure was retained and was later adopted by other universities subsequently established in Nigeria.

At the beginning, the standard was high. The products of our first generation universities namely Ibadan, Nsukka, Ife, Zaria, Lagos, and Benin compared very favourably with those of any other university in the world. Their graduates were candidates for post-graduate degrees for the best universities in the world and when they were admitted, they recorded good performances. Their graduates were offered the best jobs on graduation by the multinational companies and other big corporate bodies.

These six universities established during the period 1948 to 1970 are referred to as the first generation universities. In the third national development plan (1975-1980), the government established seven more universities, and also took over four

regional universities in 1975. These were Universities of Calabar, Ilorin, Jos, Sokoto, Maiduguri, Port Harcourt and Ado Bayero University, Kano. These universities are referred to as second generation universities. The four regional universities taken over were universities of Zaria, Ile-Ife, Nsukka and Benin (Okojie, 2010)

The third generation universities were established between 1980 and 1990. They are: the Federal Universities of Technology in Owerri, Makurdi, Yola, Akure and Bauchi, while state Universities were established in Imo, Ondo, Lagos, Akwa-Ibom, Uyo and Cross River states.

The fourth generation universities were those established between 1991 and the present date. They include more State Universities, Nigerian Open Universities and Private Universities. Presently Nigeria has one hundred and four (104) universities comprising twenty-seven (27) federal universities, thirty-six (36) state universities and forty-one (41) private universities (Kojie, 2010). Added to this number will be many other illegal universities that are currently operating in Nigeria.

## **CAUSES OF ANXIETY IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY COMMUNITIES**

### **The falling standard of Education in Nigerian Universities**

The level of indiscipline in Nigeria is very high. This has bred corruption and other related vices which have led to decay in all the facets of this nation including educational decay. As stated above, at the beginning the standard of education was high. The products of our first generation universities compared very

favourably with those of any other university in the world. But suddenly, things started changing and standards began to fall, especially with the advent of the military rule. The problem of inadequate remuneration to University Lecturers caused a serious damage to the university system. University lecturers and professors were the most respected in the society between the 1940's and 1970's. Their salaries and allowances were equivalent to what their counterparts earned overseas or in other paid employments outside the university such as the banks and multi-national companies. But today, with the lopsided value system of the Nigerian society, it is certainly better salary-wise to be a local government councillor than to be a professor. The total package for a local government councillor is much more than that of a professor. The consequence is that the brilliant materials are shunning universities for more lucrative and secure jobs outside the University system.

The quality of students produced from Secondary Schools is one major problem. The quality of products by primary and secondary schools affect the quality of students admitted into the universities. The University Matriculation Examination (UME) for University candidates is no longer a true test because the examination has been thoroughly abused. Invigilators connive with candidates to cheat; surrogates collude with Joint Admission and Matriculation Board officials. In the end dullards come up with inflated marks. Since UME results are no longer creditable, post-UME were introduced to ameliorate the effect of UME results. Babalola (2006) in one of his addresses recommended, and rightly so, that JAMB having collected billions of Naira for results that are discredited, should under write whatever expenses the universities may incur in carrying out the post UME tests.

The demand for higher education in Nigeria increased during the oil boom period of 1970's and the number of students increased without commensurate funding irrespective of the oil boom. Funding education has not been commensurate with the demand of the education sector. The condition becomes more pitiable when Nigeria's Gross National Product (GNP) allocation to education is compared with those of less affluent African Nations that allocate greater percentages of their yearly budget or GNP to education.

### **Frequent Strikes:**

Another cause of anxiety about Nigerian education is the instability in the system characterised by the truncation of academic sessions and the epileptic closure and re-opening of universities occasioned by students' unrest and recurring and sometimes protracted strike actions by the staff (academic and non-academic) just like the very recent one.

