

METHODIST UNIVERSITY COLLEGE GHANA

PRINCIPAL'S ADDRESS AT THE SIXTEENTH (16TH) CONGREGATION

HELD AT THE DANSOMAN CAMPUS

DELIVERED ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2018.

Presiding Bishop and Chairman of the MUCG Council and other Members of the University Council

Honourable Guest Speaker

Chairman of Council of Sister Universities

Honourable Ministers of State

Honourable Members of Parliament

Nii Mei, Naa Mei

Nananom

Vice Chancellor of University of Ghana

Vice Chancellors, Presidents and Principals of other Universities

Members of the Clergy, Imams

Distinguished Guests

Staff and Students of MUCG

Graduating students

Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

It is my greatest pleasure to welcome you all to the Sixteenth Congregation of the Methodist University College Ghana (MUCG).

This is a special occasion for me in particular as I give account of our achievements and challenges for the year under review. I join our graduating students to celebrate their achievements.

The University College is in its nineteenth year since its establishment, and remains one of the well recognized private tertiary education providers in the West African sub-region.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, in this address, I will give a summary of the activities and developments that have occurred in the institution during the 2017/2018 academic year. A detailed report on the state of affairs of the University College to the Congregation has, however, been packaged as the Principal's Annual Report and, which has been provided to you to keep you informed of the institution's achievements and challenges.

Purpose of Congregation

Congregation is the climax of all academic activities for students who have enrolled on various programmes of study in a tertiary institution over a period of time. It is an occasion in which they are awarded certificates/diplomas/degrees for the completion of the

programmes they enrolled on, and heralds their entry into a new level of life in most cases.

Background to the Establishment of MUCG

The establishment of the Methodist University College Ghana (MUCG) was necessitated by the limited access to higher education in Ghana at a time when there were very few public universities in Ghana - University of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, University of Cape Coast, University College of Education of Winneba, University for Development Studies and University for Mining and Technology - and with limited facilities.

The Methodist Church Ghana under the leadership of the Most Rev Dr Samuel Asante Antwi realized the need to provide and develop a good quality educational institution at the tertiary level. The desire of the establishment of the University, which was part of the vision of the Presiding Bishop at the time, was made known at the 36th Annual Conference of the Methodist Church Ghana in 1997 in Sunyani.

The Methodist University College Ghana by August 2000 had taken off with a vision to promote and develop academic excellence, spirituality, morality and service within the Ghanaian society. The institution got affiliated to the University of Ghana in October 2000. The Methodist University College Ghana aims at impacting

knowledge and skills in disciplines relevant to national development. MUCG also aims at ensuring an all round development of the student mentally, physically and spiritually on the basis of Christian principles.

MUCG currently has established and runs programmes on three campuses - Dansoman, Tema and Wenchi.

In 2010/2011, the University decided to improve and expand its capacity in terms infrastructure and staffing. The University contracted a loan of GHS10,000,000.00 for the expansion drive. However, the institution was unable to expand its revenue base to support the expansion and by 2016 had to spend about 85% of its revenue on wages and salaries in addition to about daily payment of GHS3,500.00 as interest on the loan. The repayment of the loan became a huge financial burden on the institution and stretched the University's finances to the limit. This attracted negative publicity to the University College.

I am happy to announce that the University has been able to pay off the loan. I like to extend the University College's appreciation to the immediate past Presiding Bishop (Most Rev Awotwe-Pratt) and the Methodist Church Ghana for the crucial role played in this repayment effort. I also appreciate the Management of Prudential Bank Ltd. for the concessions made to make it easier for the repayment of the loan.

Restructuring of Faculties, Departments and Academic Programmes

The vision of management of most newly established universities is to attract large numbers of students locally and internationally but such an approach is like placing the cart before the horse. Its resultant challenge is that it sacrifices quality. The best approach is to begin with a small number of programmes and student body if quality is a priority. The desire of increasing student intake by any academic institution therefore should be approached with caution because it may lower quality in its products and thereby send bad signals to prospective students and other stakeholders – rather restructuring of existing programmes and introduction of new programmes make institutions more attractive to prospective students, and this remains a viable option which MUCG is vigorously pursuing.

