

Speech on the 40th Anniversary and 38th congregation Ceremony at Christian Service University College- Kumasi, 20th December, 2014

Topic: "Let us Rise UP and Build" an Authentic Top Rated Christian University in Ghana

By Prof Stephen Adei

Chairman (Nana Otumfuo or his Representative), Council Members, Distinguished. Invited Guest, Faculty, Members of Staff of Christian Service University College, Graduands, Students, Ladies and Gentlemen, I want to thank those who invited me to join you at this' august ceremony. I am very much humbled. It seems that if by God's grace you don't die early, over time you appear to be wise because you are among the few left. There was a time if I came to CSUC I was here either to learn from the wisdom of Bill and Marah Chapman, Paa Willie (Mr. William Ofori Atta), the Senavoes, or to see my friends the Ntsifuls.

Many times I came as Chauffeur of Paa Willie and once with Rev Dr. John Stott etc. and not as a speaker. An old song says "Owuo ama yen mpanin asa". So this afternoon I am happy to share in the joys of Christian Service University College's (CSUC) 40th Anniversary and the achievements of our graduands. But I am also here to remember the great and mightier men and women on whose toil and faithfulness we stand. And to remind all of us that "aduru me ne won so so se ye beye bi atoa so" (Ephraim Amu) or it is our turn to build on where they left CSUC off.

It is always a joy to be at CSUC because in a modest way I know "when the roll is called up yonder" the efforts of our friends in laying the foundations of ministry- men like Justin Frempong of GILLBT, Most Rev. Prof Emmanuel Asante, Rev. Dr. Amo Dako and many lesser known ones- will not be overlooked. The Lord blesses you and an American will add "real good".

I want to salute the Christians in Kumasi especially the evangelicals from KNUST whose

names I will not try to list for fear of leaving out some. The likes of Brother D.O. Gyane, Prof Sam Afrane and Bishop Brew Riverson have done so much for CSUC.

The two times I have spoken at CSUC graduation the presence of Otumfuo or his able representatives like the Akyempimhene whom I humbly associate with as a mate at Legon has not gone unnoticed." Nananom, m'asseda nie o".

I am eternally grateful that the then CSC also served as a godly home for my family during my diaspora days because Juliana Amo Addae (whom you know as Mrs. Senavoe) as my sister always welcomed us home while the Ntisfuls provided accommodation and good chops. I remember the week my sister Julie died. I visited her. She gathered all the strength she had left to sit up to ask about each of my children especially the first born Stephen whom she lived with. I knew in my heart that in a matter of hours or days she would be with the Lord. So on leaving, and having done a little custom, I left the message that if she died they should let me know at once; a statement an aunty did not take kindly to because Ghanaians do not want to talk about death. To us the time had come for her to go to her eternal home after battling with cancer for years. This is the blessed assurance of those who know the Lord..."To live is Christ and to die is gain". Today I want to devote the rest of my address not to government policy or the educational system in Ghana but to talk to the CSUC fraternity to "let us rise up and build" a first class

Christian University. All I will say by way of policy is that the Government should think strategically as the Mfantshipim guys from Kwabotwe Hill will say "dwen hwe kan".

The focus of tertiary education in Ghana will shift to private universities in one generation and it is time the State formulates national higher education policy that is truly national and not biased against private universities. It is an affront to all decency to have public universities, in Sunyani, Ho and soon Eastern region, fully accredited and chartered at birth (of what initially amounts to small departments and not even a faculty) and deny the likes of Central University College a Charter. Why is it that a Ghanaian going to a public University is looked after by the government to learn business and

deny support to those who go to private universities even to study architecture, nursing, engineering? I fully support the private universities' demand for equity and if any party in 2016 will not promise to change the situation, all faculty, workers and students of private universities should do the only thing politicians listen to- not only vote against them but go out to convince others to do the same. I mean it. They will listen.

But as the British will say I will give you a rain check for another time to discuss a win-win national higher education policy so that I may focus narrowly on my topic: "Let us Rise Up and Build". These words were spoken by one of the Transformational Spiritual Servant Leaders of all time- Nehemiah, Governor of Israel around 445 BC during the reign of the Persian Emperor King Artaxerxes (Nehemiah 2:18). Even though this is a Christian College and I expect many of you to be familiar with the events recorded in the book of Nehemiah and also as graduation day is not a time for a sermon, permit me to state the context of the quotation briefly.

