

...and the fourth word is Faith

Last week I spoke about the importance of Mind, Body and Spirit in the development of a teenage boy. Today, I would like to focus on Faith.

I have deliberately separated faith from the other three words for a number of reasons. For a start, it is the hardest word to define! It is also likely to be the most contentious. One of the problems with the word faith lies in its definition and what it actually means. What we do know is that faith has multiple strands and connections – there is no one simple answer. Although this might create confusion in our structured minds there is a wonderful richness associated with this mystery of faith.

The word faith relates to a person's belief in the truth. Faith is not based on tangible evidence or logical proof but rather on what we believe to be true. While the word faith is a noun it calls out for action. There is no place for static faith. Rather faith needs to be vibrant and utilised for the good of mankind.

I would suggest that we all have faith. Where we differ is in the degree of faith we are prepared to accept and communicate to others. Of course, practicing what we believe can make us feel uncomfortable and even vulnerable. People with faith can be ridiculed and might be tempted to remain silent or even disown their beliefs. At such times, one draws strength from the knowledge that such experiences are not unique to us and have been encountered by countless others.

I am currently writing a book that explores the close relationship between the Anglican Church and the growth of our school since the early 1840s. I shall be calling this book *Men of Faith* in recognition that our College was founded on an unswerving faith that the Word of God could be brought to the peoples of China. Over the past 160 years, this school has been blessed by the service of dedicated clergymen. Many of these men had taken up the call to come to the Far East, sometimes as pioneering missionaries. Others were local youths who received their training at St. Paul's College. These men not only provided our boys with a religious education; they also imparted Christian values and principles. What they all had in common was a burning desire to uphold their faith and to spread the Christian message beyond our College.

The mission of our founders still applies today. As a school of the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui it is our duty to provide an education that is based on Christian principles. In so doing, it is our hope that each boy will develop his own set of values that will guide him in life.

The College has recently renovated the Chapel on the 8th floor of the Stewart Building. The Chapel provides a space where pupils and teachers can choose to spend a little time in peace and quiet. It is open from 7.30am to 5.00pm on a normal school day and serves as a place for contemplation and prayer. I invite students and members of staff to see the Chapel as a central location in our College. Since its foundation, St.

Paul's College has had a Chapel on its campus; firstly in Lower Albert Road and then at Bonham Road. Our current Chapel is a visible statement that faith is important, a faith that has shaped the lives of so many pupils over the years.

Boys will often say that 'they have faith in their classmates'. What they mean by this is that they trust their friends and have confidence in their actions. Adults also need to have faith in teenage boys. An adolescent boy needs the support of understanding adults to help him on his journey to adulthood. That is why Mind, Body, Spirit and Faith are such important ingredients in this task.

J.R. Kennard