

THE TEENACHIEVER

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF TEENS GOING FOR GOLD NETWORK



Be

Valuable!

INSIDE | INTERVIEW WITH ZURIEL ODUWOLE
BEAUTY IN THE RUINS BY IDIENUMAH PRECIOUS

Miss Pee's Desk

Hello achievers! In case you do not know, **Miss Pee's** full name is **Obisesan Oluwapelumi** and I am excited to present to you another edition of the edifying and inspiring TeenAchiever Bulletin themed «Be Valuable!». This quarter, our focus is on becoming persons of value. It is to make you know how you can become someone that positively influences situations and the lives of others around you, even as a young person. I believe you must have come across the story of Jesus teaching in the temple at age 12 and how the very elderly teachers of the law were surprised at his wisdom. This edition is to help you also become someone that others look up to. You should understand that value does not grow on anyone; it is rather sought after. You must make conscious efforts to do things that add value to your own life before you can become someone that can positively influences persons and situations around you.

It is important to note that before Jesus could teach so excellently, he must have spent some time reading and learning too. So, you cannot give value that you do not have. You have to first develop the capacity to become a valuable person. This edition is full of interesting and inspirational stories and articles that would positively affect your life if you believe and apply the principles they provide. The Teenspiration for this quarter is Zurriel Oduwole and her interview is something you cannot miss. Anything that is working was worked on. So, work on your life, you've only got one! Your life is your responsibility; take it up and make it worth the while! **Happy Reading**



TEENS GOING FOR GOLD NETWORK

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH ZURIEL ODUWOLE, 14 YEAR OLD FILM MAKER AND GIRL CHILD EDUCATION ADVOCATE

Tell us about yourself

So my name is Zuriel Oduwole, I am 14 years old and I am in the 11th grade at Connections High School in California. My dad is from Ogun State in Nigeria, and my mom is from Port Louis in Mauritius, so I have a true Pan African background, but I was born in Los Angeles, so that means I'm also a Californian Girl. I have lived in Lagos before, and I love my Eba and Egusi soup, and yes, I eat it with my hands !!! I play in a soccer league in my city, and also in a basketball league. As you can see, I love sports a lot. If I'm good enough, I might play in the Olympics someday – that would be great !!!

The average teenager is uninterested by issues such as education advocacy. Can you tell us what really motivated you to embark on education advocacy especially for the girl-child?

When I lived in Lagos and during my travels to other countries in Africa, I always saw a lot of kids, especially girls selling things on the street, I thought about their parents. It had to mean their parents were poor, because rich people do not sell things on the street on their heads, or chase after cars to try and collect money for what they sold. Also, most of those kids are not in school and spend all their time selling things, it means they would have fewer options in life when they get older. That means they would most likely end up in tough jobs that pay very little, meaning they too like their parents would be poor. That is not cool at all, especially if someone can do something about it. So, I thought to try and do something, and that is how my Dream Up, Speak Up, Stand Up project began in 2013 when I was 10 years old. What I do is talk to children who are in school, and who are not in school, about the importance of education and what it can do for them when they get older. Now I have spoken to about 24,890 in 11 countries, including Kenya, Mauritius, Tanzania, Malawi, Ghana, South Africa, the US, Namibia and Nigeria as well.

You acknowledge Jesus Christ a lot in your speeches and writings. Please tell us about your relationship with Jesus Christ and how has it impacted the projects and work that you do.

I do not know where to start, but all I have known are my parents first, and they told me clearly that they are not the ones in charge, but the LORD is, and I have to develop my relationship with Him. I have done that since then, and I lean on Him for strength and wisdom. **The coolest thing that happens when the LORD leads, is that the most amazing things happen.** For example, apart from all the Presidents I have met, a few days ago, I met the US Secretary of State in his office in Washington DC. He had heard of the things I was doing, and wanted to honor and commend me. That was really cool, and we talked about Education, Girls Issues, Global challenges like Syria and things like that. Just imagine me, 14 years old, meeting John Kerry, when he was busy dealing with global issues like Iran, China, ISIS, Syria, Russia Brexit, and there I was, talking with him for about 20 minutes and just chilling too. See, thats an example of the effect of the LORD leading you and giving you favor. John Kerry is the most powerful

foreign minister in the world. His decisions affect the whole world, it really does. And thats who I was sittig with a few days ago.

What would you consider to be your greatest achievement so far?

Some people think it was speaking at the UN last September 2016 on Climate Change & Education, but I would say maybe 2 things, **having met 24 Presidents and Prime Ministers across the globe to talk to them about creating policies that makes sure all Girls go to school, and then maybe making my first film that showed in the movie theaters at age 12.** It first showed at Genesis Deluxe Cinema in Lekki, and Film House cinema in Surulere, then it showed in Ghana, South Africa, England, and in Tokyo – Japan. So I would say these 2 things, and I'm very grateful to the LORD for guiding my steps in all these. It wasn't easy, but it happened. I am thankful !!!

