



ANGLICAN
BOARD of
EDUCATION
SOUTHERN AFRICA

7th November 2015

Your Grace, Archbishop Thabo Makgoba,
Bishop Ellinah,
Chair of the Swaziland Board of Education,
Principals and Teachers,

I greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

I would like to talk to you about your role as Principal of an Anglican Church School.

I have been Principal of Church Schools for the past twenty two years, prior to that I was Deputy Principal for seven years and for ten years, I was a teacher in the classroom.

So I have walked this journey with you, and from my experience of being principal, it is often a lonely and challenging one, because you are the leader of the team. The responsibility for the reputation of your school, the performance of your teachers and the conduct and success of your learners rest with you – and people are very quick to blame you when things go wrong, as they do.

I have also learnt that over time you can have a profound influence over your school and a deep and profound influence on the lives of your children.

That is why you became a teacher and ultimately a principal because you want to make a difference – and you want to be true to your calling – your vocation – and this is a Godly vocation.

Yesterday I was visiting another Anglican School – “Uplands” – and the Headmaster of the Senior School said about the new Head of the Primary School – “He has done well and has hugged his school into shape”.

The phrase “he has hugged his school into shape” caught my attention because it speaks about being **deliberate**, **intentional**, **loving** and **vulnerable**. I would like to talk about these four words this morning in the leadership of a school and in particular, the leadership of an Anglican School.

Deliberate and **intentional** about ensuring that your school is a Christian School – the educational philosophy of your school must be fundamentally Christian. I have two sayings, “Life is a gift of God and therefore, we should be generous and grateful” - the 3G programme in your school. The second saying is that “Every child and teacher is beloved, and belongs, and is a child of God”.

This approach welcomes children of every faith and does not offend, but is Godly and True, and fundamentally Christian. I was challenged by one of the Deans who said “This is not Christian but Theistic”. When you run a school it must be a welcoming place – because God is welcoming and invites all – God is loving and vulnerable. I use the words “**deliberate** and **intentional**” because if we are not deliberate and intentional – these Christian foundations are slowly eroded.

The **second characteristic of a Christian school** about which you need to be deliberate and intentional is that there needs to be **regular worship** in your school. The Anglican Church is a Sacramental Church and we believe that children even little children are open to receiving God's Grace in worship, the Eucharist, through God's Word.

Is there a place at the beginning of each day to acknowledge God as the Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier – the source of life and strength in your School? Do you acknowledge God in Prayer at the beginning of meetings? Do you celebrate the Eucharist with the children?

Thirdly, children need to be **taught the faith in a disciplined and loving environment**. Children need to learn **what it means to be Christian**, to be good fathers and mothers, to serve in society and church. How to be loving husbands and wives, how to make right and good decisions about sex, drugs, alcohol and social media. How to be honest, loyal and truthful. How to be good stewards of the environment and active members of the church. It is more about relationships with God, family, Church, school and our responsibility as children of God – rather than about formal doctrine and dogma. But children who leave your school must have an understanding of the Christian faith and know what it means to be good and faithful servants of Christ.

Fourthly – Governance and Leadership. My impression is that the schools in Swaziland have retained a good relationship with the Church – through the Swaziland Board of Education, and also through your chief provider, the Swaziland Education Department. School Councils / Boards / Governing Bodies - Do you open with Prayer? Is there a representative of the Church present? Is the voice of the Church loud and clear?

What has happened in South Africa is that the voice of the Church has often diminished and the voice of corporate business has become strong. There are some serious challenges for the Church when that happens because the priorities of the Church for education are diminished – so I challenge you to be deliberate and intentional.

In conclusion, there are **three** more critical remarks about us being intentional, deliberate, loving and vulnerable. Your school needs to be a **kind place** (yes – you do need to hug your school into shape). You need to be a kind, compassionate and tough leader, when necessary. You need to lead by example – and acknowledge your mistakes, ask for forgiveness if necessary – but a distinctive characteristic of your school must be a **spirit of generosity**. Generosity toward each other as you live together in community – and generosity toward the wider community in which your school is situated. What kind of a community outreach to the poor is your school doing? Even if you consider your school poor, you have a responsibility to others.

Secondly your school **must be a good school**. It must serve its community with a quality curriculum, disciplined teaching and learning, supportive and loving pastoral care, committed and hardworking teachers and children who are engaged and participating in the learning environment. **Quality assurance** is part of your school. An Anglican Church school must be a good school – you are branding yourself with some of the great schools of the world – live up to that branding. You are branding yourself to the Anglican Church and ultimately to our Lord Jesus Christ- live up to that branding.

Lastly, when you walk into your school what **signs and symbols** tell me that it is an Anglican Church School. Driving through Swaziland I have seen lots of Church Schools branded for the Church of the Nazarene. It is not only in signage – it is because of crosses and because of chapels – but it is clear and visible. Do your children and your parents know your school is distinctive as an Anglican Church school because they can see signs and symbols boldly displayed of the Christian faith.

Be Deliberate, Intentional, Loving and Vulnerable in the leadership of your school. In other words: “Hug your school into shape”.

May God bless you as you take on this challenging task and may you be true, like Christ, to your calling.

Revd Roger Cameron
CEO Anglican Board of Education.