

*S.Thomas College*  
*Gurotalawa*  
8<sup>th</sup> May,2004.

Rt.Rev.Duleep De Chickera,  
Lord Bishop of Colombo,  
Bishop's Office,  
368/3A, Bauddhaloka Mawatha,  
Colombo 07

My Dear Bishop,

I am enclosing a short memorandum of my observations of various aspects of the life and work at STCG. It is not the school I first came to in 1964 and left in 1990. After 1991 some unnecessary and unhelpful changes had been made to the detriment of the happiness, well-being and disciplined running of the school. The present Headmaster has inherited this cumbersome and drab existence of the whole working and the life of the school, of the last few years before he took charge.

He has to be helped, encouraged and given the green light to do whatever has to be done for the sake of the college. I am sure that with the backing of the Chairman of the Board of Governors and the Board of Governors, he will be able to accomplish much. I ask that he be given the assurance of full support to venture out to do all that is necessary.

There is a lot of potential and a lot of hope for STCG. For example, our grade five Scholarship Examination results have been good compared to the schools around us, even the National School. The G.C.E Examination results of 2003 and 2004 have also been fair. We have done well in games and activities too. Our Dance Troop has come first in the island and so has the Oriental Music Choir. We have some very good, dedicated members of the Staff too. As for discipline, although there have been some problems, there are some excellent children in the college. Whatever set backs we have had may be due to the fact children have not been befriended, helped, advised, guided, corrected and cared for enough. They want to feel that they are wanted, are of value and are cared for. I have no doubts or fears that we are a good school.

The present Headmaster is able to hold the College together in spite of the numerous problems because of his personal goodness and tremendous patience and tolerance. I hate to think of what it could be otherwise – a boiling cauldron of hate and revenge.

I trust this letter and memorandum will be accepted in the spirit in which it is given.

I want the best for the school.

With all good wishes,

Yours in our Lord,

Rev.Goodchild.

Observations of the last 2 ½ months and suggestions to revive, re-introduce and put in to practice, some of the rules, practices and traditions of the past that will help the daily life of the boys to be orderly, methodical and disciplined which in turn will help them to feel more free, happier and live more meaningful and purposeful lives. They seem to just exist at present.

### **A. Boarding House**

1. We must run the boarding according to House system giving careful consideration to the boys ages and maturity by interviewing them individually when making transfers from one dormitory to another. Some of them will be cursing us for what they are suffering now.
2. The dormitories are fairly clean and tidy but we must have regular inspections not necessarily for points but because it is a part of their education for life.
3. Room times must be strictly supervised. They must be taught to read, study or sleep during these times. Noise should be tabooed.
4. Lights out must be strictly adhered to unless special permission has been sought to study after lights out.
5. Running in the corridors is forbidden especially because there have been and can be accidents.
6. Boys should queue up to go for meals, preps and assembly.
7. There should be no washing of cloths during room times.
8. The quad is out of bounds.
9. Each dormitory should clean the area immediately outside their respective dormitories.
10. There must be a House Master to each house and preferably an Assistant House Master, or call them Joint House Masters. At-least one of them must visit the dormitory (Senior & Junior) every day. It is an important part in the boarders' lives to have visitors. It breaks the monotony and drabness of boarding life. The House Master must be a counselor or to go into matters in regard to the boys' progress in studies, their health, their conduct, their personal problems and various aspects of their life in school. We are their parents when they are with us. An occasional entertainment in the dormitory, they enjoy.
11. Visits to the dormitories by the Headmaster, the Chaplain and other members of the staff with their wives will make the boys feel that there are those who care for them in their isolated existence. Boredom is a very real cause for indiscipline.
12. Hikes, excursions and outings must be re-started and encouraged.
13. It should be seen to, that every boy in the dormitory takes part in at least one game and one activity.
14. House meetings and annual house dinners must be started.
15. House prefects should be appointed from each house for both Seniors and Juniors. It is preferable that they be suitable boys from the same dormitory and same age groups. House prefects are for house duties only and not college duties.
16. We used to have a Shramadana Group. We should start this again so that at least certain areas can be cleaned and looked after by the group. Even this can be done by Houses.

17. It will be a good thing to ask the Police to have even occasional patrols at night. It will help to keep undesirable out of the premises.

## **B. Chapel**

1. It is a rule that every Christian child attends Chapel daily for worship or prayers as the case may be.
2. Chapel cleaning and choir practices are held every Saturday afternoon and evening respectively. Those involved must be excused from other activities.
3. No film shows, organized games etc should be arranged on Sundays. It is a day of special significance for us believers and has to be treated as such in a Christian institution. All boys can rest, relax and attend to their private and personal matters and play games that are not organized.
4. The Roman Catholic Priest will be with us on the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of each month at 6.00 p.m
5. Boys must wear full school uniforms for Sunday worship or for any special chapel occasions.
6. Non-Christians must get written permission from their parents to attend chapel services.
7. Incidentally, it is only fair to mention that film shows and organized games should not be arranged on Poya Days. The majority of our students follow the Buddha Dharma and we must be conscious of that fact. It is right that they study something beneficial to their lives rather than indulge in more ordinary things.
8. Muslim boys attend prayers on Fridays in the mosque near the college. We must arrange something for the Hindu boys at least a study.