The Southern and Northern segments of the Jewish state, called Judah and Israel respectively after King Rehoboam's folly split the tribes in following the youth rather than the wisdom of the aged to give reconciliatory answer to aggrieved subjects like "yentie obiara" today, the Jewish state was weakened by internal conflicts" sin and rebellion. Finally it was conquered and destroyed in accordance with Jeremiah's prophecy. But true to his word after 70 years God started to restore the Jewish state with King Darius allowing the diaspora back to their land. The first cohort of returnees under Ezra and Zerubabel against odds had rebuilt a place of worship. But Nehemiah received a report from a visiting brother of his, Hanani that "the remnant there in the province - i.e. Israeli Palestine- who had survived the exile was in great trouble and shame.

The wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates are destroyed by fire" (1:3).

Though privileged as butler of the Emperor, Nehemiah assumed personal responsibility of the sins of his people that brought the disaster in the first place, repented of it and pleaded with God to intervene. He asked God to touch the King's heart to permit him to go and rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. Once the permission was granted he returned to

the land of his fathers' sepulchers or graves, mobilized the people and in 52 days rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem. With a team led by himself and Ezra they started a spiritual re-awakening and restored dignity and pride to the Jews again. God give us a Nehemiah to lead Ghana, a leader of character, competence and care for the people. And that was achieved not without opposition from the Arabs- Sanballat, Tobiah and other detractors who fed on the status-quo of vulnerability of others as well as some of the Jewish leaders who took advantage of their own kith and kin.

I will not have time to apply this story to our national context since I want to focus on calling on all of us to rise and build an authentic Christian College in Ghana. En passant, I will say that while physically Ghana today in no way can be compared to Israel in Nehemiah's day, the conditions that brought the Jews to so low a point in their history and which Jeremiah spoke against are evident everywhere in Ghana: Leaders who care very little about the ordinary citizen, bribery and corruption, sexual perversion, lying, godlessness even among some of those who profess to be Christians. In many ways many Ghanaians feel trapped in poverty and illusion as promise on promise go unfulfilled year after year.

The tendency is for us to feel paralyzed instead of rising up to stand against political and bureaucratic corruption, being counted upon to take social and political stance for the good of Ghana, and above all as Christians living godly and moral lives and demanding the same from others especially those who offer themselves to rule us. Soon it will be time politicians will knock at doors to canvas for your vote. Will the church and Christian leaders openly tell their congregants not to vote for the corrupt and lying leaders or they will allow themselves to be cowed by the refrain- do not mix politics and religion. Isaiah did, Jeremiah did, John the Baptist did, Paul did and even when they suffered for it we today bless their memory.

I however want to draw out the elements that underlay the rebuilding of Jerusalem and how that applies to my topic to "Let us rise up and build" Christian Service University College as a memorial "for God, Family and Country" which is the motto of Ghana

Christian International High School. Please if you have time read the whole book of Nehemiah as I draw out these lessons from it.

First, in the whole story the hand of God was evident - in the repentance, prayer and faith of Nehemiah; in touching the heart of a pagan ruler; in stirring up the hearts of his people; in the partnership of Ezra and the godly religious leaders; and above all in giving Governor Nehemiah wisdom to manage opposition and resistance. "And when all our enemies heard of it (their accomplishment), all the nations around were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God" (Neh. 7:16). It is time Christians believed God that in Jesus "we can do far more abundantly than all we can ask and think". It is an affront to the Lord Jesus for us not to set out to do great things that bring glory to God far above our capabilities so that all will know that our accomplishment has been wrought by OUR GOD!!! God never changes and he is able. Let's have a big 'God-size' vision for CSUC reflective of our motto: "To know Christ better and to make him better known". Ghana needs that.

Second, the success story of the renaissance in Israel under Nehemiah hinged on the work of the transformational, spiritual, servant leadership of Nehemiah and his team. They had vision; they challenged the status quo; they mobilized people and generated momentum; they created the right atmosphere for others to give their best; they encouraged the heart of faint; they confronted gargantuan problems and took bold decisions; they "modeled the way" (Kouzes and Posner) by example and walked their talk; and above all they feared God and had faith that linked the earth to heaven. Ghana needs such leaders and so does CSUC. We will see positive turn around in a very short time if we have such leadership at CSUC. I pray that CSUC will continue to maintain a Council of godly and faithful men and women; insist only on evangelical but academically qualified Presidents and managerial leadership team including all deans and heads of departments. You cannot expect Jesus to intervene otherwise. "Leadership is cause; everything else is effect" (Adei, 2004).

