MOTIVATIONAL SPEECH

FOR

KENNETH SAMPONG

Hello everyone. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak about one of the most worthy subjects I know of, and that is Presbyterian Boys Secondary School. Those of you that know me know how sincerely passionate I am about this school, the strengthening of it’s resources, the expansion of its outreach, and the ongoing nurturing of its students. For those of you that have had more direct experience of the school and its attendees, you know the vital work that is being done to educate, motivate, and inspire the future of Ghana and ultimately the world. For those of you that are alumni of this fine school, you know the impact PRESEC’s involvement has had on **your** life. In this day and age of competition, global struggles, and the perpetual advancement of crises and hopefully cures, involvement in and support of this fine institution is more important than ever. To clarify just a little…. as you support the school, the true beneficiaries of your generosity and compassion will be the future generations of Ghanaians and citizens throughout the world.

It was Nelson Mandela who said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” It is no secret that in order to create a world that works for **everyone**, **A LOT** must be done. Making a difference in the world begins with a sense of self worth and a strong educational foundation. Everyone in this room that has had the privilege to receive an education knows just how true President Mandela’s statement is. Think about it. Where would **YOU** be had you not had the chance to acquire the tools to conquer ignorance and self doubt? I owe so much of my success to the years I spent earning my education at PRESEC. I can’t imagine what my life would be like today had someone not taken the time and the resources to make an investment in ME…. nor can I imagine the fate of so many of my cardiac patients who in turn benefit from the chance I was afforded to attend such an exceptional institution.

Over the years PRESEC has inspired, nurtured, taught and encouraged literally THOUSANDS of young boys to become vital, responsible, respectable men. Over two thousand students currently attend classes at the school and as we acknowledge and support its growth and impact on Ghana and ultimately the world, that number can and must grow. As I said, there is much work to be done on this planet. There must be a balance brought to those in need. Infrastructure, nourishment, basic care… so many resources must be shared with the world population and it all starts with education.

Every bit of symbolism that represents the school is an opportunity to find inspiration and motivation. From the color blue that signifies trust, honesty and loyalty to the baobab tree, known as “the tree of life” and stands for presence, strength and grace, to the motto, “A solid Bulwark,” the PRESEC students are infused with encouragement as they learn how necessary it is to be able to take on the responsibilities of leading their families and communities. Baobabs are known to last for a thousand years… or so I have been told… Who **REALLY** knows? (**If you want to make a little joke you can say that with a questioning gesture and wait for the laugh**). What I **DO** know is that they support the school’s legacy and message. Education is timeless, and the need and thirst for knowledge does not have an expiration date. Ignorance is not bliss. “In their light we shall see light.” That expression goes both ways. The students look to us to lead the way with resources and encouragement and in turn we see the light of the future and of possibility, curiosity, and discovery in their eyes.

I will never forget my time at PRESEC and although it was certainly **NOT** all fun and games, I made lifelong connections and friends with my classmates. I guess when people endure a common struggle, unbreakable bonds are formed. Who among us will **EVER** forget… no matter how hard we might try… of those early mornings… we would be awakened from our peaceful sleeps and have to go trotting for **MILES** to Atomic Junction. It was part of a discipline that we **HATED** but you know what? What medicine tastes good? But how much good does medicine eventually do? I look back on those early mornings and I am thankful …. Don’t tell the headmaster!!! I realized from those “bitter” moments that I had the strength to endure much more difficult challenges. Those uncomfortable times got me through medical school and far more stringent disciplines and in retrospect I am grateful for the priceless lessons I learned in the process.

My fellow classmates are dedicated to the ongoing contribution that PRESEC so consistently makes to the educational community. The school continues to have an excellent reputation and is considered one of the highest ranking, if not **THE** best school in Ghana. Its students have won the Math and Science quizzes an unprecedented **SIX TIMES**, more than any other school in the country. There is so much to be proud of in the work done by the staff and faculty of PRESEC and its students, and still there is so much more to be done.

Presbyterian Secondary School for Boys is doing a wonderful job but as is the case with many great institutions and functioning symbols of society and progress, the work is **NEVER** complete. It is definitely a “work in process” and there is always something to be done. Projects, construction, repairs, materials- anything you can think of is needed at any given time. For instance, there are a large number of students that live on campus as boarders but there is not enough housing for the teachers to be on campus. My fellow graduates have gotten together to invest in building and installing a new school gate and we are proud of our ability to contribute to an institution that has done so much for us but there is so much more to do. I want to point out something else as well. The more we offer our support to the building and strengthening of PRESEC, the more those benefits are manifold…. The school grows, its positive impact increases, the desire to learn and compete for achievement among all schools increases, the student body has the chance to grow and learn more, and the community wins as well…. with job opportunities…. economic support… and a sense that **each person matters**.

If you are sitting in this room it means you care. It means you have achieved a certain level of success in your own personal life and you have the foundation of an education to support your contribution to life and society. And even if you found your own personal challenges in YOUR trotting for miles to Atomic Junction, you are acutely aware of the positive impact that and your entire school experience has had on you. With that in mind, think of all of the young men out there in need of some early morning discipline!!! (**Wait for the laugh**). In all sincerity though, think of how our world is changing. Consider the increased stresses we all face just to get through another day. And then think of the students who have gone, are currently attending, and will attend PRESEC in the future. Picture the light in their eyes as they learn and discover and prepare to inherit the responsibilities of life. The young men of the future deserve an equitable chance to survive and succeed and that can only be achieved with knowledge… and a quality education.

I want to acknowledge all of you for your attendance today and I want to acknowledge your respect for educational institutions, and in particular, of course, PRESEC. I thank you for listening to what I had to say, and I thank you in advance for your consideration and support to insure that Presbyterian Boys Secondary School continues to provide quality education as they shine the light and see the light in the eyes of the future. That light is for **YOU** to discover as well, for you are ALSO the light. Thank you all!