

WELCOMING SPEECH
upon
AWARD-OF-CHARTER
to
SCOTT THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

18 November 1997
Machakos, Kenya

by
Davy Koech
Chairman Commission for Higher Education

On 18 November 1997 Scott Theological College became the fourth private university-level institution to be awarded a charter by the Kenya Government. In recognition of this distinction we are publishing the following speech given on the occasion of the Award-of-Charter by the Chairman of the Commission for Higher Education.

Dr. Davy Koech holds a higher doctorate (*CuD*) in Therapeutic Philosophy (1988) from the World University in the USA; a *Ph.D.* degree in Medical Pathology (1980) from the University of Nairobi; an *MS* in Pharmacology (1977) from Duquesne University of Pittsburg in Pennsylvania, USA; and a *BSc* degree (1974) obtained from the University of Nairobi. He is a member of many professional societies in Kenya, Britain and the United States. During his academic and biomedical research career, in which he has investigated immunological aspects of tropical and infectious diseases, he has published widely with 230 papers in peer reviewed scientific journals. Dr. Koech is the Chairman of *The Davy Koech Foundation*, the Editor-in-Chief of the *African Journal of Health Sciences*, the President of the *African Forum for Health Sciences*, the founder and Chairman and trustee of the *African Medical Services Trust*, and is a member of several other international boards. He has been decorated with many national and international honours. He also serves as the Chairman of the Commission for Higher Education in Kenya.

Your excellency the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kenya, Hon. Daniel Toroitich arap Moi;

The Minister for Education Hon. Joseph Kamotho,

Cabinet Ministers and Assistant Ministers,

The Head of the AIC Church in Kenya. Bishop Dr. Titus Kivunzi,

Staff and Students of Scott Theological College,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Your Excellency, on behalf of the members of the Commission for Higher Education, it is my very special honour and privilege to welcome you to this ceremony for the award of charter to Scott Theological College.

Your presence here, Sir, is a clear demonstration of your enormous commitment to the promotion of higher education in Kenya. It is also a great source of *inspiration and encouragement not only to us at the Commission for Higher Education, but also to all those involved with the advancement of higher learning in this country*

Your Excellency, Sir, Scott Theological College is the fourth private university-level institution to be awarded a charter by the Kenya Government, and the first private evangelical theological college to qualify for such award.

Unlike the first three private universities to be awarded charters in Kenya, namely, the University of Eastern Africa at Baraton, the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, and Daystar University, which have diversified their academic programmes, Scott Theological College is unique, in that for a start, it is offering only one degree programme, namely the Bachelor of Theology.

Sir, in conformity with your Government's vision in encouraging the development of private universities in Kenya with a view to absorbing some of the candidates who qualify for university admission, the Commission for Higher Education has endeavoured to encourage private degree-granting institutions such as Scott Theological College to diversify their programmes. However, after lengthy discussions spanning over a number of years with the institutions concerned and owing to the rather specialized missions of some of these institutions, the Commission came to the conclusion that instead of pressing these institutions to diversify their academic programmes in fields outside their

missions, and for which they did not have the necessary resources and expertise, they be encouraged to diversify within their own missions.

While this approach enabled the institutions to meet the objectives for which they had been established, diversification within their missions ensured that the programmes were broadened and offered at an appropriate depth, to enable them to produce broadly based graduates, comparable to any other graduates trained in other disciplines from accredited universities.

Sir, the charter you are about to grant to Scott Theological College, is therefore, based on the above premise. Thus, although Scott Theological College opted to remain a theological college instead of becoming a broadly based university, it is a college operating at university level. Its degrees will, therefore, be recognized worldwide, by virtue of having been accredited by the Government of Kenya.

For Scott Theological College, today is momentous, symbolizing as it were, their highly cherished motto of *Growing into Maturity*.

Founded on strong Christian principles, Scott Theological College is an evangelical theological college, with a philosophy based on evangelical orthodoxy. Although their mission is currently very specialized, being limited to the training of the clergy and other personnel for the AIC Church, it is gratifying to report that in conformity with their past practices, the College will continue to offer its facilities to other Christian churches.

