

❧ *A message from the Principal regarding the College Song* ❧

April, 2010

Dear students, alumni and friends of the College,

Thank you for your very keen and enthusiastic comments in response to the College's intention to change parts of the school song lyrics. Although there have been divergent views, one thing is certain: you do have strong attachment to St Stephen's. This is something positive, which I proudly regard as a definite asset to the College.

One point I would like to take this opportunity to clarify is that the decision to change was not a unilateral one. It was the product of consultation involving various stakeholders beginning from the last school year. The issue was first mooted in internal school meetings of senior teachers, and then brought up for discussion among College Council members, comprising alumni members, at least twice. Several alternatives were discussed, including retaining the original verses and adding a third verse; changing only the second verse; or sprinkling the themes of "faith" and "courage" in the entire song. All these are aimed to align the song more closely with the school motto to reflect the Christian ethos of the founders with a minimum of change. You may like to note too that an old boy was involved in revising the school song along with the chaplain and current teachers.

Having said that, I would like to stress that we do respect the 1970s version of the school song as a cherished and integral part of the school heritage. Its lively and bouncy feel certainly has an appeal of its own that could and should never be erased from collective memory. Our intention is to teach only current and incoming students the new version. To reiterate, alumni are welcome to sing the 70s version on occasions they feel the urge to. I could think of very few events, as speech days, where all have to sing one official version. With this in mind, it might be best if we view the issue not as a zero-sum game, where one party wins and the other loses. It is more a win-win situation in which alumni's interests are looked after and the Christian nature of the school underlined, and where the ideal of diversity in unity can be achieved.

Admittedly, for complex issues like this one, we have to consider multiple perspectives: respect for traditions, values of various stakeholders, and the Christian ethos of the school, to name just a few. Your suggestions to help resolve this issue for the benefit of the school will be much appreciated. If you feel that you wish to convey more of your views to the school on the school song or indeed any issues related to school development, such as the master plan for capital works, or the plan to internationalizing the College, please do so through email to alumni@ssc.edu.hk before we forward them to the College Council for further consideration.

I am of the conviction that with your ardent support of and allegiance to the College, it will grow from strength to strength in the years to come.

Kind regards,

*Louise Law
Principal*