In the recent past, the universities and the government of any period have not enjoyed a healthy relationship. Their relationship has been centred on industrial disputes with the University lecturers, workers and students. The incessant industrial dispute in the universities hinders academic calendar. This kills the morale of students and prevents them from putting more efforts in their studies. All over the world, the academic calendar is running and nobody is waiting for Nigeria.

In 2001, President Olusegun Obasanjo verbally assaulted the University Professors (Guardian Online, Jan 31, 2002). The assault seemed to suggest that the lecturers were responsible for the poor state of the nation's educational system. This attack was not well taken by the university lecturers, but we all know that there are some bad eggs in the system. Most of the

accusations which the then President voiced out in 2001 are actually operating in our universities.

Strikes dislocate the educational system, affect the morale of staff and students, and lower the quality of education and the degrees, especially when the lecturers return to class months after they had vacated it only to compromise the syllabus. I am not aware of any other country where university lecturers embark on strike actions so frequently. At the end of each strike, the lecturers may get some of what they asked for but at a tremendous cost to the country's educational system. Suffice it to mention here that at the end of any strike action, the Universities are still able to turn out 1<sup>st</sup> class honours, 2<sup>nd</sup> class upper division and 2<sup>nd</sup> class lower division honours graduates no matter how short the length of quality teaching given. With this development one wonders the quality of graduates we produce in our institutions these days.

The lecturers are striking not necessarily because their salaries are too small but because their salaries are peanuts when compared with the take-home payments made to the political office holders and other sectors of comparable status. The lecturers feel sad to see the political office holders brandishing expensive cars and monies when they, the lecturers find it difficult to feed their children and provide them quality education. In addition, the lecturers are not happy that the universities where they are working are denied of the essential facilities that will enable them function properly. However, the lecturers should also know that the political offices are only temporary and cannot be compared with their tenure jobs. Moral ethical training will check mate this unnecessary public display of affluence by the politicians.

### **Corruption:**

For many years Nigeria has ranked as either the most corrupt or second most corrupt country in the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (CPI). This image has far reaching consequences, ranging from distrust of the average Nigerian, to poor rating of academic certificates and other official documents issuing from Nigeria. According to the Transparency International Study Report on Nigeria (2004) corruption in Nigeria can be grouped under three headings: - Petty Corruption, Grand Corruption and Political Corruption. These three forms of corruptions are operating in the Nigeria's University Communities. Petty corruption pervades the entire society and is manifested in several immoral and unethical ways ranging from police extortion at check points to extorting money from travellers at the airports. Other area where this type of corruption is endemic is in government offices where licences and permits for various activities are issued. One of the most damaging effects of this form of corruption is the fact that several generations of Nigerians have been raised in this setting and have experienced this as norm. As a result, they go through life without knowing anything else.

There is no gainsaying the fact that education is a *sine qua non* for progress and development in any organised society. But in Nigeria, corruption has impacted drastically on the education sector. This is very sad when we think of the University system which should have been centres of excellence, but which instead became a pitiable extension of rotten political system in Nigeria. Rather than ameliorate this situation, the Nigerian educational system has added to it. This is quite understandable not only because the lecturers are drawn from the larger society, but also because a good number of our students and teachers, especially at the university level, are not

supposed to be in the system.

The Nigeria's Policy on Education is hinged on the main national goals of Nigeria which essentially are the building of a free and democratic society, a just and egalitarian society, a united and self-reliant nation, a great and dynamic economy and a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens (Okecha 2008). The philosophy of the policy is based on the development of bright opportunities for all citizens, the full integration of the individual into the community and the provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. However, the inability of the available Universities in Nigeria to cope with the high demand for University Education has put much pressure on University admissions. In order to satisfy some interests the Government of Nigeria adopted such admission policies as the quota system, catchment areas, educationally disadvantaged areas etc. These admission policies are counter-productive in that some people who are qualified to be admitted are not admitted while others who are not qualified to be admitted are admitted because of quota system.