## **C-Swimming and Swimming Pool**

Swimming is treated rather casually and in a disorderly way.

1. The engine must be on for a few hours each day at least when the pool is being used.
2. Boys must use bathing trunks even home made once and these be kept for swimming only.
3. Boys must bathe before and after swimming not just wet themselves. A lot of body impurities can make the water dirty and cause disease.
4. The pool is out of bounds except when a master is in charge.
5. Swimming for Juniors and Seniors must be done separately to avoid bullying and ragging.
6. No boy must go to the deep end unless he has done his lengths.
7. Pushing, ducking or rioting of any sort is forbidden.
8. Every boy must report to the master in charge before entering the pool.
9. No boy must jump in to the pool from the high boards when there is another boy in the water just below the high board. He must also inform the master in charge before diving or jumping from the high board.

10. There must be no running round the pool at any time.
11. All must get out of the pool at the bell.
12. Boys must not use the pool cut to move up and down from the Junior dormitories. There is a foot path which can be used.
13. It is advisable to have the swimming periods on the timetable during the last periods in the morning (before lunch) or the last periods in the afternoon. It is convenient for the boys and health-wise good. Swimming after taking food is not advisable.

Weekdays – Swimming Roster

Daily	3.30 p.m	Juniors
	4.30 p.m	College Swimmers
	5.30 p.m	Seniors or by arrangement

Saturdays and Sundays and Holidays

	10.00 a.m	Juniors
	11.00 a.m	Seniors
	3.30 p.m	Juniors
	4.30 p.m	College Swimmers
	5.30 p.m	Seniors or by arrangement

**D. Studies**

There was a time when even the Headmaster prepared schemes of work for the term and year and notes for each week or fortnight. It is good to start this again. Sectional heads can look in to the schemes and notes of their particular section with the Headmaster overseeing all sections. Written work in exercise books must also be seen. Record books must be maintained and seen.

Teachers on leave must set work for their respective classes so that the relief teacher can set the work and supervise the class.

Boys with reports about their class work or their conduct must be put “on report”. They have to attend “Detention” on Saturdays by 10.00 a.m to do the work set by the teacher who reported them. Absentees must be sent to the Prefect of Discipline. It will be good if we can order one type of exercise books for use for the whole the school (at least the upper school). If we can set up faculties for each subject, it might help to co-ordinate teaching lessons at least to some degree. We must invite inspectors to the school to advise and help in the various subjects etc.

We must arrange to have Parent/Teachers meetings.

Our Grade V Scholarship Examinations and the G C E results are good and encouraging.

## **Preps:**

Preps must be more strictly supervised. Lady teachers feel unsafe coming for preps in the morning when it is still dark and returning after preps when it is still dark.

I think we should turn our Primary into St.Thomas' College Primary International. We have the classrooms, the teachers and the hostel. We may need some more English work to be done. We should take this matter up with the Board of Governors.

## **E. Prefects**

Prefects must not be punished, scolded or humiliated in the present of other boys. Therefore, prefect meetings must be held at least twice in a month where they can be advised, guided and corrected. The Headmaster, Prefect of Discipline and the House Masters should attend prefects meetings others can be co-opted when necessary.

## **F.Films**

Films must be chosen carefully and even censored before shown. Some boys have reported that some films have certain scenes that are offensive even to them. This must be prevented.

Films must be shown for Juniors and Seniors on one day. Too many preps are taken up for films and other matters.

Fridays 3.30 p.m – Juniors  
5.30 p.m - Seniors

## **G.General**

Literary Associations – It is good to re-start the Literary Associations' meetings, if possible of all three media. Other Clubs and associations should be re-started.

We must have a check on the boys doing library reading. Class teachers can go in to this matter by checking the library card of each boy and even going with them to the library.

We should introduce a system of identification cards for all those living and working on the campus.

EXE AT WEEK ENDS – We must arrange for boys to go home only during the weekends set by the College. At present boys leave on any weekend they wish to do so.

## **H. College Council**

The Headmaster would find his task easier and less burdensome if he forms a College Council to discuss, thrash out, decide and execute the decisions reached to various problems that arise from time to time in regard to every aspect of the work of the school.

The Council to comprise of:

The Headmaster,  
Chaplain,  
Prefect of Discipline,  
Prefect of Games,  
Senior members of the Academy Staff who volunteer to serve,  
The House Masters and any others the Headmaster wishes to co-opt.

8<sup>th</sup> May 2004.