To make our courses and programmes more cost effective and responsive to the needs and aspirations of society, we have initiated motion to restructure our Faculties, Departments and Academic Programmes. As a result of this, Wenchi Campus is no longer operating as a Faculty. Instead, it operates as a satellite campus of the University College, as in the case of Tema Campus. There is no more Faculty of Applied Sciences but Faculty of Science made up of the Departments of Mathematics and Actuarial Sciences, Information Technology as well as Nursing and Applied Sciences.

The Faculty of Arts and General Studies has been merged with the Faculty of Social Studies and known as the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. A new Faculty known as the Faculty of Educational Studies and Entrepreneurship has been introduced, and comprises of the Department of Educational Studies, Department of Entrepreneurship Education, Research and Training and the Department of Continuing Education and Distance Learning.

With the restructuring, there is the reduction of academic programmes we offer from 47 to 26 and the reduction of the number of departments from 21 to 11

In accordance with the restructuring, the following programmes have been phased out with effect from the commencement of the 2018/2019 academic year:

- i. B.Sc General Agriculture
- ii. B.A Music
- iii. B.A French
- iv. B.A Religion, Ethics and Psychology
- v. BFA Theatre Studies
- vi. Diploma in General Agriculture
- vii. Diploma in Music
- viii. Certificate in Agribusiness

- ix. Certificate in Agro-processing
- x. Certificate in Horticulture
- xi. Certificate in Bandmastership
- xii. Certificate in Sound Engineering
- xiii. Certificate in General/Church Music
- xiv. Certificate in Theatre Practice
- xv. Certificate in Information Technology

In this direction, no fresh admission of students will be made in respect of the above-mentioned programmes with effect from the 2018/2019 academic year. The programmes from Levels 200 to 400 will, however, continue to be run until all students undertaking these programmes have completed their studies (which will be at the end of the 2020/2021 academic year).

Student Enrolment

The total number of students comprising of postgraduate, first degree, diploma and certificate students as at last academic year (2017/18 was 3831. It is currently (2018/19) 3132 i.e. a reduction of about 18% - this has been the trend since 2011.

Acknowledgements

We wish to acknowledge with gratitude the financial support we gained particularly from the following banks:

Management appealed to UNIBANK to refurbish the computer laboratories at the Dansoman Campus. Work on the refurbishment has been completed and the refurbished laboratories are in use i.e. MUCG currently has one of the best computer laboratories for academic work in the country. We are grateful to the Management of UNIBANK (now Consolidated Bank Ghana Ltd). The total cost of the project was GH¢583,375.00 and funded as follows:

UNIBANK - GH¢495,652.00

MUCG - GH¢87,723.00

A similar request was made to the Management of Prudential Bank Limited (PBL) to help purchase a server and computers to establish a computer laboratory at the Tema campus. The computers and the server were supplied at a cost of GH¢145,960.00. The computer laboratory in Tema is set up and it is functional currently. This has enabled MUCG to start running ICT programmes at our Tema Campus.

We are grateful to UNIBANK and Prudential Bank Management.

Management also expresses gratitude to staff of MUCG for their commitment to duty. We are grateful.

MUCG FINANCES

Restructuring

Our wage bill is unacceptably high and unsustainable. My administration has no option than to cut down the staff strength within the shortest possible time. The current restructuring and realignment effort is estimated to save the University about GH¢400,000.00 a month when fully implemented.

The number of Part-Time Lecturers has been reduced from 120 to 35. This is estimated to save the University about GH¢200,000.00 a semester. We soon will start retrenchment of a number of the permanent staff in addition.

Tema

Work on a four storey classroom project has begun in earnest to relocate MEDASS students. This will pave the way to start Day programmes at Tema Campus.

Akyem Swedru ABDC

Akyem Swedru ABDC was a drain on the University coffers until January 2018. The University over the last few years spent an average of GH¢100,000.00 per annum on Akyem Swedru ABDC with no returns whatsoever. Since January 2018, efforts have been made to transform Akyem Swedru ABDC into a profit making centre.

Since January, the centre has cultivated about 30 acres of cash crops (cocoa and oil palm) and 20 acres of food crops (maize, cassava, pawpaw, pepper and garden eggs). The centre also entered into poultry farming (1500 layers). The first batch of 500 birds has started laying eggs.

Wenchi Campus

Wenchi Campus has also been a drain for the past eight (8) or more years. The University subsidizes Wenchi to the tune of GH¢2 million a year. The plan for 2019 is to reverse this worrying trend. It is our desire that by the end of the 2018/2019 academic year, the subsidy to Wenchi would have been brought down to GHS1,000,000.00 or less.

