

Covenant Faculty Suggests Investment in Education to curb Population Explosion

Governments and the private sector in Nigeria and Africa must invest more in education as a solution to the problem of high fertility and rapid population growth, a senior faculty at Covenant, Professor Patrick Edewor, has advocated (<https://goo.gl/61JU2Y>).

While stating that education was the best “contraceptive” for prolific child bearing, he posited that it would raise the marital age for the female and change the lifestyles and world view of men and women.

Edewor, the first Professor of Sociology in Covenant, made this assertion recently, at the 16th Inaugural Lecture of the University, where he delivered a lecture titled, “Be Fruitful, Multiply and Replenish the Earth”:

The Motivation, the Costs and the Gains’. According to him, the focus of his research in the last three decades had been on fertility with a special focus on the value parents placed on children and how this affected their reproductive behaviour.

World population, he said, had increased geometrically at intervals with the figure currently standing at 7.6 billion, while that of Africa and Nigeria stood at 1.2 billion and 195 million respectively. He posited that population growth in African countries was associated with poverty, stressing that where there was poverty there would be high fertility.

The inaugural lecturer, who also attributed high fertility in the continent to social, cultural and economic roots among which was the perceived costs and benefits of children, argued that, “As long as Africans perceive large families as advantageous or as long as children are perceived as economic assets that contribute to household economy or who serve as a means of old-age security support, high fertility will persist”.

Professor Edewor contended that at micro and macro societal levels, prolific childbearing, high fertility and rapid population growth were disadvantageous, especially in a country in which the economy was growing much more slowly as was the case of Nigeria and most countries of Africa.

He maintained that the panacea to high fertility and rapid population growth were mass education, especially of the girl child, and poverty reduction. Aside raising the marital age for the female and changing the lifestyles and world view of men and women, education, he said, would raise the cost of rearing children through widespread schooling, which would reduce their labour value; educated women would engage in occupations that are incompatible with childbearing and rearing; and education would cause couples to become knowledgeable about family planning techniques among others.

Professor Edewor assured that a vigorous pursuit of education, especially for the girl child and particularly in the northern geo-political zones of Nigeria, coupled with social and economic development, was the way to go if the nation was to reduce fertility and stem the rapid rate of population growth.

In his remarks, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Covenant, Professor Akan Williams, representing the Vice-Chancellor, Professor AAA. Atayero, appreciated the “wonderful presentation” made by Professor Edewor. He stated that the 16th



Professor Patrick Edewor, presenting Covenant’s 16th Inaugural Lecture on the topic “Be Fruitful, Multiply and Replenish the Earth”: The Motivation, Costs and the Gains’.

inaugural lecture came in the season of the celebration of God's faithfulness in the life of the University's Chancellor, Dr. David Oyedepo, who celebrated his 64th birthday on the eve of the lecture. According to Professor Williams, not only had the audience listened to a stimulating lecture, Professor Edewor, with the academic exercise, had moved from being a standing to a sitting professor.

He said that even with all the benefits people could have from high fertility and from whatever perception one may decide to view it, population had an impact on development. "People need to watch it, especially in Nigeria where the Gross Domestic Product was not going the way it should, so that the nation would not end up having many persons in the streets begging," he added.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor expressed hope that the research already done over the years by the inaugural lecturer and the one he would be doing in the future, would give a fuller insight into the subject of population studies, with the world being the better for it.

There were goodwill messages for the inaugural lecturer amongst which was that of the Ogun State Commissioner for Education, Science and Technology, Mrs. Modupe Mujota. Represented by the Director of Education in the state's Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Mrs. B.B Makinde, the commissioner stated that the audience had gained a lot from Professor Edewor's lecture and hoped that people's orientation about the girl child must have changed. She acknowledged that the inaugural lecturer had given the audience the keys to reduce high fertility and even stem the rapid growth of population, which was investment in education.

Also at the event that was held inside the Chapel of Covenant were other members of Management, faculty, staff and students, family members of the inaugural lecturer, representatives of other institutions, and distinguished guests from various walks of life.

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