

13<sup>th</sup> September 2007.

Dear Old Thomian,

Greetings to you and yours from the salubrious climes of Uva and from all of us at S. Thomas' College in Gurutalawa.

I write to you in this the 65<sup>th</sup> year of the School's existence as its 13<sup>th</sup> Headmaster to bring you personal greetings and to introduce something of my plans and vision for making STCG once more a centre of excellence among the Private Diocesan Schools of Sri Lanka.

I was instituted and installed in office in the College Chapel of St. Francis of Assisi by the Rt. Rev. Duleep de Chickera, Bishop of Colombo, Chairman of our Board of Governors and our Episcopal Visitor on the Feast of St. Barnabas the Apostle, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2007. Having taken over the School I have begun to daily realize the quantum of work involved in the resuscitation of this once great institution. I was fortunate that for the 6 months prior to my taking over Mr. Jacques Huyghebaert was in charge of the School as in that short time, almost single handed, he has brought the School out of the doldrums and had begun to raise standards of education, discipline, accountability and general life of the School. Any future historian of any calibre will no doubt agree with what our Bishop said in his speech at my installation assembly that when the history of STCG is written the name of Jacques Huyghebaert will go down in gold for the part he has played. My job has been made a great deal easier due to Mr. Huyghebaert's continued association with STCG as Advisor to the Board, unofficial financial controller and coordinator of infrastructure development. All those associated with this School owe him a great debt of gratitude for had it not been for his vision and commitment STCG would have been closed down in December 2006 and of that there is little doubt.

STCG is back on track, albeit battered and bruised, run down and dilapidated. As of 12<sup>th</sup> September 2007 the number on roll is 523. This augurs well for the continued development of the School. But there is still much to be done to raise it to greater heights. There is much that needs to be put right about its administration and financial management, educational and disciplinary standards but it is my conviction that this is not an impossible task. The Book of Proverbs declares 'Where there is no vision the people perisheth'. This is undoubtedly true. All those involved with Guru need to recapture the vision of our founding fathers.

Our Bishop set up a Task Force in January 2007 to assist in the work that Mr. Huyghebaert had begun. The STCG-OBA is part of this through its representatives. A comprehensive study of the needs at STCG was compiled in the form of a Master Plan by the incumbent Senior Vice President of the STCG-OBA, Mr. Mahen Ranasinghe, and was submitted to the Board of Governors who have given their approval in principal, subject to some conditions requested by me. A number of matters raised in that report are already receiving our attention and a number of other areas are being looked into as well. In keeping with the recommendations of the master plan we have obtained preliminary costings for a number of infrastructure development needs details of which are attached for your reference and possible support. The Board has sanctioned these items that have been divided into three phases. Phases 1 & 2 are to run concurrently but Phase 3 will receive attention as and when we have the funds required. I have also included a list of what I consider to be needs if we are to offer quality standards of education here at Guru.

Sports and Extra-curricular activities form an integral part of a Boarding School. It is essential for the maintenance of good discipline that our boys are involved in outdoor activities and are occupied. While we have the necessary buildings, courts, field, pool etc we are facing a severe shortage of the basic sports goods to enhance sports. In addition we are in the process of recruiting coaches as well. We have received a number of used items from our brother School at Mount Lavinia, but we need more sports and other equipment if we are to proceed further and I have attached a list for your information. Your solidarity would be greatly appreciated.

One of the major concerns of all interest groups with regard to assisting STCG is that of financial transparency and accountability. While I cannot, and will not, take responsibility for what has happened in the past, I can only give you my word of honour as a Priest and as a Thomian that I shall do my level best to ensure accountability and transparency on my watch. With this in mind we have obtained the blessings of the Board of Governors for the formation of a Trust Fund through which old boys, well wishers and benefactors could channel their funding for the many projects that are envisaged for the development of the School. I must inform you that although we are now at just about breaking even the income generated from the school fees is only sufficient for our day to day operational expenses and cannot be utilised for special projects. I request however, that you clarify any doubts with me directly before making hasty judgements based on insufficient and sometimes inaccurate information.

What I request now of you all, sons of Thomiana, is that you find ways of supporting your *alma mater* as most of you have already been doing with so much dedication in the past. I invite you to extend your concrete moral and financial support for our plans for the School. I request and am open to your advice, your guidance, and indeed your constructive criticism. This is all part and parcel of your continued involvement in the life of the School and it is not only solicited but will be welcome. However, once advice and guidance have been given please trust me to take the decisions that need to be taken and do what must be done as I, being on the spot, deem appropriate. Please do bear in mind that all our plans cannot be accomplished as urgently as we would want. We need to plan well and take the time that is necessary for good results. I need to introduce and effect changes at my own pace taking into consideration the present ground realities or else I shall end up doing more harm than good – like a bull in a china shop! We need to remind ourselves that even Rome was not built (or rebuilt) in a day!