Was there ever a time you failed in achieving a set goal? If there was, what did you learn from it?

Yes, when I entered my first film competition at the age of 9, I did not even get to the 3rd round. There are 5 rounds, then you go to the county finals, and then the state finals, and then you represent your state at the National finals in the US in Maryland. I was disappointed, but it meant I needed to work harder. The next year when I was 10, I did, and this time, I won the county finals, so that was a huge improvement.

Was there a significant event that triggered your decision and actions so far?

Seeing many children selling things on the street, and also watching the global news where they always show the negative things about Africa, when there are positive things, but they were not showing them

You are a teenager of many skills and talents. From setting up advocacy projects, to exerting positive influence on global issues as well as having enviable public speaking and interviewing skills. How have you been able to harness and develop all of these over the years?

First, I pray every single day, and what I ask for the most is wisdom, not a shoe or a cool dress, or a nice gadget, but wisdom. Then that guides all I do, and how I prepare. Plus, I love what I do. I really do enjoy it.

How do you successfully juggle academics and your focus on major global developmental issues?

My parents help me out a lot, and they encourage me. My dad quit his job so he can work with me more on my projects when they began to get bigger and more complex, and we could not afford to pay a staff. He sold his car, we moved to a smaller house, so he could help. I am always grateful for that. I hope that one day, I can repay him, but I know what he would say. «You keep it, because parents sacrifice for their children». But I am still very grateful to him.

What is the one thing you would do, if you had no limitations whatsoever?

I would stop crime before it happens, and I would warn those doing it that next time, they would be in serious trouble, especially those

who take the wealth that belongs to everyone else and they keep it for themselves. That is so not cool.

With your involvements in key sectors affecting the human race, what is your vision for Africa and the world at large?

It would be that all children, especially girls get to go to school to at least University. But regarding Africa, that people take a lot of pride in themselves and do all the best they can to make their communities a better place, and be their brothers keeper – really, help those who cannot help themselves, and inspire all those around them. If that happens, I really think the continent would change. I really do.

What is your advice to teenagers who have interest in advocacy and policy reformation but do not have the platform, exposure, opportunities and resources to do so?

I get asked this a lot. I did not have a platform, until I started doing something first. I learned that nobody would come to you and just offer you a platform. You must be doing something that gets you noticed, and then the platform would come. I did not start to get platform, I just wanted to help and do something, and after a while, it turned into a platform. I hope I talk a little sense. It is hard to explain, but that is what happened. So I would say just find what you like to do, and do it especially when no one is looking at you, or noticing what you are doing.

Your advice to readers of the TeenAchiever

I have to say know from now that you have a purpose in life. Start by asking the LORD your God, what your purpose is, and that HE should show you what it is. Then have fun doing it, no matter what anyone else says, have fun doing it. But you must believe in yourself also.

Thank you.

GLEANINGS FROM THE BE VALUABLE SEMINAR ON THE 25TH OF FEBRUARY 2017.

According to the famous Albert Einstein sharing on value, he said "Try not to become a man or woman of success, rather be a man or woman of value".

What then is Value?

Values are set of principles, standards of behavior, convictions and beliefs that we adopt consistently as guidelines in our daily activities whether we are conscious of them or not. Values are like our mantra, they are what attract others to us. They connect others to our soul. Our values show the part of us that people do not see physically. I will like to ask you to list 5 values that you hold in high esteem. These five values can significantly sum up your value system. As change-makers of the 21st century, our goal is not to be successful because success can fade. Our goal is to be valuable. Once you're valuable, instead of chasing success, success will attract itself to you. Value is much more sustainable

Briefly, I'll like to share with you Five ways to Be Valuable

1. Don't be afraid to re-assess your values. Re-assessing includes knowing when you're wrong and admitting to your mistakes.

2. Be optimistic and stay positive.

I'm sure we've all had experiences working in an environment with low morale and generally lousy attitude and that takes the toll on us after a while. I've heard people say, "I'm naturally angry! That's who I am!"

You can change that narrative. Stay positive and be consistent with your values and you'll attract like minds. It doesn't matter what background you had or the community you live in, you can choose to be different! To be exceptional. To be phenomenal

3. To be valuable and attract value, you must be willing to freely share your ideas

There is no competition in sharing your values. As a matter of fact, shared values bring about shared insights, more knowledge and intuition with other innovative thinkers like you!

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4...

