

ST JOHN'S COLLEGE



Statement on Spirituality at St John's

1. Our History establishes a Spiritual Foundation

"But those who counseled caution were up against something more formidable than common sense: they were confronted by the determination of two priests who believed it their duty to provide Christian education within the community for which they were spiritually responsible".

On 1 August 1898, Rev John Darragh and Rev John Hodgson enrolled 11 boys in an Anglican Church School named St John's College.

"Venture of Faith" K C Lawson

Lord God our Father, who art Light and Life and Love, look down in love upon our College of Saint John, make it to be a home of religious discipline, sound learning and good will, which may send forth many rightly trained in body, mind and character to serve Thee well in Church and State: supply our wants, and give us increase as shall seem Thee good, and let Thine angels drive away all evil from us; through Thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen

"School Prayer" words by our second Founder Rev James Okey Nash

The Pelican Fountain, dedicated to the memory of the Community of the Resurrection and in thanksgiving for their devoted services to the College of St John's "for love of God alone", has inscribed on it words which record the belief upon which St John's was founded, and by which it has survived: "Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid which is Jesus Christ".

Pelican Fountain

2. The Constitution of St John's College recognizes that we are under the Church's Authority

St John's College is a Diocesan School of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa (CPSA) Johannesburg Diocese. The Diocesan Trustees own the property on behalf of the CPSA and it is held in trust for the purpose of Christian education. The Bishop of Johannesburg is the "Visitor" to the School and as such he has the task to approve the appointment of the Headmaster and all members of Council. He has the right to attend all Council meetings and can appoint a Church representative to the Council. He is the final authority in all matters spiritual and pastoral.

3. The Role of the Chaplains

There are two Chaplains at St John's. Both are ordained priests of the Anglican Church. They fall within the authority structure of the School which is under the authority of the Bishop of Johannesburg. They are ordained and licensed by the Bishop to minister at St John's.

Within the overall structure of the school, the chaplaincy has special responsibility for:

- The pastoral care of all members of the school community;
- The liturgical and public devotional life of the school;
- Christian nurture and formation within the school.

4. The Council and Heads

The Council, led by the Chairman, has the responsibility to ensure that the mission and purpose for which St John's College was established is implemented and developed. The preservation and development of the Christian Character of St John's College is a responsibility of the Council.

The members of Council, at the combined Mass on Mitchell Field at the beginning of each year, acknowledge the authority of God and commit themselves to seek His wisdom in their deliberations and decisions.

The Headmaster of St John's College is officially inducted by the Bishop of Johannesburg, at a ceremony at the beginning of his headship. He is the spiritual Head of the School and may delegate to, and operate through, the School Executive, the School Chaplains, the Housemasters and others.

The Heads of the College, Prep, Pre-Prep and Bridge Nursery School will be practicing Christians.

5. The Mission of St John's College

The Mission of St John's College is captured by two statements

1. **"St John's College: a World-Class, Christian School in Africa"**. Accepted by Council May 2001.

With humility and courage St John's strives to work out in practice what it means to be a world class Christian School in Africa.

2. **The School prayer** expresses the mission of the School.

- it acknowledges God's authority and seeks His love and blessing on St John's College.

- it requests that God make St John's a home of religious discipline, sound learning and good will.
- it expresses a purpose that St John's "send forth many rightly trained in body, mind and character to serve Thee well in Church and State".
- it requests that God should supply our needs and give us increase according to His purpose and will.
- it asks for God's protection

6. Out working of the Christian Faith

Christian education will seek to represent

- God the Father, source of all being and life
- God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again; and
- God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known to the world.

(Taken from the alternative profession of faith, Baptism Service, Common Worship)

The spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of each child will be based on the values and virtues of the School's Christian tradition: love of God and love of neighbour; the pursuit of truth and justice; the challenge of service and duty; and the experience of trust and forgiveness.

These values and virtues find expression in the curriculum, character and life of the school through:

- Spiritual development which fully recognizes the religious dimension of education throughout the curriculum and in the daily act of worship;
- Moral development which builds character, enabling each child to have the courage to do what is right;
- Cultural development which incorporates the Christian heritage of School and country as well as the contribution made by other religions and cultures;
- Mental and physical development that encourages each child's full potential to grow in the image of God.

7. Alternative World View

Powerful secular and material forces operate through many media in our society, encouraging a selfish concern for the acquisition of possessions or power and an ignoring or denial of the community. An education based on Christian principles will seek to provide a coherent alternative world view in which, for example, the denial of self and a life of service is encouraged.