My vision for S. Thomas' College at Gurutalawa is that it will offer the all-round Thomian education system in a nature friendly, socially diverse and down to earth environment. I do not see STCG as 'Mount Lavinia in the Hills' – it has been and must always be 'S. Thomas' College in the Hills'! As such I don't intend replicating Mount at Guru. I shall endeavour however, to preserve the noble traditions and principles espoused by our Founders and use them to turn out, as best as we can with our limitations, Thomians – boys (and girls) imbued with the Thomian Spirit, who will be able to hold their own at any institution of learning beyond the portals of Gurutalawa. My vision for such boys and girls is that the all round education they receive here will hold them in good stead in later life and that they will be whole persons, good human beings and model citizens. That is my vision – but it will remain only a dream unless all those involved rally round to support me to bring that vision to fruition.

Utopian? Idealistic? Perhaps. But that is where the three pillars of Faith, Hope & Charity (the names also of our three new horses!) play their role. [Incidentally a Horse Riding Club is now well in place at College and the riding ring has been completed on the very sight contemplated by Dr. R. L. Hayman as per his original sight plan for the School.] I believe that there is no task or venture that is impossible if it is something noble, good and true. If God wills it and gives us God's blessings this School, dedicated to God's glory will live again! I close this rather long letter to you with the words of our Founder – Bishop James Chapman: inspiring words preached at the laying of the foundation stone of S. Thomas' College at Mutwal on St. Thomas' Day 1849 – **'In building for God, in working, in spending for God, we run no venture, we hazard no loss, we cherish no vague or uncertain hopes. Though unseen, when founded on true faith, hope is never unreal. Enduring works are often of humble beginning.'**

I look forward to you being a partner with us in this noble venture.

ESTO PERPETUA!

With peace and good wishes,

Yours in the Service of Thomiana,

Rev. Marc Billimoria

Headmaster

### **SPORTS AND GAMES ITEMS NEEDED**

[This is a list of minimum requirements]

Cricket	18 Match Balls 24 Practise Balls
Volleyball	4 Match Balls 8 Practise Balls
Rugby	4 Match Balls 12 Practise Balls
Football	2 Match Balls 12 Practise Balls
Table Tennis	8 Bats 36 Balls
Basket Ball	4 Match Balls 4 Practise Balls
Badminton	8 Racquets 10 sets of Shuttlecocks 10 Nets
Squash	2 Racquets 8 Balls
Carrom	8 Seed sets
Chess	2 Sets
Scrabble	2 Sets

### **WESTERN BAND EQUIPMENT REQUIRED**

[To develop the Western Band of the School we need the following items. I have not listed our needs for the Oriental Band.]

Base Drums	2
Side Drums	1
Cymbals	2 sets
Trumpets	6
Trombones	2
Euphonium	4
Saxophone	4
Maze	1

### **OTHER NEEDS**

[To develop the general standards of the School and to bring it into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These items are not included in the Infrastructure Development Plan below]

1. A large screen Television for the children to watch their weekend movie that is a highlight of their week. [W are hoping to obtain a satellite connection for educational, sports, news and children's channels et al.]
2. Books for the Lower School library in all three languages suitable for children of that age group (i.e. 5 – 10)
3. Books for the main Library that will be of interest to the present generation. Much of what we have at present has been described by a visiting expert as 'an antiquarian's dream' but not of much interest for our boys.
4. Furniture i.e. desks and chairs for classrooms, chairs for the Foster Hall, white boards etc. [Those interested could sponsor one set or a few sets as they wish.]
5. A multimedia projector and screen or an OHP and screen.
6. A sound system for the hall that can be used for other events. [At present we have an outdated system with 3 old microphones, a small and totally inadequate amplifier with two loud speaker cones.]
7. A Duplo machine for cheap production of examination papers, circulars et al. [At present we are using a Roneo machine that is as old as the School!] Duplo is much cheaper in the long run and photocopying is too expensive.
8. An intercom system. [Communication between key people and points in the School is very poor. While we are exploring the viability of a VPN through a local telecom provider an early solution to the problem is desirable.]
9. We need to enhance the benefits enjoyed by our Teachers if they are to produce better results. Some kind of special fund from which we can pay incentive bonuses etc needs to be created. The creation of a special fund for this purpose in consultation with the Board is an ideal project for Old Boys.

### **PROPOSED INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT**

Some explanatory notes on this are required.

1. This Plan was prepared by Mr. Jacques Huyghebaert in consultation with me and based on estimates of our contractor has been approved by the Board of Governors and is being worked on as and when money becomes available.
2. The items listed in blue italics are those for which funds have already been allocated by the Bishop and the Board.
3. Under Water projects we have opted for the 1<sup>st</sup> option that will cost us Rs. 1 million as the Arpico option is too expensive.