### **Lack of Moral Discipline:**

There is no doubt that moral indiscipline pervades the university communities in Nigeria and this remains one of the major factors responsible for the precipitous decline in the quality of education in Nigeria. This manifests itself in different forms of unethical and unprofessional practices, which are unbecoming of university teachers, such as immorality some of which we have had to deal with in FUTO, indiscriminate admission of unqualified or unfit candidates, examination malpractices, absentee lecturers, fraudulent and criminal activities and late release or non release of

examination results. Lecturers extort money from students through selling of copies of text books in the name of handouts, they sell the grades they award to the students, some male lecturers harass female students and some female students harass male lecturers. These are very serious misconducts. Many lives and futures of students have been adversely hampered by deliberate late release or non-release of results for months or even years after the examinations have been held. In some cases examination scripts are not marked at all. By this some students can not report at National Youth Service Corps camps and some prospective lawyers can not go to law schools at the time they are supposed to report.

This lack of moral discipline has resulted in Nigerian Universities producing individuals who lack moral disciplines and who are perpetually pre-occupied with looking for ways to exploit the society for their personal advantages, instead of contributing positively to the advancement of the society at large. This is because the educational systems and the families failed to inculcate in them the right moral and ethical values which are necessary for the survival of the individual and the society. The students also lack role models from the university communities. The educational system in Nigeria has failed to contribute meaningfully to the national development. We have failed to develop the intellectual capability of our youths to understand and appreciate their local and external environments.

### **Cultism:**

Students' cultism is another cause of anxiety in Nigeria's educational system. In recent years, this plague has assumed a frightening and deadly dimension. The term cult is defined as a group of people engaged in a form of ritual, usually under oath

binding the members to a common cause. Cultism in the nation presently is not only a criminal offence it is also a national calamity.

Cultism started in the Nigerian tertiary institutions in 1952 at the University of Ibadan, when a group of seven people led by the Nobel Laureate, Professor Wole Soyinka founded the Seadogs Confraternity popularly known as the Pirates. The group had three principal objectives:-

(i) “To fight against moribund conventions” that is the colonial mentality in the university system, such as the compulsory wearing of formal dresses to the cafeteria, and the idea of students behaving as overlords and as per British behaviour.

(ii) “To fight for humanization ideas to revive the soul in the campus, to establish discipline, orderliness and orientation to laudable national objectives”

(iii) “To fight against corruption, tribalism and other wicked acts” (Babalola, 2006)

The above objectives of the first cult group in Nigeria run contrary to the actions of the cult groups in our tertiary institutions today. Whereas Wole Soyinka's group had laudable objectives of emancipation of the black race, restoration of human dignity and a fight against corruption, tribalism and evil, the present generation cultists aim at dehumanization of their fellow citizens, they mastermind corruption, political thuggery, campus terrorism and anything that is evil. Today, cultism is a criminal offence in Nigeria.

Cultism in Nigeria can be blamed on Nigeria's faulty educational system where wrong people populated the Universities. A situation where students go to examination

halls and class rooms with guns, knives and axes should be very worrisome. There have been cases of lecturers and Heads of Departments being shot or stabbed in their offices or invigilators being stabbed in the examination halls.

The existence of cultism in the Nigerian tertiary institutions is blamed on the following:

- (i) Long years of military rule and its attendant brutalization of the civil populace.
- (ii) The employment of discretionary admission which favours less brilliant students but prejudices the interest and chances of the brilliant and talented ones.
- (iii) Presence of non-students in the halls of residence of higher institutions which makes it easier for extraneous forces to employ them for diabolical ends.
- (iv) Access of students to dangerous and sometimes sophisticated lethal weapons.
- (v) Readiness of some university administrators to employ cult members for their own selfish ends like the suppression of vocal and dynamic student leaders.
- (vi) Existence of fear as a result of lack of security on campus.
- (vii) Inadequate accommodation leading to over crowding and all manners of sharp practices.
- (viii) The course system which allows a student to stay in school for a longer period than necessary and which makes him to lose focus and thereby becoming "professional" student in the process.