And if you got an academically qualified, visionary, and spiritual leader, God permitting good health, don't follow the "tradition" of retiring them at 60 or 65 or even 70 so they can

build a godly heritage till their work is done. Retiring professors at 60 means we do not understand as a nation the value of educated brains. CSUC should also stop having stop gap Presidents. Get a Nehemiah who will lead the college for 5, 10, 15 or 20 years. But the Council must be bold to terminate a non-performer or a hypocrite even after 1 year. We just sacked a school Principal after 4 months of engagement because we found him to be a wolf in sheep skin.

Third, Nehemiah's first point of call on returning to Jerusalem was to assemble the leadership

of his people- "the priests, the nobles and officials". Some later disappointed him like the

nobles of Tekoa who "would not stoop to serve their Lord" (3:10). But the truth Moses had to learn from his father in law Jethro (Genesis 18) is good for our time and that is leadership

success depends on forming a guiding coalition of capable next rung of leaders who buy into your vision and form a team with them. That is why Presidents have cabinets and

are responsible for the team they assemble whether "team A, B or C". One of my greatest regrets at GIMPA was that such a team could not be put together in a young public university as GIMPA where strong traditions had not yet been established and one was also handicapped as to what one could do by way of whom one would engage and to plan for one's successor though I confess I could have done better if I focused on it.

Similarly the Council and President of CSUC must have the right leadership team including Vice President, Finance Officer, Registrar and Deans in place. One bad nut can set the college back. Time will not allow me to elaborate on the other elements in the success story of Nehemiah but to list them and leave them for your reflection later:

They stuck to their vision and agenda and were not easily detracted by enemies or friends. It is easy for CSUC to seek to be like any other university instead of building a Christian university strongly rooted in three equal pillars: Academic excellence; spiritual transformation and character building; and producing leaders of integrity for public office and the business world.

They were also conscious of opposition from within (internal corruption of sin and oppression) and without and they dealt with them "surgically" without allowing them to detract them from their focus. Sometimes the work had to slow down because they held weapon in one hand and the trowel in the other. There are inevitable challenges in building a first class Christian University from getting evangelical Christian qualified faculty; Finances, dealing with National Accreditation Board that is biased in favour of public universities, etc. There are challenges to be met but you can do all things trusting in Jesus.

With regard to Nehemiah's leadership he showed utmost integrity, even forfeiting the trappings of position and power to be with his people, planned for his succession, kept his word to the king and returned at the appointed time, and on his return dealt with relapse into inordinate alliances and marriages. Those entrusted with CSUC cannot afford to do otherwise. In serving God, "slightly soiled; greatly reduced".

The only other element I want to touch on a bit more in detail is that of total mobilization. Everybody was motivated to join in the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem: religious leaders, merchants, community leaders, business people, families, housewives. In fact Nehemiah Chapter 3 is a litany of goldsmiths, rulers, priests and "titleless" individuals like Harumaph as well as Hollahesh's daughters.

Leadership is about mobilization, motivation and generation of momentum among those led. I am writing the GIMPA transformation story currently and have reached a chapter I have had to title "The Kings Men" and I am amazed why people associate even me alone with the transformation of GIMP A. I guess the leader is the one that attracts

public attention for the same reason that Egbert Faibille took me alone to High Court in an attempt to have me removed prematurely. The reality is that GIMPA was transformed by the likes of the head of the labourers -Ayoma, by Dr. Joe Mensah Ansah the General Manager, by Dr. Lawrence Kannae and Mr. N.S.K Appiah of the Consultancy Service, by Mr. Anthony Minlah and Mrs. Regina Onomah, the Finance Officers, by Prof Ebow Mensah, Mrs. Vivian Attah and Dr. Joe Oteng Adjei in the Business School and a host of others I dare not attempt to list.

It will take total mobilization of students, lecturers, friends and the evangelical community in Ghana and abroad to build a great Christian college. Otherwise as a college you will suffer the Ghanaian predicament whereby even our Presidents are de facto Presidents not of Ghana but Presidents of their party and 50% of Ghanaians. By their actions half of the people (i.e. the rest) pray for their downfall. Instead of total mobilization they dance to "yentie obiara". I am fed up with leaders who seek the interest of segments of their subjects, form governments with inordinate majority from their part of the country as if winning election makes their people the smartest and wisest and reinforce the erosion of national cohesion while hypocritically talking against tribalism and national unity.

