

TRINITY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, LEGON

70TH GRADUATION 2015

President's Welcome Address

I. PROTOCOL GREETINGS

- Rt. Rev. Daniel Torto, Council Chairman and Anglican Bishop of Accra;
- Her Excellency Mrs. Matilda Ammisah Arthur, wife of the Vice President of the Republic of Ghana, who is our Special Guest of honor;
- Prof. Ernest Aryithey, Vice Chancellor of the University of Ghana who is our keynote speaker at this ceremony.
- Honorable members of Council of this Seminary;
- Distinguished Faculty Members;
- Heads and Representatives of sister Institutions;
- Distinguished ministers of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ;
- Friends of the media;
- Relatives and friends of the school;
- Students;
- Ladies and gentlemen

II. WELCOMING PROTOCOL

I wish on behalf of the Council Chairman, the whole Governing Council and the Trinity Community to welcome all of you to the 70th Graduation Ceremony of the Trinity Theological Seminary.

At graduation, we are actually fulfilling one of our key mandates which according to Article 8 of our Statutes is "to confer degrees in respect of programs which have received formal accreditation by the National Accreditation Board ...". We have met here today to fulfill this mandate.

At a graduation ceremony such as this, President's and Vice Chancellors tend to give a State of the Institution's Address, which tend to be very long. I do not intend to bore you with a long speech but I will only give a summary of some major events that occurred in the life of the Seminary in the course of the previous academic year up to today.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

1. Student Statistics

This year, 339 students were admitted, bringing the total student population to 689. This figure includes all those in the various programs who have not yet graduated. The

breakdown of fresh students is as follows:

PhD	--	10
MTh	--	29
MDiv	--	51
MAM	--	106
BTh	--	99
CIM	--	<u>63</u>
Total	=	<u>339</u>

And the breakdown of the whole student population by programs is as follows:

PhD	--	35
DMin	--	6
MTh.	--	67
MDiv	--	154
MAM.	--	106
BTh	--	267
CIM	--	<u>54</u>
Total	=	<u>689</u>

Once again, Rev. Chairman, you will notice that out of the total population of 689 only 321 (i.e. 46%) are undergrads, with the majority (i.e. 54%) being graduate students. As I said last year, this is the trend now, intentionally. Around the world, most people now go to Seminaries already with their first degrees in other fields of study and therefore go straight into MDiv programs for their professional degrees in ministry. I actually applaud this trend for I personally believe that the work of a minister is too serious to be left in the hands of amateurs. I seriously anticipate that very soon MDiv will become the basic Seminary degree in Ghana also.

2. Graduating Students

By God's grace, this year we are able to graduate 251 students in the various programs of study.

MTh	--	17
MAM	--	51
MDiv	--	33
BTh	--	101
CIM	--	<u>49</u>
Total	=	<u>251</u>

3. Staff Statistics

Once again, the nurture of these students have been made possible by our strong faculty and staff. Currently our staff strength is as follows:

a) Full Time Teaching Faculty	-- 15
b) Part Time Teaching Faculty	-- 12
c) Other Senior Members	-- 4
d) Senior Staff	-- 11
e) Junior Staff	-- <u>30</u>
Total	-- <u>72</u>

Let us applaud our hard working faculty and staff.

4. Conditions of Service

Management was able to complete work on our revised Conditions of Service for Senior Members and our revised Appointments and Promotions Document. These documents are now with Council awaiting final decision.

5. Matriculation

Mr. Chairman, a significant event happened at this year's Matriculation ceremony. We received at the Matriculation a handsome donation of GHC 50,000 from one Mr. and Mrs. Adjei for the establishment of the Sam and Emma Presbyterian Endowment Fund. This fund was set up to help with the living expenses of at least four Presbyterian candidates in the Seminary. We hope that other philanthropists will follow the good example of Mr. and Mrs. Adjei. It is worth noting that most students in the Seminary are matured, family students who have left their jobs to respond to the call of our Lord Jesus Christ.