There are many reasons why students embrace cultism and they include the following:

- (a) Desire to obtain undue privilege.
- (b) Desire to have a sense of power, influence and prestige among fellow students.
- (c) Desire to command undeserved authority and respect within the campus.
- (d) Readiness to confront injustice and inequity especially from school authorities and lecturers.
- (e) A desire to terrorize people by exhibiting capability to inflict violence on real and imagined adversaries.
- (f) Need to force and intimidate both lecturers and fellow students to grant unjustified selfish and devilish requests.
- (g) Desire to attract for members undeserved rights and privileges.
- (h) For the male cultists, the desire to create an avenue of securing girl friends through intimidation and guarantee of protection on campus.
- (i) Need to work in conjunction with other students of similar persuasion for purposes of evading sanctions
- (j) Urge to acquire false boldness consequent upon their inherent weakness and or lack of parental care/good home training.
- (k) Simply out of misplaced inquisitiveness and lust for social vices. (Babalola 2006)

## **WHY CORRUPTION PERSISTS AND CONTINUES TO IMPACT NEGATIVELY ON EDUCATION AND NATIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.**

The reasons are very many, and they include the following:

**Lack of Moral family Upbringing:** Families are the units that make up a nation. If every family raises children with

moral ethics, the entire nation will be moral. The problem is that some of the families are amoral and what they put into the system are amoral children. A child will showcase to the public what she or he has learnt from the home. In the book of Proverb, the Bible advises us to bring up a child the way he will go, and when he grows up he will not depart from it (Prov. 22:6)

**Education not given the Priority It Deserves:** Government does not give the educational sector the attention it deserves. This can be seen from peanut allocation in the Federal and State Governments budgets to the educational sector as compared with other sectors and the non-challant attitude of the government when the academic staff go on strike. Most of the ASUU strikes in this country are caused by reason of the Government's failure to implement its former agreement with the University teachers. The policy makers would rather send their children outside the country to receive quality education than improving the quality of education in Nigeria.

**Lack of Moral Ethics on the Part of the University Community:** The University community is a miniature of the Nigerian Society. The level of corruption in the university community is a reflection of the level of corruption in the Nigerian society. This corruption in the University community causes a serious damage to the educational sector and a downturn in the quality of education leading to the downturn in the National economic growth and development.

**The absence of political will to tackle the issue of corruption.** This is a major factor in the perpetuation of corruption in Nigeria. There is a culture of tolerance to corruption, and the absence of enforcement of the law against corruption is related directly to the culture of tolerance to

corruption. Most of the times, when people have committed grievous offences, they have escaped the proper punishment because of the intervention of the godfathers and the sacred cow syndrome. In Ecc.8:11 the Bible says “when the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, the hearts of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong”. Various governments have taken various initiatives to fight corruption, but have lacked the political will to implement them.

**The absence of role models:** Because the leaders are corrupt, there are no role models for the people to look up to. Moral ethics must start from the head of the organisation.

**Lack of emphasis on accountability:** Accountability is not emphasised in the system and this leads to the entrenchment and institutionalisation of the practice of impunity.

**Greed and Lack of the Knowledge of God:** Most Nigerians are greedy and they lust after money because they are spiritually bankrupt. Despite the number of Churches in all the cities of Nigeria, most Nigerians neither fear God nor have the knowledge of God. The spread of the gospel in Nigeria is so wide but the spiritual content is so thin. What is more worrisome however is the obvious reality of the society gradually and steadily decaying alongside the increasing churches and religious activities. The religious leaders, who should act as character moulders, have failed in this assignment. The knowledge of God will make us wise, godly and to understand that “vanity upon vanity is vanity” according to the book of Ecclesiastes That “godliness with contentment is great gain” (1Tim. 6: 6.), that “the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil” (1 Tim. 6:10), In Heb. 13: 5, the Bible says “Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what

you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." And finally, we brought nothing into this world, and we can take nothing out of it (I Tim. 6:7).

