



HILTON COLLEGE

*A letter from*  
**the Head**

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**Robust debate**

I have long held the view that we deepen our understanding of the world through deliberate exposure and discussion that is directed cleverly and acutely. Schools have at their core the intention to introduce new concepts, to challenge beliefs about the world wherein we live, to stretch young minds into new ways of thinking, to explore, to imagine, to venture beyond the 'known'.

It is with this mandate that we deliberately get boys to embark on uncharted waters in discussions in the classroom, in our boarding houses, in chapel, in assemblies, in tutor groups, in LO lessons, by venturing into conversations around topics that demand us all to question, in order to strengthen beliefs and to sharpen their picture of the world.

Schools must cultivate curiosity. It is with this aim in mind that we are unapologetic in our ongoing calls to question and to engage in rigorous debate around difficult issues.

A group of boys who serve on our Diversity Committee have recently spearheaded a campaign to get us all talking about our perceptions towards some groupings of society with whom we share our world. This campaign has included posters up around the college that have been intended to spark debate, along with a questionnaire for boys to participate in, should they wish to. The culmination of this particular campaign was a speech on Human Rights Day, by current Board member and past Head of School, Mr Karabo Mokoape, followed by group discussions on the matter.

I have found the boys' response to this campaign mature and engaging.

The few boys who have argued that this type of confrontation of ideas is tedious, are mistaken - in my opinion. Our world is a fractured world, perhaps more so than ever; this we cannot ignore. If our intention is to develop young men who are compassionate; who have the capacity to be peace-makers; who seek to be the change we all hope for, then ongoing conversation is an essential ingredient in this process.

Lest we forget, the Sharpeville massacre happened 58 years ago and we commemorate the day annually as a reminder that when otherness is allowed to determine a perverse construct of power of one group over another, we have given in to a depraved expression of humanity.

We give our boys space to explore and discuss issues of this nature to ensure an education that holds the promise that we never experience the horror of a distorted power construct ever again and, to develop an understanding of justice among our boys such that they will not allow a perverted construct to take root anywhere near where they may be in their futures. A brave and bold goal, it is true, but one that is essential in our quest to educate holistically.

On Sunday evening we enjoyed an abridged Passover meal for the boys who were in at the weekend. What a tremendous occasion. What struck me most was our boys' willingness to embrace this experience and their superb behaviour throughout. Our boys' openness to exploring faith is pleasing to see.

Again, I would encourage you to engage your son on these matters, always with a listening ear, to understand the nuance of the conversations and the varied points of view. Your sons are articulate and able; their view of the world is sophisticated; they can engage well.



At the end of this term we bid farewell to two staff members who have served Hilton well. Firstly, Mr Wessel Theron, our Head of Afrikaans, who is making his way to New Zealand to take up a teaching post at a prep school. Mr Theron has rejuvenated the Afrikaans department in his short stint here at the college. He has been innovative and thorough in his approach to teaching Afrikaans and we will miss him. As master-in-charge of Tennis he has led the Tennis club to a resounding win in the Denness Cup among other achievements and this bodes well for the future of Tennis at Hilton.

Mr John Roff has been an integral part of Hilton and Environmental education on our Estate for twelve years. He has been an educator par excellence; often connecting with certain boys in unique ways and without much public acclaim. Mr Roff is choosing to pursue a new dream in setting up retreats for people to discover themselves and connect with God. I can think of few better people to do this and we wish him well.



Eastertide reminds us of the sacrifice paid by Christ to redeem all of us. In a world that often glorifies self-centered behaviour, we would do well to reaffirm the selfless example Christ left us to emulate.

May your time with your sons be richly rewarding.

Regards,  
George