IV. ACADEMIC WORK

1. Routine Work

Normal academic work proceeded uninterrupted. All our six programs (PhD, DMin, MTh, MAM, BTh, and Certificate) ran smoothly.

2. Publications

There were a total of about 18 Faculty publications out of a total of 15 full time faculty members.

3. Honours

One of our Senior members, the Very Rev. Prof. Johnson Kwabena Asamoah Gyadu was honored with a Doctor of Divinity degree by the Asbury Theological Seminary in the USA. He was also received into membership of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences. We congratulate our brother for such great achievements in the Academic field.

4. Journals

By God's grace, we are now on top with our Journal publications. Under the leadership of the Rev. Prof. D. N. A. Kpobi, we were able to come out with timely publications of the Trinity Journal of Church and Theology within the period under review.

Yet another great achievement of the Seminary was the launch of a new International Journal for Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics, which as the name suggests, is a product of our own Center for Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics.

The Center and Journal are under the Directorship of the Very Rev. Prof. John Ekem who is the Dickson-Ansre Distinguished Professor of Biblical Exegesis.

5. Promotion

The Rev. Seth Kissi was promoted to the rank, par of Senior Lecturer. Congratulations.

6. Library

Our Williamson library received a collection of additional 3,000 good theological books from the Theological Book Network in the USA. Our Williamson Library continues to be the leading theological library in the country.

7. Mentoring

We continue to mentor six institutions of higher learning, namely:

- a) The Divinity Faculty of Regent University College
- b) The Global Theological Seminary
- c) The Pan African University College
- d) Glory Leadership Institute
- e) International Theological Seminary which is now Counseling Institute
- f) Emmanuel University College

8. University of Ghana

Rev. Chairman, one of the several reasons why Trinity was moved from Kumasi to Legon in 1964, was so that it will have strong collaboration with the University of Ghana, particularly its Religions Department. In fact, a few years ago we shared faculty members. However, since National Accreditation Board came and we got chartered and started offering our own degrees, it looks like the collaboration has reduced significantly to my dislike. It is now reduced to external examinations and theses supervisions.

Mr. Chairman, since the current Vice Chancellor has a strong vision for collaboration as the future of universities and research, I pray that we could foster stronger official collaborations in teaching and research. For both institutions will gain a lot from such official collaborations. I hope that within a short period we will carve out something significant for our institutions in this respect before both of us leave office.

V. STUDENT LIFE

1. Hall Week Celebrations

Hall weeks were celebrated during the period under review. Funds were raised to improve upon life in the Halls.

2. Student Representative Council (SRC)

The SRC constructed a Summer Hut which is used for private studies, group studies, and receiving visitors and also as a place for inter-lecture periods of rest particularly, for non-residential students.

The SRC here works in close collaboration with Management. Currently they have taken it upon themselves to complete one lecture hall in our New Academic Block under construction. They have already donated an amount of GHC 10,000 towards that project. We are grateful to them.

VI. OUTREACH

1. Students Practicum

Students continue with their inter and intra semester Practicum where they are attached to churches for supervision.

2. Trinity United Church

The Trinity United Church which is our community church is also growing well. We are grateful to the church for its decision to contribute at least 12% of their income to support the Seminary. The Seminary also houses the assistant pastors and provides children service teachers for the church.

3. Field Education

Our Field Education Department also offers Church Leadership and Church Music programs. We hope that the general public will patronize these programs for their own good.

4. Christian Council of Ghana

We collaborated with the Christian Council of Ghana to host an important Symposium on “*Religious Tolerance and Interfaith Relations*”. Our guests at the Symposium were the Regional Manager of Islamic Schools, students and faculty from the Islamic University College and Senior staff of the Christian Council of Ghana.

We began to realize at this symposium that perhaps the younger generation want more inter-religious peace than we the older generation; but there must be more conversations between Moslems and Christians in this country.

VII. SPIRITUALITY

Our school actually exists for spiritual formation. This means that spirituality is core to all that we do here. We therefore provide space for spiritual nurture from all angles. This explains why the chapel stands at the Centre of the Seminary's architecture, and also why we have two chapels on this small campus.