**Political Quagmire:** The electoral process is not creditable, and because we do not have creditable electoral process, we do not have creditable political leaders. The political leaders know that they did not come into the office through the people's mandate. The wishes of the electorate do not count at the elections. The politicians will want to win elections at all cost. They got into office through whatever means other than the people's votes. They, therefore, owe no obligation to the electorate. They came into the office through corruption and they must patronize corruption.

### **WHO IS TO BE BLAMED?**

All of us are to be blamed. The parents, the headmasters, the principals of schools, the lecturers, the students, the university management and the government have their share of the blame. The whole thing is a vicious cycle. "We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (I John. 1:8-9).

The students will share in the blame because they are the ones that indulge in cultism, cheating in examinations and causing violence that disrupt academic calendar.

The headmasters and principals of schools are to be blamed because they are the ones that collect illegal monies from students to pay to the Examination inspectors so that they can

close their eyes to the examination malpractices that their students are indulging in.

The academic staff will share in the blame because they are the ones who encourage sorting, sexual harassment of female students, sales of handouts and the delays in the release of examination results of the students. The academic staff will declare strike at the slightest provocation without any qualm and come back after the strike to compromise the syllabus and graduate the students in different categories of honours degrees.

Administrative staff of the universities who engage in the alteration of students' transcripts, delays in the release of transcripts and are sometimes part of syndicates that perpetuate one evil or the other on the campuses are to share in the blame.

The University Management who has failed to give the appropriate punishment to the offenders when they are caught and who also engage in the mismanagement of funds allocated to the universities are to share in the blame.

Parents encourage and sponsor their children's illegal and unethical deals. Parents follow their children to the universities to make unethical requests to the lecturers. Parents collude with JAMB officials to obtain inflated scores. Parents pay to impersonators to take examination for their children. Parents pay huge sums of money to gain admission for their children. Parents will share in the blame.

The Governments in power has the greatest share of the blame because they are insensitive to the needs of the Universities.

The government has refused to give the educational sector the priority it deserves and because of their non-challant attitude to the educational sector, they do not honour the agreements reached with the unions. It is the government's negative attitude towards making universities centres of academic excellence that has converted the universities into centres of trade and marketing transactions.

### **THE WAY FORWARD**

1. There is a compelling need for moral re-engineering. The societal revival will not become a reality until each of us resists the temptation to be corrupt and sell ourselves cheap and this requires a new awareness of self-worth which is priceless.
2. There must be a re-orientation of our value system. We need to go through attitudinal changes. The value system must change from those at the top to those at the bottom. Nigeria must redefine its value system.
3. The government and the managers of educational system must evolve policies that will destroy the current bad and corrupt value system in the society and create conducive environment that would enable educational institutions to engage in healthy academic competition. The greatest need of Nigeria and a *sine qua non* for national development is leadership of complete moral integrity and great courage
4. There must be stringent rules and regulations on standard and discipline and these must be enforced. The enforcement of rules and regulations involves the punishment of the offenders no matter who is involved.

5. Instilling moral ethics in our university communities calls for the strengthening of our counselling units. Moral ethics should be emphasised in all forms of educational training.
6. The Government must lend a sincere helping hand to institutions on all matters concerning cultism. All laws banning cults in Nigeria should be vigorously and visibly enforced. At the same time counselling services must be made available to students.
7. To curb examination malpractices, intensive counselling must be provided in our institutions of higher learning. The law on examination malpractices should be enforced and made effective.
8. Universities should be allowed to conduct their own private admission examinations and screen their new intakes within the standard set by JAMB.
9. School administrators and the government should develop the political will to restore sanity in the sector and motivate the students by providing them with healthy learning environment.
10. Admissions should be strictly on merit, without ethnicity and state base criteria and NUC should make sure that schools offer courses that meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.
11. The culture of scholarship and bursary that has been neglected in the society should be revived
12. Corruption and mismanagement of funds should be

checked in the University System.

