

**SPEECH BY EMMANUEL ADU-SARKODEE (GROUP CEO OF CDH GROUP) -
SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER AT THE CONGREGATION OF THE COLLEGES
OF HEALTH SCIENCES AND BASIC & APPLIED SCIENCES, AT THE GREAT
HALL, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA - LEGON**

The Chairperson and member of the University Council, distinguished guests, graduands, all protocol observed. Let me first commend the leadership of this University for maintaining this institution in the top league of universities on this continent, and indeed around the world. Congratulations, our graduands, for having successfully completed your studies from the two Colleges represented here: the College of Health Sciences and the College of Basic and Applied Sciences. Congratulations to you!

I'm honoured to be here with you to share some thoughts on my perspectives of life. I have a colleague called Kofi Baafi (who hails from Nyafuman Ekwinase Noyem and New Abirem finally Nkawkaw).

Extempore

I want to share with you this morning about a sense of direction. A place where you can always make references and get guidance as you make life's choices; because in the next phase of your life, it is not just a matter of black and white but there are many colors in between, as you will soon discover.

Without a fulcrum to guide your life, when the many ethical and moral questions are thrown at you, you will be lost just as many of you were lost until the word Nkawkaw was mentioned.

You have received excellent education here in this University, but remember, every conclusion is a new beginning, as William Wordsworth puts it succinctly, “the child is indeed the father of man”. My advice to you is, continue with the next phase of education as you leave this remarkable University. Your life will be filled with learning opportunities that will bring great joy and satisfaction. Regardless of the type of learning, be it specific to your career, home or personal enrichment, please remember that your lifelong education should have a spiritual component.

And I will quote part of the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Church at Philippi:

*“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are **true**, whatsoever things are **honest**, whatsoever things are **just**, whatsoever things are **pure**, whatsoever things are **lovely**, whatsoever things are of **good report**; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”
(Philippians 4:8).*

Graduands, honest, pure virtues and good character are higher than intellectualism. Character is best developed through firm adherence to the pursuit of high moral standards that you set for yourself. Pursuing this moral code of ethics will develop the Christ-like attitude of integrity that Paul referred to.

This nation has had and still has people with enough intellectual capacity to move it forward; what we have lacked and continue to lack is the character and the integrity that should match this intellectual capacity to develop this nation. So if you're graduating only to chase after wealth at all costs then you will be miserable, and will make very little contribution to this nation, as we have many of such people around already. And I will quote my former headteacher – Reverend John Teye (who established the John Teye Memorial School). He said:

“Lust after wealth and naked greed are the rules of the day, and our moral standards have declined to the depths of Nineveh.”

So what we need is a Jonah, but in this case a wilful and obedient Jonah, who will call the nation back to moral integrity, without which, let me quote Aryequaye Armah, who said - “the beautiful ones are not yet born”. And we have to wait for the next graduands to salvage this country, because, what we lack out there is citizens who combine intellectual prowess with integrity and dedication to service.

As an employer with businesses spanning various sectors of this economy – banking, health facility, insurance, hospitality and others, I have observed that what we require is faithful and willing servants, not arrogant and dishonest

intellectuals. We need people who are guided by a sense of what is moral and what is immoral.

I like a quotation by Potter Stewart (an Associate Justice of the US Supreme Court); he defines ethics as, “knowing the difference between what you have the right to do and what is right thing to do”. I hope that throughout your lives, you will remember and ponder on this advice about the distinction between what you have the right to do and what is right to do.

The Criminal Offenses Act in this country is limited in its prescription of all uncharitable actions and could not possibly criminalise everything undesirable for society, so if the Act is your moral code in life, then you will live a poor life indeed. Because lying to your friend, not under oath is not criminal, but you will diminish your integrity account before this friend, when he finds out eventually. Today's Ghana, and I dare say the world, is in dire need of individuals who will refuse to compromise their principles but rather choose to build their integrity account. An integrity account is akin to a good name. As the Bible says, “a good name is better than riches”, so please build a good name. Commit to yourself this day that you will place integrity above personal gains, so that you can be an influence for good; for we require good character in the business world.

As citizens of this nation, we owe an obligation to seek the good of the nation by pursuing service to God, family and country. If you do so, you will find a resolute purpose for your life and the blessings of God will be yours in rich abundance.

Let me end with the immortal words of Ephraim Amu in his song – “*Yen Ara Asaase Ni*”. For me, every person graduating in this nation must imbibe this song. It’s indeed our turn to lay down our lives for our nation. Whether this country succeeds or it fails depends on the character of you and me, and I pray that you will choose good over evil.

Once again, I congratulate you on your achievements in school, and I look forward to learning of your success in the next phase of your life.

Thank you very much for allowing me to be part of this special occasion.

God bless you.