

Bishop Gerard Lander

This morning we are pleased to the College today Mr. Gerard Lander the grandson on Bishop Lander. Bishop of Lander was the Bishop of Victoria in the early twentieth century and also the 6th Warden and Principal of St. Paul's College. His name is on the honour board at the back of the Hall and his photograph on the wall to my right. This is Mr. Lander's first visit to SPC and I thought I would use this occasion to tell you a little about the life and work of his grandfather.

Bishop Lander arrived in Hong Kong from England in November 1907 and enthroned as the Bishop of Victoria. He was 47 years of age. Lander went to Trinity College at the University of Cambridge from where he was awarded a bachelor's degree, a master's degree and a doctorate. In the years before coming to Hong Kong, the Rev Lander served as a parish priest in the north west of England and had a close association with Liverpool Cathedral. The Rev Lander had been considered as the new Bishop of Fujian (Fukien) but the Archbishop of Canterbury felt that the climate in Hong Kong would be a more suitable for him and his young family.

The circumstances that led to Bishop Lander being appointed the new Bishop of Victoria were very sad. In September the previous year Hong Kong experienced a severe typhoon. Shortly before the storm arrived, Bishop Joseph Hoare, the 5th principal of our college, left on a preaching of villages in the area around Castle Peak. Bishop Hoare intended being away only four days. Moving between Hong Kong Island and New Territories one hundred years ago was difficult and often far quicker to travel by boat. Bishop Hoare owned a boat called the Pioneer and along with four St. Paul's students he set sail from Victoria harbour for Castle Peak in what is today the Yuen Long district close to Tuen Mun. Bishop Hoare, the four students and two boatmen were on the return journey when they were hit by the Great Typhoon of September 1906. Their boat sank in the storm in the area close to the current international airport and Bishop Hoare and his four students drowned leaving only the two boatmen to live to tell the tale.

It was in these tragic circumstances that Bishop Lander arrived at St. Paul's College. He found a school that was closed although the buildings and grounds had been maintained since Bishop Hoare's death twelve months earlier. Immediately, Bishop Lander went about the job of reopening the College, a task he embarked on with great determination. St. Paul's College in Glenealy reopened 18 months later and commenced

what would be a remarkable period of expansion and development. One of Bishop Lander's first decisions the day that SPC reopened its doors was to appoint a Principal to run the school on a day to day basis. He chose the Rev Arthur Stewart for this position although Bishop Lander remained as Warden (or Supervisor) of the College. The Rev Stewart was a young clergyman who was married to Bishop Lander's eldest daughter.

Over the next eleven years Bishop Lander embarked on many important projects. He was responsible not only for the reopening of St. Paul's College but also for the building of St. Paul's Church (Form 1 Heritage Service), the opening of St. John's Hall to residential students at the University of Hong Kong (on the site we now occupy!), the founding of St. Paul's Girls' School (now called St. Paul's Co-educational College), and the relocation of Diocesan Boys' and Girls' schools to new locations. He also pioneered the establishment of the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui (the Anglican Church in China).

Bishop Lander retired in 1920 and returned to England where he would continue his work in the church. He passed away on the 14th November 1934 in London at 73 years of age. At the funeral service it was said of Bishop Lander that he possessed 'the greatest of all human gifts, the power and capacity to love.'

We are delighted to have Mr. Lander at the College today and proud of his grandfather's service to the Church in Hong Kong and to St. Paul's College.

J.R. Kennard