13. Government must honour its agreements with ASUU to avoid incessant strikes, and ASUU leaders should consider the fate of our students who are our children and think of other options of settling their grievances against the Government other than long strike actions.

14. People in governance must lead by example and eradicate "the sacred cow syndrome" which has frustrated every effort made to clean up Nigerian Society.

15. Serious efforts must be made to instil moral ethics in the University System. This will help to salvage the youths who have developed resistance to every principle of integrity, due primarily to the fact that they have not experienced any other alternative.

16. The universities must stop involving themselves in the immoral and unethical practices in order to pass NUC accreditation exercises. The normal thing would be to showcase what they have and list what they do not have which the government should provide because these things are needed for the education of the students. The universities should not cover their inadequacies.

### **17. A CALL TO NATIONAL REPENTANCE.**

Finally, Nigerians should be advised to imbibe the spirit of God. We may have to consider a national call to prayer of repentance. In 2 Chro.7:14, The Lord said to Solomon, "If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and heal their land". The

people of Nineveh sinned, and the Lord sent Jonah to preach to them. Jonah proclaimed to them the punishment that awaited the people of Nineveh if they failed to repent. The Ninevites believed God, they declared a fast and all of them from the greatest to the least put on sackcloth, even the king of Nineveh made a decree to that effect. When God saw what they did and how they turned from their wicked ways, God had compassion on them and did not bring on them the destruction He had threatened. Can this be the portion of Nigeria?

This would be a better approach to solving the Nigeria's problem than man made approach. No human made therapy can cure the nation. Every effort in the past to save us from this malady did not yield much dividends. Previous governments in Nigeria have tried to introduce and implement different social, economic and political change in Nigeria. We can easily recall our national reform programmes such as War Against Indiscipline (WAI) which was started by General Muhammadu Buhari and Brigadier Tunde Idiagbon government in 1984. This was quickly replaced by General Ibrahim Babaginda's Mass Mobilization for Self-Reliance and Social Justice (MAMSER). When General Sani Abacha came on board, MAMSER was changed to National Orientation Agency (NOA). General Olusegun Obasanjo came up with Servicom and presently we are on re-branding of Nigeria. Yet we do not see any change. The better approach is to go back to God. Jesus makes the difference. He brings about transformation, he brings about renewal, he makes change possible. Unless Jesus re-brands us, we cannot re-brand Nigeria. The Bible says in 2Cor.5:17 "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new".

## CONCLUSION:

In this lecture, I have argued that the survival of Nigeria as a viable society will depend on the quality of her educational system. This is because the socio-political and economic development of a nation is determined by the quality and level of the educational attainment of the population. I have also argued that instilling moral discipline in the university community is a *sine qua non* to the improvement in the quality of our educational system. This is because instilling moral ethics in the university community makes it possible for the youth to differentiate rights from wrong. Moral ethics instils discipline, it gives integrity and it makes sense.

It is only when one has this type of orientation that one realises the futility of acquiring wealth unnecessarily and the joy of hard work rather than wealth. It is only then that one begins to appreciate knowledge rather than money. It gives the individual the ability to analyze problems and make thoughtful decisions. It creates the ability to re-order priorities based on how they will benefit the society and not how much they will benefit individuals. It is only when this happens that we will be able to graduate people who are worthy in learning and character. The continued neglect of this fact will lead to social paralysis.

## A P P R E C I A T I O N

I am very grateful to the Almighty God for “thus far He has brought me”. He is my Good Shepherd. I have depended on Him and will always depend on Him for provision, protection and guidance. Surely, “it is neither him that willeth nor him that runneth but Him that showth mercy”. God has been merciful to me. It is only by the grace of God that I am where I am today. Without God's intervention in my life, I would have today been a Mrs nobody. I ascribe all power, dominion, glory, honour and majesty to Him.

