

**SERMON ON THE OCCASION OF THE FUNERAL SERVICE FOR DR. A.D.O. WRIGHT  
AT THE ST.GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL, GEORGE STREET FREETOWN ON SUNDAY  
AUGUST 27, 2017**

**By Rev. Canon Dr. Modupe Taylor-Pearce**

**INTRODUCTION**

Today we lay to rest the remains of a great Sierra Leone, whose life serves as an inspiration to us all. Let me start by stating the response of his wife Pamela to my question: "What do you remember your husband for?" Here is her answer as she told me with passion and sorrow:

- i. He devoted his life to serve humanity faithfully and with distinction
- ii. His was a life full of greatness
- iii. His was a life full of inspiration
- iv. His was a life full of generosity, compassion and love
- v. He touched the lives of many for good, and I, Pamela his wife am deeply honoured to be part of him.

What a touching assessment by one who was the closest person to him and deeply grieve for him. As we consider the life and legacy of this great man, let us see him in the eyes of others, as I quote tributes to him.

**OTHER TRIBUTES TO DAVE'S GREATNESS**

1. Professor King-David Ternayawe, 29<sup>th</sup> President of the West African College of Surgeons (WACS) writes about him as follows:  
We have missed one of the great architects of the success story of the West African College of Surgeons, a pillar of surgical training in the region, a peace love, a man of enviable character selfless. Addressing him posthumously, He adds, Past President A.D.O. Wright, you were indeed a great teacher great researcher great mentor and a great architect o the West African College of Surgeons. Rest in the bosom of the Lord.

2. Another Past President of WACS , Emeritus Professor Osato-F. Giwa Osagie, writes *“We shall miss a genuine, truthful person who was caring committed to the ideal of ethical medical practice, and help for his fellow human beings.”*
3. The 28<sup>th</sup> President of WACS wrote the following about him: *“He was the quintessential faithful servant who devoted himself to a life of service.. His humility was exemplary.”*
4. Dr. J Olutola Olatosi, the Secretary General of WACS writes “You were a great teacher of teachers and deep in our hearts will you remain.
5. Fru F. Angwafo writes: “It is a deafening loss of a great man, soft spoken who would not hurt a fly. He defied with his gentle ways the boisterous of our maddening world. May his legacy of love and service to one and sundry comfort his family and admirers today tomorrow and ad infinitum”
6. In their tribute, Dr. Eugene Terry represented Dave’s secondary school days at the Grammar School and in particular the class of 1951-55. He writes:

*There was a Band of Comrades true (Regentonians will recognize those lines) – A band of Comrades True Indeed - We call ourselves The Class of 51 (the year we started Form 1 at the Grammar School) or if you prefer Class of 55 (OUR graduating year). We were a bunch of little runts, rascals in reality, - full of mischief, clever little 13/14 year old BOYS. We were full of that boundless energy that is fueled by that powerful hormone – TESTOSTERONE, The hormone that masculinized our brains and drove our boyish aggressiveness and competitiveness.*

*Amid all of this hustling and bustling and much confusion –there was among us one who was forever the essence of calmness and serenity – That was Arthur Dave Wright – hardly ever ruffled, and always seemed to be at peace with the world!*

At the vigil on Saturday, August 26, a member of his family testified as follows”

*“Despite his numerous obligations and duties he engaged himself for the concerns of his family. He cultivated contact with his relatives both far and near and was the bridge between our relatives in other countries in West Arica and us in Sierra Leone. Dave fulfilled his function as head of the family and was always attentive to the needs of its members. He was always there to advise to discuss problems and assist in finding solutions, and was an inspiration to everyone of us. He was a good father to his three sons Arthur, Jeremy and Davey Jr. God blessed him with grandchildren whom he visited from time to time and with whom he had the good fortune to spend some time in the recent weeks. He will be missed by his wife Pamela, our eldest sister Agnes our youngest sister Audrey and her husband, the aforementioned children and grandchildren and nephews and nieces and other relatives at home and abroad. .*

## DEVELOPMENT

As we consider this wonderful life and we praise God for giving Dave to us for these almost eighty years, let us turn our hearts to the words of Scripture in

Prov 22:29

Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.

The evidence of Dave’s diligence is widespread and obvious. However let me classify them in three areas from which we too may learn to improve our lives. These are

1. His diligence in the work of God

2. His diligence in his professional career
3. His diligence in his service to humanity

In his calm and unruffled way, he served God and the Church. He was voted by the congregation to be a member of the Chapter of the St. George's Cathedral for several years. Chapter is the governing body of the Cathedral, and he served the Church with distinction. He was recognized by the Bishop and made a Lay Canon. Indeed it is heartwarming to see this dedicated, unruffled man doing his duties to the church, always with an lovely smile.