Your Excellency, the famous English saying that "*all that Glitters is not gold*" can be truly reworded to read "*all that does not glitter may be gold*" for the case of Scott Theological College. This is so because, if one were to base one's judgment on its external appearance, this College has none of those glittering or awe-inspiring buildings that are normally associated with well-endowed universities. Neither has it got the serene academic atmosphere often associated with the "*absent minded professor*", and a stream of students criss-crossing one another, while gliding their way in the corridors of learning with some trying to emulate their role models.

Sir, with an enrolment of only 78 students during 1996-97 academic year, and a projected enrolment of 200 by the year 2004, this College has none of those external "airs" typical of the great citadels of learning, yet in its own small way, it has cut a "niche for itself" in the world of learning, through adopting quality assurance measures to ensure the quality of education it is offering, as well as through establishing "time honoured tradition in research" which is highly valued in the world of academia.

Sir, Scott Theological College, small and young as it is, can be singled out as a university-level institution in Kenya, that offers a balance between imparting knowledge in their chosen field of theology as well as imparting relevant skills for the world of employment through their Field Education and Learning Contracts programme.

Your Excellency, the concept of Field Education and Learning Contracts is a methodology of training not confined to theology only, but one which can be adopted by other disciplines in higher education as well. One of the biggest challenges to higher education worldwide at the close of the current century, is how to bridge the gap between acquisition of knowledge and imparting and translating that knowledge into relevant practical skills. It is in this regard that the pioneering effort by this College in this field becomes of great interest, not only to the private universities in Kenya, but also to the public universities as well.

I have already made reference to Scott Theological College's contribution to one of the time honoured traditions of universities, namely that of research and scholarship. I am pleased to inform you, Sir, that despite its size, this College is one of the few university-level institutions in Kenya, which has established and consistently maintained over the last 12 years, the production of a journal entitled the *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology*, with wide continental readership.

The experience in many African universities, Kenyan public universities included, is the inability of the universities to sustain the production of academic journals, even where the universities which attempt to do so, are far much better endowed with human and financial resources than this College.

For most of the African universities, the production of academic journals hardly goes beyond the gestation period, with a high mortality rate for those that manage to go beyond the production of the first or second volume. For this College, small as it is, to have sustained the production of the *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* for over 12 years continuously is, therefore, a major achievement on its part.

Your Excellency, these achievements are but some of the strengths that have made the Commission for Higher Education recommend Scott Theological College for the award of Charter.

The recommendation to award Scott Theological College a charter is based on 11 years of interaction with the College, during which period, the Commission and its various organs, have not only visited, inspected and re-

inspected the College's physical facilities and scrutinised its curriculum, and all aspects of its operation, but also made a number of recommendations some of which have already been acted upon by the College, while others will, no doubt be acted on within the next few years, as conditions upon which to-day's charter is being awarded.

The famous saying that "*All is well that ends well*", is from the famous English playwright William Shakespeare in one of his many novels. For this College, *all seems to have ended well* with to-day's ceremony, which symbolizes their time-honoured motto, namely "*Growing into Maturity*". The motto is derived from the *Mumbu* tree, estimated to be about 500 years old, and which stands just outside their fence, in front of the Mumbini Church, and which Scott Theological College has adopted for its Logo, and after which, this very site has been named.

Indeed, as the award of charter marks a step towards the maturity of an institution, and as this College enters into that threshold, it is not expected to sit on its past laurels on the assumption that it has attained maturity as is symbolised by their Logo.

The award of the charter is, therefore, not an end in itself, but the beginning of an relentless and venerable challenge as this College struggles to establish a name for itself within the world of higher learning, to justify the honour that shall be bestowed on it by being awarded a charter. Drawing on the example of the biblical mustard seed, we all expect this College to rise from these humble beginnings, gradually and steadily into a *colossus* in the world of learning and scholarship.

As is stipulated in the Universities Act of 1985 and Universities Rules of 1989, Scott theological College shall be required to work under the close supervision of the Commission for Higher Education. As the College begins its new chapter of life, we at the Commission shall give it all the necessary support it needs to realize its dreams of growing into an institution of quality education.

The decision of this institution to retain the term "*College*" instead of "*University*" in its corporate name and image is a demonstration of a philosophy that is clothed with true humility, wisdom and honour. Let this philosophy continue to nurture its vision for the future. I am sure the leadership of this College is aware that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

On my part, I wish Scott Theological College continued God's blessings. Thank you.