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behaviour of the American Yankees. They are now both married to two Nigerians: - Engr. Uche Mgbebuihe from Amauzari, in Isiala Mbanjo LGA and Mrs Ijeoma Anyanwu (nee Mgbajah) from Umunachi Obowo, in Obowo LGA and these were after Chinyere had obtained a B.Sc. degree in Accountancy and MBA degree in Banking and Finance and Chukwuma had qualified as a Pharmacist. They know their roots.

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Lady, Prof. Beatrice Ngozi Anyanwu,  
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FUT0



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**FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, OWERRI**  
**LIST OF PREVIOUS INAUGURAL LECTURERS & LECTURES**

S/N	NAME	DATE	TITLE
1.	<b>Prof. E.O.I Banigo</b>	Saturday 18/01/1986	"Food Processing & Preservation Paths to Self Sufficiency"
2.	<b>Prof. C.O.G. Obah</b>	Friday 12/12/1986	"Communication in the Service of a Nation"
3.	<b>Prof. V.O. Nwoko</b>	Wednesday 14/11/1990	"Where Rust Doth Corrupt"
4.	<b>Prof. S.C.O. Ugbolue</b>	Wednesday 11/12/1996	"In the Throes of Polymer & Textile"
5.	<b>Prof. O.O. Onyemobi</b>	Wednesday 17/07/2002	"Mineral Resources Exploitation, Processing & Utilization <i>A Sine Qua Non</i> for Nigeria's Metallurgical Industrial Development"
6.	<b>Prof. A.B.I. Udedibia</b>	Thursday 18/09/2003	"In Search of Food: FUTO and the Nutritional Challenge of <i>Carnavalita</i> Seeds"
7.	<b>Prof. E.O. Okorafor</b>	Wednesday 17/03/2004	"Expendable Polystyrene Pattern Casting Process: A Revolution in Metal Casting"
8.	<b>Prof. P.B.U. Achi</b>	Wednesday 02/06/2004	"Acquisition of Indigenous Machinery Design Manufacturing & Control Technology: The Engineering Education and Training Perspectives"
9.	<b>Prof. M.I. Nwufo</b>	Wednesday 28/07/2004	"Securing the Harvest to Ensure Food for all: A Plant Pathologist's Perspective"
10.	<b>Prof. M.U. Iloje</b>	Wednesday 17/11/2004	"The Chicken or the Egg: Nature and Nurture: New Genetic Spreadsheet & Gene Pools in the Breeding & Evolution of a New Nigerian Man"
11.	<b>Prof. J.O. Uzuogbu</b>	Wednesday 29/10/2008	"Salvaging Our Food from Fungi Rot to Ensure Food Security"
12.	<b>Prof. C.S. Nwadiaro</b>	Thursday 07/05/2009	"Inland Water Data Base as a <i>Sine Qua Non</i> for Fisheries Development in Nigeria"
13.	<b>Prof. M.C. Ofob</b>	Wednesday 27/05/2009	"Food Security & Mitigation of Climate Change Through Ecosystem Based Agriculture"
14.	<b>Prof. B.O. Esonu</b>	Wednesday 24/06/2009	"Unconventional Feed Resources for Livestock Development and Food Security: Paradigms for Nigerian Livestock Industry"
15.	<b>Prof. Edem O.P. Akpan</b>	Wednesday 25/11/2009	"Project Management: A Catalyst for Rapid Industrial Development for Emerging Economies"
16.	<b>Prof. C.C. Asiabaka</b>	Monday 15/02/2010	"Scaling-up Agricultural Technologies for Food Security and Poverty Reduction: Whose Knowledge Counts: The Farmer or the Scientist"