Let me land and bring my remarks to a close by calling all and sundry to rise and let us build a great godly institution in Ghana at CSUC. The Lord needs such a college; Ghana needs such a college; and the students who come to study here including the rebellious wanting to wear "Otto Fista" or "I am aware" and the sexually perverse need a place where they will know Christ, know him better and be equipped to go out to make him better known. I am of the school of thought who believes that "whatever your hands find to do, do it with your might as serving the Lord God" (Eccl 9: 1 0). By that I mean the following with regard to Christian Service University College:

First, must aim to be the best academic institution for what we do. That means we must resist the temptation to expand into too many areas following the fad and pressures from National Accreditation Board that continues to shift the post of charter

for private schools. Our products must be of "IVY League" quality academically and intellectually.

Second, we must never be ashamed of Christ as Lord. That must be reflected in the selection of leadership and faculty and if short of godly faculty "pray the Lord of the harvest to send more labourers to his vineyard". We can train our own from first class Christian students from universities in Ghana.

Third, CSUC I believe must have a core solidly Christian and liberal arts programme which every student must go through so they are exposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ and are equipped morally and spiritually for the market place. I am tired of educated thieves and immoral leaders. At Pentecost University College every student now takes college prescribed 23 courses from Basic Christianity to computer literacy. That still leaves in 4 years 24 or 25 semester courses to train anyone to be a business graduate, a computer scientist or a theologian.

Fourth, in an era of increasing number of college students which I call "massification of university level education", we must have a system that captures the old time tutorial system that will group 10 to 15 students under a mentor(s) all the time in their college life to meet their spiritual, emotional and academic needs. We started such a scheme at Pentecost University College and they are continuing with it. I have had the opportunity to share the details with this college.

Fifth, the worship of the Lord Jesus Christ is the centerpiece of a Christian University and we must put in place a system for all to participate in worship every week. That will require more than a one day college worship and a sole chaplain. Worship should be decentralized and made multi-layered especially with day, evening and weekend classes. That must be supported by a prayer chain of internal clients and friends for the release of the power of the Holy Spirit to transform lives. We do not want to produce tongue speaking fornicators and thieves. The devil also produces such people trying to

imitate Christ while in fact he is producing hell bound tongue speakers whose lives have not been transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit and their sins cleansed in the blood of Jesus.

Sixth, we need total mobilization of Christian minds and financial resources to build second to none infrastructure and systems. Mind my words! I say second to none infrastructure and systems. CSUC will need resources to build not only a big campus for residential students' outside the city to leave here possibly for evening and weekend students mainly, but also put in place systems that facilitate modern delivery of quality education including video conferences, total Wi-Fi for students and a laptop being part of every student's tool kit, for example. We must build alliance with big donors but I do also believe in getting sufficient numbers of small donors. After all if you have 10,000 people giving GHS1200 a year (i.e. GHS100 a month) it brings in GHS 12 million every year and you can do a lot with it. There are many here who can do that.

Finally, let us have faith in God. Jesus has come and has commissioned us to do his work. Jesus has risen. That he came and died for sinners and rose again in power are annually celebrated at Christmas, Good Friday, Easter and on Ascension Day. He has released divine power in the person of the Holy Spirit. Let us tap into that as individuals and as a college. The worst state of everyone listening to me is not material poverty, unemployment as some graduates may experience for some time and what have you. The greatest tragedy is to live and die without experiencing the forgiveness of Jesus Christ, the transformation that comes by being regenerated by his Holy Spirit and the power of living an overcoming life. When you are a partner with Christ you can attempt greater things for God. I thank God that in my late teenage year I was led to confess my sins, trust in Jesus and was born again. May everyone listening to me also find Jesus today and together let us rise and build a great institution for God's glory.

It is customary on graduation day to talk to the graduands. But, I will say "A word to the wise is Hassacas". I have said enough for the wise to pick their pick. But in case I am

accused of not being a graduation speaker let me use the last one minute to share an experience.

If you want to go out there and be truly successful and leave a positive legacy then take care of my three Cs:

- Don't compromise on your Character. "Slightly soiled, greatly reduced".
- Don't "finish school" - Continually sharpen your saw by building your capacity and competence. CSUC has given you a tool to teach yourself.
- Don't go out to live selfishly. Care for others. The irony is the more you care for others the better you live.

Then when I am long gone- and you young ones should allow me to go to my Lord Jesus before you follow me, I will join those who welcome you to eternal glory for you would have served God in your generation.

Meanwhile, I invite all of you to "let us rise up and build" CSUC.

God bless you.

I thank you all for your attention.