

THE IMPORTANCE OF VERITAS LUX MUNDI – “TRUTH IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD” - IN SOCIAL LIFE: SHORT ADDRESS BY MARTIN A. B. K. AMIDU TO OLD STUDENTS OF BAWSCO

I salute each and every one of you and thank you for the invitation extended to me and your gracious presence at this old student get together to night. I will start with a quotation!

“The ability to understand the question is part of the answer.” The foregoing statement was a refrain of Dr. J. K. Agyeman Dickson, a renowned Ghanaian educationist and first Headmaster of Azoka Secondary School, later christened Bawku Secondary School and now christened Bawku Senior High School. My information is that Dr. Dickson was Assistant Headmaster for Navrongo Secondary School for a brief while before he went to head Azoka Secondary School. The name change was part of the political chieftaincy skirmishes that has been an integral part of Bawku before I accompanied my parents on transfer from Lawra to Bawku in 1959.

Some of the first students of what is now Bawku Senior High School were my class mates and seniors from Bawku Mixed Middle Boarding School. I heard of and internalized the refrain, “The ability to understand the question is part of the answer”, from my class mates who were in the school and it has since been a useful guide through out my career. A person who has the ability to understand a problem has part of the answer to the problem. The solution to the problem becomes less difficult for that person than the person who does not even understand the problem.

Philosophically one cannot find the answer to any problem, whether personal, peer group, community, national or international unless one approaches the solution to the problem with objectivity, integrity, and sincerity determined to find a beneficial answer to the problem. One can only do this when one is true to himself (whether as an individual, a peer group, community, or national leader(s)) and true to the problem(s) one intends or has undertaken to tackle and resolve. In the absence of sincerity and truthfulness in one’s social interactions with one’s neighbours, anything one attempts to do in life would be predicated by self centeredness and selfishness, greed and ultimately the destruction of the person, the peer group, community or nation. This is because in the end at every level of social interaction in this world theories of conflict studies and conflict resolution tells us that truth will always stand over untruths and good will always triumph over evil no matter how long it takes.

I have no doubt that the motto of Bawku Secondary High School, alias Bawku Secondary School, alias Azoka Secondary School depending on when you were a student there mandating VERITAS LUX MUNDI – translated as “TRUTH IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD” – has been a guiding vision in your lives. I see many of you, old students of BawSCO occupying high and responsible positions in Government as Ministers of State, Members of Parliament, Chief Directors and heads of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies in the public service, senior commissioned officers in the Ghana Armed Forces, the Police Service, and other security services. In the private sector I have lost count of

the number of old Bawscans who are Chief Executive Officers of private entities. I challenge any of you - old Bawscans present here - to tell us whether or not you did not benefit from the rewards of truthfulness on your way up to where you are today. I know you may each also confess the challenges you confronted in trying to be truthful to yourselves, the entities and your neighbours. These are natural challenges and dangers of doing what is truthful and right.

I am not naïve to think that there is no price to pay for fighting for the truth in social interactions. After all truth is justice; truth is freedom; truth is probity, accountability and transparency; truth is honesty, sincerity and integrity; and truth makes you to protect your neighbour as yourself. Being truthful to the group, society, community or a nation accelerates collective development and growth. Propaganda and spinning in any social relationship is evil as it is dishonourable and untruthful. It may succeed in the short run but truth will always prevail as the night follows the day in the long run. The stability of any type of society, community, or nation can thus thrive in the long run only on truth, justice and freedom. Truth is the light of the world – VERITAS LUX MUNDI.

I know that several of the students in Bawku Secondary School promised to become lawyers because of the relationship we built there when we came to do national service after being called to the Bar as Lawyers. Hon. Cletus Avoka and I had refused to return to the Meat Marketing Board office in Accra and opted rather to help the students of Bawku Secondary school who at that time were short of teachers especially in Government and General Paper. I taught English in literature in one of the form two classes – Esther Mba's & Co's class, history in one of the form four classes – Agambilla and Zinabu & Co's class, Commerce in form five business class – Bukari Sadique, Rejoice Yakubu & Co's class, and Government and General Paper in Sixth form classes – I will not mention names, they know themselves. Several of these students have redeemed their promises and are now acknowledged lawyers on their way to distinction in the field.

Some of you may remember that while I was teaching in Bawscos the teaching staff decided to go on strike and stopped teaching. I refused to stop teaching on the grounds that I was a national service person and did not agree that students should pay a price for any disagreement between staff and the administration. I stood my ground because I believed that the truth required that students should not be sacrificed as pawns in waging conflict amongst staff and administration. As you all know I have stood my ground anytime I believe the truth is on the side of the ordinary people of Ghana. From Upper East Regional Administration to Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development to Ministry of Industry Science and Technology to Volta Regional Administration to the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General I fought for the truth and justice and they never let me down. I have since 2009 stood on the side of truth, justice and freedom as Presidential Advisor to the President on Legal Affairs, Minister for the Interior with additional responsibility for Security and Intelligence, and lastly and not the least as Attorney General. Even the doubting Thomas has seen that the Supreme Court of Ghana on 14th and 21st June 2013 vindicated my tenacity in fighting for the truth against all falsehood. Corruption and crimes generally are perpetrated by those who are stranger to truth and justice. I narrate this short history to encourage each of you to continue to

uphold the motto of the Great Bawsco because it will make you humble and lead you to help your neighbour as yourself. The Ghanaian society will be enriched by that.

In my political career I have come across various persons engaged in corruption, abuse of power, impunity and other criminal offences, particularly from Northern Ghana. I have always asked if they are educated, which secondary school they attended because charity begins from home. I can say with all confidence that I am proud as a former teacher of Bawsco that the culprits have usually not been students of Bawsco. I believe this is because VERITAS LUX MUNDI works and worked.

As you celebrate the guinea fowl day to night, I urge you to have a thought for Bawsco which has helped to make you what you are today. Help Bawsco to produce more students to promote VERITAS LUX MUNDI by donating very generously to your Alma Mata.

I apologize for being unable to be with you this night in person. But I hope you will understand that recent events of my involvement in litigation in the Supreme Court to retrieve the monies of the Gargantuan judgment debt frauds makes it imperative that I take great care for my person and personal security. Being at large in the night is not advisable in the present circumstances. I send you these words of greeting and encouragement to show that whatever it is, I love Bawsco and I love you all. Enjoy the night but think always of how to help Baswco to continue to grow. I thank you Gargantuanly for your patience in listening. Thank you!

Martin A. B. K. Amidu

(At the GCB Club House on the night of 28th June 2013)