Dave was diligent in his professional career and he serves as a role model to us all. He had impeccable achievements. He was a Doctor of Medicines, a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh and a Fellow of the West African College of Surgeons. He has a very impressive array of learned papers that he wrote and published. Indeed his diligence in his professional career took him to serve as a doctor and an ENT specialist in Scotland, Freetown, Kambia and Bo. Such high academic achievements demonstrate his great ability and his great commitment to learning. It is fitting that this man was appointed Senior Lecturer at the College of Medicines, University of Sierra Leone. Indeed his diligence as a professional was recognized in the following positions he held.

1. President, West African College of Surgeons
2. Senior Medical Superintendent, Connaught Hospital, Freetown
3. Dean of Clinical Sciences College of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences, University of Sierra Leone
4. President of the Sierra Leone Medical and Dental Association
5. Member of the Executive Board of the West African Health Community
6. Senior House Officer in the Department of Otolaryngology, Bangour General Hospital, Dechmont, West Lothian, Scotland
7. Registrar, Department of Otolaryngology The Royal Infirmary and the City Hospital, Edinburgh, Scotland
8. Member of the Senate of the University of Sierra Leone and many other Committees of the University
9. Member of the Council of the West African Post Graduate Medical College
10. Regional Representative, West Africa to the Pan African Federation of Otolaryngological Societies

Indeed as we view the impressive list of achievements of this great man, we ask that it serves as an inspiration to all as we echo Longfellow's poem:

The heights by great men reached and kept  
Were not attained by sudden flight,  
But they, while their companions slept,  
Were toiling upward in the night

Let us now look at Dave's diligent service to humanity. He was a good doctor, an excellent ENT specialist, He was kind to all and would allow those without the necessary funds to be treated. He served humanity in the field of Education, serving as member of the Board of Governors of Ronsab School and the Board of Trustees of FSSG. He had a dedicated teaching career and served at the University in teaching and preparing doctors. Indeed his service to humanity was exemplary.

But Regentonians would rise up to applaud this great Regentonian who served as President of the Old Boys Union and member of the Board of Governors. Regentonians who march on the Foundation Day celebration would be struck by this smiling marshal who guided us on the way. The man was indeed very humble and his smile was infectious. Indeed we can aptly use Shakespeare's depiction of Mark Anthony as applicable to Dave:

*His life was gentle  
And the elements so mixed in him  
That nature itself would say to all the world  
This was a man.*

But let us go to the school song which he so wonderfully exemplified and together let us sing the verse which states:

*O tis not the nerve or sinew  
Of learning store alone,  
That the school upon her sons bestows  
Which stamps them for her own.  
Tis manhood gleams in boyish eyes  
Steadfast and true and keen  
The heart that never failed at need*

*The soul that n'er was mean  
Live for ever, sundered never  
Faltering never, Grammar School  
Live for ever, sundered never  
Regentonians true  
School, School, School, School  
God bless our Grammar Schoolore*

Our text is "Seest thou a man diligent in his business, he shall stand before kings, and not mean men"

Indeed Dave's excellence in service to God, to professional excellence and humanity puts him in the position of standing before the Head of State. As part of the recognition of his greatness and outstanding service to Sierra Leone and humanity. More than ever, by faith we believe he will stand before the King of Kings and receive the accolade "Well done, thou good and faithful servant"

Dave has lived and passed from time to eternity. His excellence is obvious and evident. He will always be remembered for his service to God, and to man. What about you? What will you be remembered for? I ask you to think deeply about this question. Let us take your service to God. Are you a child of God? Do you have the assurance of your sins forgiven and your name written in heaven? Those who do not fully belong to God are very often filled with guilt for what they have done. God has placed Himself in you and desires that you seek Him till you find Him.

How do you rate in the area of diligence in the exercise of your talents.

Dave was a talented doctor, You may be talented in tailoring or administration or agriculture, Are you diligent or are you apathetic? There is no success to the lazy or apathetic or negative. If you have not left footprints in the sands of time then wake up and take action

How do you rate in the area of service to humanity. Are you kind? Will people remember you for being kind to others in the day to day grind of life. Many people are selfish and pay for it in lack of peace and misery.

Emulate Dave, who served humanity and be determined that you will be remembered for your unselfishness and dedication to bless others.

You must have heard of the story of Albert Nobel who is the one who instituted the Nobel prizes for science, literature etc. He was the man who invented dynamite and after he read a wrong publication about him that :The merchant of death is dead, he determined that he would be remembered for kindness and social blessings.

Take action with your life and be known as someone who devoted his life to the service of humanity.

On behalf of the Church, I express condolences to Pamela his wife, the children, the family, the medical and dental profession and indeed to us all. Indeed this is a time for reflection on the life of a great man. But do not leave this service without making a commitment. Let your commitment be to serve God faithfully and to be sure of your place in heaven to use your talents to the full in the service of humanity and to help others in kindness so that long after you have left this life, you will be remembered for service and blessing as I am sure Dave will be.

So, I urge you to make a choice for God and receive the blessings.

Let us pray.