

Influencing our world through servant leadership

I would like to first offer my most sincere congratulations to the 2019 graduates in your determination to be **Beacons of light to serve and enhance cohesion in society**, and for reaching a major milestone in preparing for your future. I would like to congratulate your parents and instructors for supporting you through this journey.

A vote of thanks to the Vice Chancellor Professor Laban Ayiro who has been here for barely three months but his influence and servant leadership spirit is present in every aspect of this University. A vote of thanks to the members of Daystar Company, Daystar University Council; members of the Management council; Daystar students, faculty and staff. To all invited Guests in your various distinguished capacities, thank you for joining us in this important event.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Daystar University is this day sending approximately 700 graduates, with degrees in Bachelors of Science and arts, masters, and PhDs, to the workforce. A degree from Daystar is valuable. In a country where the rate of unemployment is over 40 %, it is impressive that 70 % of our graduates secure professional jobs within the first year of graduation. Despite the fact that Daystar was challenged by growing pains and changing paradigms in the recent past, I am proud to report that the firm foundation that Daystar is founded upon provides resilience during stormy times. For example, while a member of the faculty, Dr. Thomas Koyier lost half of his family in a period of 12 months,

Daystar family surrounded the Dr. Koyier family with prayers, moral and financial support in the spirit of servant leadership. I personally had the privilege of visiting Dr. Koyier soon after the incidence and Ladies and gentlemen, while I was expecting to find him overcome with sorrow, I found him grading a pile of papers for his students. This is a demonstration of a servant leader in loving and supportive environmet.

Even more important is to know that our alumni continue to practice servant leadership long after they graduate from Daystar. For example, a selected number of alumni strongly supported the Chancellors Forum by giving a generous financial gift to sponsor students to attend the forum. I want to personally thank each one of you for supporting the Chancellors initiative in the spirit of servant leadership.

Our current students have embraced the call for servant leadership and the spirit of caring. During the Chancellor's forum two undergraduate students Rosemary Kimangi and Emily Naitore presented a plan to increase food access to the Arthi river community through a garden project with a full market research and financial calculations to prove that the development of a garden would provide food to the food insecure and save money for Daystar. I am glad to let Rosemary and Emily know that we have already identified the location for the garden and the first tree will be planted on that garden this week. As you graduate today, we encourage you to follow up on the project. We ask all well-wishers including our alumni to support this project, in honor of Emily and Rosemary.

To the 2019 Graduates. Congratulations once again for reaching this great milestone. Your time is now! The degree you earn today is one of the most elite credentials that Kenya has to offer. But I don't want you to think about it as a document that hangs on the wall. Or reflects the accomplishments you made up until now. This degree is a social contract. It calls on you to devote your talents and energy in honoring those legends on whose shoulders both you and I stand.

Despite all the challenges we face as a country, Kenya is an extraordinary country, and you are equipped with every tool to make it a better place because your time has come. Going forward, you will not have to rely on grades or guidance from instructors to tell you how you are doing and where you stand because your time has come to rely on your inner compass to take you in the right direction.

However, to stay on the right course, your inner compass will require constant calibration. See an inaccurate inner compass will turn you into a drifter blown in different direction by every wind. But if your inner compass is accurate it will turn you into a courageous doer, unafraid of the strong winds of opinions and thoughts. You will therefore not sit around waiting for a telephone call, or wait for an opportunity to come, or for your turn, because your inner compass will remind you that your time has come and your time is now.

Earning a degree from Daystar University is not just the mastery of the content in your field of study, but the intentional development of servant leadership attitude and practice. These values have been integrated into all levels of your educational experience. Servant leadership is a way of leading by example as you endeavor to build

the change you wish to see in the world. When you lead by serving others, people will be more inclined to follow you, making you an **influencer**. But remember you will be in a better position to influence your world if you allow the change you want to see, to start with you.

As an **influencer**, you will need to build accountability to protect yourself when you go through negative pressures. Accountability will give you checks and balances to keep you on the right path. It takes humility and courage to subject yourself to accountability, but the result is an influential life marked with integrity.

Integrity opens the door for you to plant good seeds and many seeds. Planting many good seeds and planting often assures a good harvest. Planting is an investment, and it is hard to see an influencer who does not invest in others. For example, as you all know Mother Teresa did not live a life of luxury or wealth and yet she got our attention—her investment in the poor chattered her path in influencing world leaders. Through applying servant leadership, Mother Teresa became an influencer to world leaders to see the world through her eyes. Similarly, evangelist Billy Graham is known as the most influential evangelist in this century, not just because of the millions of people he brought to the knowledge of Jesus, but also because of his influence to the world leaders and policy makers. They both planted widely and often and as a result they positioned themselves to influence the poor, the sinner, the leaders and the church as a whole.

While influencers were not all born with special gifts they have something in common. They give all they have, they give it often and

they give it widely. They invested in others and stayed focused. They start small but by faithfully following their cause they rise to heights of influence they would not have imagined. You are the Billy Grahams of tomorrow, and the Mother Teresas of today. In addition please remember, the more individuals like you plant good seeds and influence others the more you mitigate bad influencers. Being an influencer is not just having many face book friends who like whatever you post, or followers in your twitter, it is being the agent of change that the world is looking for. Having been under the influence of Daystar and having good seeds in your head go influence our world with integrity and courage. I encourage you to be strong and courageous for your God will be with you wherever you as He promised Joshua in Joshua 1: 9b:

I would like to emphasize that you are the most valuable tool of influence—develop your character spiritually and professionally. As you develop your sphere of influence start at home. Give your family the best, they are your most important likes and followers. Develop the value of influence and that value will create the network, the followers and the desired impact. As you leave us for the real world, never forget what your God requires of you with the words of God to prophet Mica 6: 8—**to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God!**