ABDC

We plan to revamp Wenchi farms, expand the poultry project (currently with 1000 layers) and resource the Agro Processing Centre into an Agro Processing Mini-factory.

Academic Programme

The Department of Applied Sciences and Nursing has been tasked to introduce new but viable programmes such as:

- BSc Nursing
- BSc Midwifery
- BSc Physician Assistantship
- Doctor of Pharmacy
- BSc Medical Laboratory Technology

These programmes could also be offered both at Dansoman and Tema Campuses

Finance Department

The University continues to improve the IT systems in the Finance Department to enable it deliver quality services to the University Community.

Students' Fees Portal (SFP)

The University launched **Students' Fees Portal (SFP)** in September 2018. Students' Fees Portal is an online school fees application where students can:

- Check and print their bills;
- check and print their statements of accounts; and
- have issues concerning their fees resolved at the comfort of their home and offices.

This has removed the stress students went through to trek to campus to check their bills and accounts balances. This has made it easy for students to pay their fees and register online without visiting campus.

New Academic Programme for 2019

The following programmes are at the final stages of accreditation process and we expect to admit students into the programmes from January 2019:

- Bachelor of Law
- Certificate in Entrepreneurship (3 months)
- Advance Certificate in Entrepreneurship (3 months)
- MA in Small Business Management
- MA in Entrepreneurship

- MSc Business Analytics & Entrepreneurship
- MEd in School Leadership & Innovation
- MEd in Educational Management & Practice
- MEd, Education Entrepreneurship

Scholarships

MUCG has two types of Scholarship Schemes. The first one is for all Methodists, and it is 10% of tuition fee. The other one is the Presiding Bishop's Scholarship, which is 50% of tuition fee for 2 students per diocese. Currently, there are 111 students enjoying MUCG's scholarship. This is made up of 102 students enjoying 10% and 9 students enjoying 50%. This is a corporate social responsibility effort by the University to the Methodist Church Ghana.

Graduating Statistics

Presiding Bishop, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, at this ceremony, we shall present 828 Graduands. They include 244 postgraduates. The total number of First Degree Graduands is 442 out of which 17 (3.8%) obtained First Class Honours; 127 (27.7%) had Second Class (Upper Division); 222 (50.2%) had Second Class (Lower Division); 67 (15.2%) had Third Class Honours and 9 (2.0%) had Pass. There are also 21 Diploma students in IT and 95 in Nursing, and 21 Certificate students.

Appeal to Ghana Government

The one continuing purpose of education has been to bring people to as full a realization as possible of what it is to be a human being. Other statements of educational purpose and widely accepted include: to develop the intellect; to serve social needs; to contribute to the economy; to create an effective work force; to prepare students for a job or career; to promote a particular social or political system; to think critically, etc. Education seeks to encompass all the dimensions of human experience - The purpose of education has always been to give the young the things they need in order to develop in an orderly, sequential way into members of society. It is for these reasons that a large number of Ghanaians embraced the Free Senior High School idea with joy so that every Ghanaian, irrespective of the status of the parents will have access to education. However, on implementation, there is the realization that the challenges in running good quality free SHS are enormous. There is the need for the reassessment of the programme to know the enormity of the challenges and to call for support from private individuals and organizations to enable the programme run smoothly and successfully to enable the individual and society realize the full benefit of good quality education.

As we seek for solutions to the challenges bedeviled the free SHS, we need to project ahead to know the possible impact of the large

numbers of SHS graduates that we will turn out in 2020. We are informed that in 2020, 145,000 SHS graduates are to enter universities i.e. an increase of 90,000 (courtesy Prof Kwesi Yanka). The question is: can all these find places in public institutions of higher learning? The answer is obvious – no.

I have said it over and over again that most private Universities in Ghana are not operating for profit but to provide support to the government or society in the preparation of human resource that has the capacity to accelerate the growth and development of our country and society and to offer job opportunities. Currently, most private Universities are operating under capacity and if this should continue most of us will fold up in a couple of years. The question is: Why? - Stiff competition with our mentoring institutions. Almost every public University in Ghana is running a form of Distance Learning programme. The government will need to show interest in what is offered in our universities to ensure quality. We are also made to pay unreasonably high affiliation and accreditation bills and at the end of the day we are left with inadequate funds to pay for salaries, utility bills, stationery, etc.