4. We have been able to purchase the 5 KVA Generator already for the Office and Dining Hall Block with money donated by a Church School in England.
5. The long term options for some items are listed.
6. The other items are self explanatory.
7. We are working on these areas as and when funds are available. The raising of funds is now a top priority. All money sent in by way of donations or grants for this work will be placed in a separate account and will be used for the purpose for which it has been sent. Alternately, money may be channelled through the STCG OBA or the Board of Governors.
8. A more detailed list of the proposed building construction work can be provided if requested.
9. We look forward to receiving constructive advice on these plans.
10. Any clarifications may be addressed to me or to Mr. Huyghebaert to our email address [stcgurotalawa@gmail.com](mailto:stcgurotalawa@gmail.com)

Description	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Amount
<b>CONSTRUCTION WORKS</b>				
<b>LABOUR COST</b>				
Keble Boarding House	10,000			10,000
Keble Boarding House (Toilets etc)	100,000			100,000
Keble Primary Section	16,000			16,000
Keble Classrooms 1&2	5,000			5,000
Keble Nursery	2,500			2,500
Keble Staffroom			35,000	35,000
Keble Classroom 3T	2,000			2,000
Quarters - Dikkumbura		20,000		20,000
Quarters - Dinushi		20,000		20,000
Quarters - Manomani		9,000		9,000
Quarters - Dancemaster Silva		8,000		8,000
Quarters - Neesaseelan		15,000		15,000
Stables			70,000	70,000
<i>Winchester dormitory</i>	<i>25,000</i>			<i>25,000</i>
Junior toilets	9,000			9,000
Junior dormitory	10,000			10,000
<i>Quarters - Father Goodchild</i>		<i>25,000</i>		<i>25,000</i>
<i>Reid dormitory</i>	<i>17,000</i>			<i>17,000</i>
<i>Garnier dormitory</i>	<i>7,000</i>			<i>7,000</i>
Parents & Visitors' room	24,000			24,000
<i>Davidson dormitory</i>	<i>100,000</i>			<i>100,000</i>
<i>Senior Classrooms - 4 blocks</i>	<i>25,000</i>			<i>25,000</i>
Chapman dormitory			100,000	100,000
<i>Selvaratnam</i>		<i>5,000</i>		<i>5,000</i>
<i>Jayasinghe dormitory</i>	<i>50,000</i>			<i>50,000</i>
Old Dining Room & Kitchen			150,000	150,000
Contingencies	100,000	50,000	50,000	200,000
<b>Labour Total</b>	<b>502,500</b>	<b>152,000</b>	<b>405,000</b>	<b>1,059,500</b>
	47%	14%	38%	100%
<b>MATERIALS &amp; SUPPLIES</b>	pro rata	pro rata	pro rata	amount
materials Mahaweli Trading				381,640
materials contingencies				100,000
cement building repairs 100 bags				70,000
cement contingencies				60,000
concrete metal repairs 4 m3				23,200
concrete contingencies				22,000
cement building blocks 2000 @ 30				60,000

wood				50,000
iron				30,000
<b>Materials Total</b>	377,926	114,318	304,597	796,840
(allocated estimate)				
	380,000	120,000	300,000	800,000
Contingencies	87,500	28,000	25,000	140,500
	970,000	300,000	730,000	2,000,000

### WATER STORAGE SYSTEM

<b>Water tank 450m3</b>	
labour	250,000
cement 100 bags	70,000
concrete metal 6 m3	34,800
rock 45m3	126,000
water network pipes	250,000
contingencies	269,200

**WATER SYSTEM TOTAL** **1,000,000**

ARPICO equivalent  
45 tanks @ 10,000 l capacity each 3,150,000

### ELECTRICTY GENERATION

5 KVA Diesel generator	80,000
<i>5 KVA LPG generator</i>	<i>150,000</i>

62,5 KVA diesel gen		1,500,000
generator room		50,000
control panel & electrical wiring		150,000
		1,700,000

100 KVA diesel gen		1,900,000
generator room		50,000
control panel & electrical wiring		150,000
		2,100,000

### EQUIPMENT & FURNITURE

300 metal bunk beds	750,000	750,000	750,000	2,250,000
Internet Wi-Fi network (If we don't get a good offer from a telecom company)			500,000	500,000
Computer equipment			500,000	500,000
Deep-freeze & cold rooms			1,000,000	1,000,000
contingencies			500,000	500,000
<b>totals</b>	<b>750,000</b>	<b>750,000</b>	<b>3,250,000</b>	<b>4,750,000</b>

### SPORTS FACILITIES REHABILITATION

swimming pool			500,000	500,000
tennis courts			100,000	100,000
cricket turf			200,000	200,000
other			200,000	200,000
<b>totals</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>

### SECURITY SYSTEM

Fencing & electronics			5,000,000	5,000,000
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Description	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Amount
	970,000	300,000	730,000	2,000,000
	1,000,000			1,000,000
	150,000		2,100,000	2,250,000
	750,000	750,000	3,250,000	4,750,000
	0	0	1,000,000	1,000,000
	0	0	5,000,000	5,000,000
			10,000,000	10,000,000
			4,000,000	4,000,000

	<b>2,870,000</b>	<b>1,050,000</b>	<b>26,080,000</b>	<b>30,000,000</b>
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