8. The Curriculum

At St John's College, Christian education is not restricted to certain aspects of the curriculum only, such as worship or religious education. It is recognized that all

aspects of life of the school can contribute to the moral and social development of our pupils. Similarly, all aspects of the life of the School contribute to pupils' spiritual and cultural development, so St John's College will find opportunities throughout the school curriculum, explicit and implicit, and through relationships at all levels, to share the Christian gospel and to exemplify the life of faith.

9. The Staff and Pupils

Those who seek an education or a post at St John's should be able to discern that the Christian faith is at the heart of the character and life of the school. Not everyone within the school will be able to claim the Christian faith as their own with equal conviction. It is important for the school to ensure that other views and beliefs are respected among the staff, as they will be among the pupils. Those who appoint the staff have a responsibility to ensure that the School's commitment to the Christian faith is clear within a lively and stimulating diversity.

10. Members of Other Faiths

Staff

St John's may employ those of other faiths and those of no particular faith who, for whatever reason, seek a post at the School. Preference will be given to the appointment of Christian teachers. Staff will be required, according to their conscience, to contribute professionally and personally to the religious life of the School. They will be required to acknowledge and respect the faith of the School.

Pupils

St John's College accepts boys and girls of other denominations and faiths. However, it does so on the understanding that all pupils will attend scheduled acts of worship and all divinity classes. It is required that Parents give their consent to this on admission.

At all times the School will encourage staff and pupils to respect alternative religious beliefs and build a climate of tolerance and understanding of diversity.

The School will not allow the formal practice of other faiths at St John's. However, allowance may be made at the discretion of the Headmaster for boys and girls to attend worship and prayers at their own places of worship during school time, and permission will be given during special religious festivals for pupils to take time off school.

11. Documentation and Statements

In character and mission statements, in the School prospectus, in aims and objectives, in policies and schemes of work, St John's College will express the centrality of the Christian faith to the life of the School, not as an additional or incidental feature, but as a fundamental and guiding principle.

12. Worship in the School

Worship is at the heart of St John's College. It provides a point where all that the School is and does can be offered to God. It provides an opportunity for Head, Staff and Pupils to share what is of value to them and what is cause for joy or sorrow. It is a time for reflection and a time to give praise to God for His goodness. For this to be at the heart of the School, it must be a daily experience for all pupils.

13. The Teaching of Divinity

Every pupil at St John's College will attend Divinity lessons on a weekly basis. The focus of these lessons will be to teach the Christian faith and morality. The Bible is studied and discussed as the Word of God. In Divinity, the Gospel of Christ as revealed in the Bible will be studied. Lessons will be conducted in such a way that respect is shown to the diversity of belief and background of the pupils. Divinity lessons will be taken by the Chaplains or members of the teaching staff.

14. Marriages and Funerals in the St John's College Chapel

The Chapel may be used by Old Johannians, and members of staff and their immediate families for weddings and funerals. Anyone seeking to be married must be a member of a Church, or if not, they must join one and the couple must be counselled in marriage by the parish priest or minister so that they can understand the meaning of Christian marriage. If they want one of the St John's Chaplains to marry them they must have a letter from their own priest or minister stating that they have his or her blessing to get married at St John's. Arrangements must then be made with the School Chaplains. If a member of the St John's Community dies and his family request a service to be held at St John's, arrangements must be made with the Chaplains of St John's. The times of such services will be subject to approval by the College.

Conclusion

The histories of St John's College i.e. "Venture of Faith" and "Forward in Faith", reflect a wonderful story of faith. Central to that story are the lives of Boys, Staff, Parents and Old Boys – men and women of faith, who have given of their time and talents to St John's College and the wider society. They have left us a powerful legacy for which we are grateful. For this wonderful Christian heritage from Rev John Darragh in 1898 to the present day, we give thanks to Almighty God.

Lux Vita Caritas

Roger Cameron
Headmaster 2003

REFERENCE LIST

Venture of Faith: The Story of St John's College, Johannesburg 1898 – 1968
K C Lawson 1968

Forward in Faith: The continuing story of St John's College, Johannesburg 1969 –1998 I G
Grant-McKenzie 1998

Christian Character: a handbook for developing an Anglican ethos in independent schools:
National Society (Church of England) for Promoting Religious Education 2001

Diocesan College: Statement on Spirituality at Bishops Draft 4

St John's College Chapel: Week-Day Service Book

Policy document on Diversity and multi-culturalism for ISASA