P H O T O G A L L E R Y



Zuriel Oduwole
After film show in Tokyo



Zuriel Oduwole
With President Buhari



Zuriel Oduwole With
Sec. of State, John Kerry

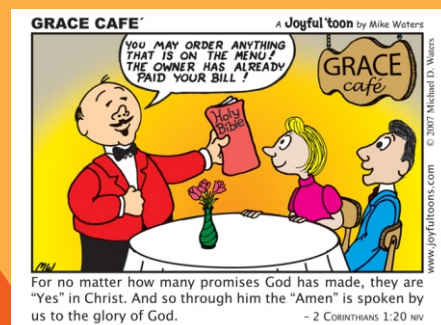


Welcomed to Namibia by
President Hage Geingob

QUOTES OF THE QUARTER

«Remember [thoughtfully] also your Creator in the days of your youth [for you are not your own, but His], before the evil days come or the years draw near when you will say [of physical pleasures], "I have no enjoyment and delight in them" Ecclesiastes12:1 (AMP)

«You cannot give value if you do not first have it!»



NOVELLA BEAUTY IN THE RUINS

PRECIOUS IDIENUMAH,
Author, *A Sketch of Murder*

Bisola, I've told you to throw that dress away. It's taking up space in your wardrobe and besides, the tailor already said there's no way she can mend that tear a third time. It'll just open up again. Or, do you plan to keep it there as a decoration?" I smiled. Mummy had no idea what I was up to. You see, this dress was very special to me. It was a gift from my aunt abroad last year. Well, it was actually a gift to mummy, her sister, but when mum wore it, it was too small for her, and so I got it. It was the same dress I wore for my fifteenth birthday few months ago. It held a very special spot in my heart. I took the dress out of my wardrobe, folded it, and stashed it in a corner of my school bag. If mummy didn't see it, then she wouldn't remember that I had not thrown it away. The next morning, on my way to school, I dropped it off at Aunt Sisi's place. She was the one who had amended it three times and told me a fourth time would be a waste. This time, when I showed up at her shop with the same dress, she sighed, shook her head and didn't say a word to me. "Aunt Sisi, I didn't bring it for repairs this time, I promise." She stopped sewing the *agbada* she was working on, looked at me and said, "Okay Bisola, what do you want me to do with it?" I explained what I needed her to do and she smiled. "Now, I see why your mum says you're so intelligent." When Aunt Sisi said that, I felt really good. "Do you want me to drop it off at home when I'm done?" "No, I'll pick it up next week myself. Mummy must not know about it. It's a surprise." "Okay, we have a deal." Aunt Sisi said and I

hurried out of her shop.

One week went by very quickly and by the eve of mummy's birthday, I had her gift ready and wrapped up for her. I almost couldn't wait to see how surprised she would be. The next morning, I sang a birthday song for her and gave her my gift. "Wow Bisola, where did you get money to buy me a gift. She held the wrapped gift up as though she wanted to peep through. "Just open it already, mummy." I was already getting excited. She opened it, and the surprise on her face was beyond what I had imagined. "Bisola, this looks familiar. Is this that..." I didn't allow her finish her question. "Yes it is! The same torn, patched, and ready to be thrown away dress. It's the same one." "Wow. How did you get it to look this good?" She held up the shawl Aunt Sisi had made out of the dress and examined it carefully. "I know how much you love shawls so I told Aunt Sisi to loosen the entire dress and see if she could make a fine shawl out of it. She added the lace around the edges herself, I didn't even think of that earlier." Mummy wrapped the shawl around her neck. I knew she loved it and as soon as daddy came into the living room, she showed it off to him. I laughed excitedly.

Later that night, as I thought about the joy that lit up my face seeing what had become of my old dress, I was reminded of Jesus' love for me, and everyone in the world. It helped me see that if I could make something beautiful from what had been condemned, then Jesus does even much more. He makes things, and people brand new. No matter the state of our hearts or how 'bad' we think we are, Jesus makes

beauty from ruins if only we allow Him. Like the potter and the clay in the Bible, He doesn't give up on us. Never! That's a refreshing thought.

PRECIOUS IDIENUMAH,
Author, *A Sketch of Murder*
GLEANINGS:CONTINUED

Being a great leader isn't just about knowing when to share your expertise, it is also about knowing when to yield the floor to someone else.

Does your team see you as a Dictator, an opportunist or a real leader?

4. Make your values transparent. Don't just say them, show them for they speak louder than words.

If you were to describe yourself in 5 words that really speak of who you are, what would they be?

5. Finally, as a value creator, make yourself a resource.

Leaders are resources, they create values that not only sustain them but also values that create sustainability for our world.

Don't just be a knowledge resource, be an emotional resource. Have compassion for the community that you live in, think about the things you'd like to change and take bold steps today to make a difference. Your values should drive you but we also need to be rational in our thinking. For example if you are a creator of ideas, you also have to be rational in thinking about the idea you want to implement. Is it realistic, is it achievable, is it possible? You must think creatively before you venture into a project or cause.

6. Have a Mentor. It is always helpful to have a mentor who shares the same values as you and strongly believes in your values.

Ibiwoye Victoria,
Director, *One African Child*