

Assembly 2 November 2009

The Christian Union (CU)

This morning I am delighted to have on stage with me our Christian Union leaders. In a short while Kelvin Lau of Form 6, the CU Chairman, will tell us something of the CU programme in our College. But first, I would like to give you some historical background to the Christian Union at St. Paul's College.

When SPC reopened in 1950 after World War II, here at Bonham Road, it was a much smaller College than we have today. Amongst that small number of students and teachers, there were a few who were Christians and who wanted to hold various Christian activities. In those early days, this small group held prayer meetings, Bible Study and hymn singing. Of course, most of the boys were Anglicans but they did welcome classmates from other Christian denominations to join in their activities. Within three years, they had formed the Christian Union and selected its first Chairman, Kwong Kong Kit. Peter Kwong was not only our first CU Chairman but he went on to become the first Archbishop of the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui.

A year after the CU was formed, the College appointed its first Chaplain since reopening after the war. The Reverend Dennis Runcorn came to Hong Kong from England. A missionary with the Church Missionary Society, the Reverend Runcorn immediately participated in CU activities.

From an initial band of 15 students, the CU grew to more than 40 members by 1956. A Prayer Meeting was held every day, either in the morning or after school. Discussion forums and Bible study groups were held every week, either on Wednesday or Friday.

Holy Communion was celebrated every month in the Chapel by the Chaplain and members of the CU. By the mid-1960s, Holy Communion had become a weekly event. Unfortunately, the last record of Holy Communion being held in our College was in 1970, when it was celebrated in the Chapel on major Saints' Days.

Camps and conferences have always been a major activity for the CU. In the early days, two camps were held each year, one at Easter and the other during the summer holidays. The CU was also very active in inter-school activities, particularly with St. Stephen's Girls' College. Our links with St. Stephen's Girls' College have always been close. Indeed, their current Principal, the Rev Jenny Nam, was our College Chaplain in the late 1980s and again in the late 1990s, leaving St. Paul's in 2003 to take up the role of Principal at St. Stephen's.

I have already spoken about Archbishop Peter being the first CU Chairman. But other CU boys have also taken on senior roles in the Anglican Church. Thomas Soo is the current Bishop of West Kowloon, and Patrick Yu the Bishop of Toronto.

The CU has made a significant contribution to the life of our school over the past 55 years. Many alumni still speak fondly of their time as members of the CU. I am pleased that the Christian Union remains active and willing to serve the needs of our students.

J.R. Kennard