In Ghana, tuition is free at all levels. I want to use this forum to appeal to the government to extend the free tuition to Ghanaians in private Universities – after all they remain Ghanaians irrespective of where they access education. In so doing, the fees paid by students in private Universities will reduce significantly to enable us help to

take care of the large SHS graduates that may qualify to enter university in 2020 and thereafter.

Goodwill Message to Graduating Students

Please, as you step out of MUCG, **never think that everyone is wrong** and you are always right, if you did that you will be labeled as a difficult person. Please, when you have nothing good to say about people, **never talk ill about them when you do not have the facts**. Learn to please people if you have no reason not to do so and learn to say sorry if saying that will bring peace. Never argue baselessly except such arguments will make a point clearer and will help solve a problem. As you develop yourself at your workplace, **give up short-term mindsets** and set up long-term goals and go in for them – but in doing so never cheat on the system. Always think big and go for the best. You need to give up fixed mindsets because the future belongs to those who learn to unlearn and to relearn to address the realities of time. Certainly, **who you are today should not be who you have to be tomorrow** – tomorrow should be better than today. You will need to know that overnight success is a myth. You need to consistently and consciously develop yourself and make strides towards the achievement of your goals – you cannot get there in a day or two – avoid shortcuts. **Try as much as possible not to be a perfectionist** because perfection is a mirage. Make mistakes along the line and make efforts to address them but don't make them bog you down – it is very normal to commit

mistakes occasionally but too many mistakes may make people lose confidence in you.

Even if you become the CEO of an organization, **you cannot control everything and/or do everything – some things are not up to you – detach yourself from things that you cannot control – you need to delegate when necessary.** I will encourage you to **learn to say no when necessary** – after all, you cannot please everyone, and no matter what some people will never like you. **Stay away from negative people** – they will just dampen your spirit and slow you down towards the achievement of your set goals. Take your time before making friends, **accept no offer that is unreasonable** and accept that which is reasonable with care, be cheerful and attractive, dedicate yourself to **the responsibilities you accept to perform** and get committed to your work. **Be confident and avoid over dependence on others.** Do whatever you are supposed to do with precision and rapidity to free yourself some time for personal development; **be time conscious** but do not rush at anything. Take your time at taking every major decision in life and be responsible for such decisions. Always bear in mind that **people are watching and assessing you**, and at the opportune time they will pass judgment on you. Above all, study and know how to handle your boss and those close to you.

You should **expect to occasionally deal with foolish people, bad bosses**, etc and not getting exactly what they want. You have to be

persistent – remain focused. **Philippians 3: 2: Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers...** Certainly don't let **resistance make you cynical**. Cynicism is so easy, and cynics don't accomplish much.

Radiate light – be positive – do not be a source of frustration.

The one thing that you have that nobody else has is *you* - Your voice, your mind, your story, your vision - so write and draw and build and play and dance and live as you can.

The way you perceive and react to the world is a choice. It means being conscious and aware enough to choose what you pay attention to and to choose how you construct meaning from experience. Everything you are comes from your choices

Stop dreaming and start doing

The world has plenty of dreamers. While dreamers are busy dreaming, the really happy people, the really successful people, the really interesting, the engaged and powerful people, are busy doing what they should do - these are the people who should inspire you.

You just have to keep moving forward. You just have to keep doing something, seizing the next opportunity, staying open to trying something new. It doesn't have to fit your vision of the perfect job or the perfect life. Perfection is a mirage and dreams are not real.

Conclusion

I am strongly advocating for the establishment on an endowment fund to help establish a thoughtful business model that allows for institutional growth and financial sustainability.

The Methodist Church Ghana has goodwill, the University has a lot of underutilized academic infrastructures, the various locations of the University campuses are good and prime; these are strengths that the University can leverage to turn around its fortunes.

I once again would like to express my gratitude to all teaching and non-teaching staff of MUCG who contributed in various ways to make the past academic year very successful. Though we did well you will agree with me that we could have done better.

My dear graduating students, we graduate you into the world of work, and the world of opportunities, strive for the best of every situation that comes your way. May God grant you the peace that you require to be functional and successful; may He guide and protect you; may you see no evil; may you hear no evil and touch evil throughout your working life and on retirement may you enjoy peace and live in absolute health.

May God shower His blessings on all of us.

Thank you.