Here we believe that Christian spirituality and good academic work can be joined together in good harmony. Hence our daily lives are soaked in worship and study. For the past 73 years, the Seminary has maintained this spirit. This then is one of the best places for anyone seeking a good place for pastoral formation.

VIII. INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

For the past three years we have been trying in our own humble way to construct a New Academic Block that will create room for additional lecture halls for our growing student and faculty population. We have been really struggling with fund raising and we pray and trust that all kind--hearted Christians and churches will come to our aid.

Estimates indicate that each lecture room and office will cost us GHC 25,000 (*i.e. if we are to do it before end of December, 2015*). So if you like us, you can help us complete at least one lecture room or office. Estimation for completion of the whole building is in the neighborhood of GHC 2.4m.

IX. THE THEME: “Moral Development and Theological Education”

Until recently it was common knowledge that a pastor's main job was to be an exemplary of biblical morality and teach it to his/her members. Everyone looking for a genuine and trust worthy person would not think twice but go to the priest.

Somehow, within the last thirty years, the landscape has changed and we have so many priests who now prefer the power to do wonders than the power to be morally upright. Society is suffering as a result of this shift. Morality is now being divorced from the Christian faith. This is a very strange phenomenon since the Christian God is holy, righteous and just within His core moral attributes. Have we now created our own God who cannot deal with sin anymore?

The great German thinker, Immanuel Kant, once wrote a treatise entitled "*Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*". There the great philosopher did a powerful analysis of human moral behavior and taught us that there are three levels when it comes to normal human moral behavior.

Level 1

Predisposition to Animality: where like animals people are pure predisposed to self-love and live mainly towards that which is appetizing to the body. All kinds of vices of the flesh are associated with this predisposition to Animality.

Level 2

Predisposition to Humanity: This is where people live only by competition. Here people do what is right only by virtue competing with other people. Again, several vices such as jealousy, envy, "*pull him down*" syndrome, are associated with this level of morality.

Level 3

Predisposition to personality: It is here at level three that the moral law works from within; it is here that the principle of universalizability works; it is here that the categorical imperative works. If Christian priests will decouple morality from their theology, then I do not know where society will end --- in a ditch, definitely.

I pray that we will all understand these three levels of morality and know how important it is for us all to live at the level of personality, but as Christians, to do so in Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Well, since we have invited a great scholar to speak on this topic, let me defer to him and only hope and pray that society will be able to read through the chicaneries of so-called pastors who separate Christian theology from morality.

X. CONCLUSION AND BENEDICTION

As I conclude my speech, Rev. Chairman, I wish to congratulate all our graduands who

have worked very hard to come to where they are today. Particularly for those of you who had first classes and distinctions, I say well done. I only pray that your good Academic work will translate into good Christian Ministry.

Go and work for Jesus and not for money; go and work for Jesus and not for show of power; go and work for Jesus and not for fame. Go and feed the hungry, cloth the naked, give water to the thirsty, visit the sick and those in prison, comfort the dying and afflicted, and above all preach and teach the unadulterated word of God.

May The Lord who called you, Himself strengthen and empower you so that this country and this world will be better because of your training.

***"Go labor on, spend and be spent, thy joy to do the Father's will;
It is the way the Master went, should not the servant tread it still".***

***"Go labor on, 'tis not for naught, thine earthly loss is heavenly gain;
Men heed thee, love thee, praise thee not, the Master praises what aware men".***

***"Toil on and in thy toil rejoice: for toil comes rest for exile home;
Soon shall thou hear the bridegroom's voice, the midnight peal, behold I come".***

Rev. Chairman, on this note, I wish to welcome all and sundry once again to the 70th graduation ceremony of the Trinity Theological Ceremony with the distinguished Rt. Rev. Daniel Torto, Anglican Bishop of Accra and Council Chairman of the Trinity Theological Seminary presiding as the chief officiant.

You are all welcome.

Thank you and enjoy the ceremony.

Humbly presented by:

**The Rev. Prof. J. O. Y. Mante, PhD.
(President)**