

Speech by C. M. Lekaukau, Chief Executive, Botswana Telecommunications Authority (BTA) Read by Mr. M.O. Tamasiga on the occasion of the Prize Giving Day for Mater Spei College, Francistown 24 September 2005.

My Lord Bishop Frank

Manager of the School, Father Thomas

The School Head and Staff

Member of the Parents Teacher's Association

Parents

Students

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honour for me to have been invited to come and officiate on this 19th Prize Giving Day of the great Mater Spei College. I wish to apologise that I could not honour the invitation personally as I was caught in an important family commitment but I am with you in the spirit and love of Christ our Redeemer and I wish the day a success.

From the onset, allow me to introduce my organisation, Botswana Telecommunications Authority

(BTA) to you. BTA is an independent regulatory authority charged with the responsibility of promoting free and fair competition within the telecommunications industry in Botswana. In short, we are the organisation that licenses telecommunications operators such as Botswana Telecommunications Corporation (BTC), Mascom Wireless (Pty) Ltd, Orange Botswana (Pty) Ltd to provide you, consumers, with telecommunications services. We also licence other service providers like Private Network Operators, Data Network Operators and Internet Service Providers (ISP) to provide you with Internet.

When this invitation came I accepted it without hesitation for two reasons:

Firstly, like any parent of my age, I worry a lot about the future of this country that has come a long way since independence. Therefore, I welcome every opportunity that

allows me to play a part in trying to influence a positive life for you our youth – the future of tomorrow; and

Secondly, as a member of the Catholic church myself and having attended a Catholic College – St Josephs, I can directly relate to Mater Spei College as a sister College, not only in the role it plays in the education system of this country but also in the spiritual upbringing that it instils in your lives.

Allow me to begin by stating the obvious that I know your teachers have already mentioned to you many times. In modern day lives, Education is the key ingredient that distinguishes soft life from hard life. Education opens and broadens your mind to many life opportunities.

I know that you may be discouraged from taking your education seriously because you see university graduates roaming the streets without jobs. We are latecomers to this

problem, however many countries have been with it for many years. Let me hasten to warn you that education will not guarantee you a job. Instead, education will train your mind to sift through various opportunities in life and find something suitable to sustain yourself.

Gone are the days when Batswana entirely depended on subsistence agricultural practices for a living. But even so we are now experiencing more or less perpetual drought for lack of rainfall. Education allows you to engage in both white collar and blue collar jobs in a lot more focused manner. Without focussed education, it will be difficult to be self employed today than it would have been during our times. As such, the importance of focussed education can not be overemphasised.

Today is about celebration of success. Events like this one are a way through which your teachers and parents encourage you to take education seriously. I am

happy to be part of this occasion and to add my voice to those that say congratulations.

From the history books of this college, the word congratulations may have been used so many times that you could easily begin to take it for granted. I peeped into the records of your results and was impressed to note that since 1999, your school has consistently obtained position one (1) nationally. Over this five-year period, the school only faltered once when it obtained position three (3) in the year 2003 with St. Joseph's College scooping position one. This is indeed a commendable record that deserves no less than an applause if not a standing ovation. Congratulations and keep it up.

Similarly, I was impressed by your achievements in extra curricular activities. According to the records, Mater Spei students have featured and made their mark in high level competitions under national bodies such as Botswana

Amateur Athletics (BAA), Botswana Institutions Sports Association (BISA) and others.

This is indeed a fitting tribute to Mater Spei - ‘**Mother of Hope**’. Results like these indeed give us hope that come Year 2016, Botswana will be both an **Educated and Informed Nation** as well as a **United and Proud Nation** through sporting excellence.

It would be remiss of me if I could end my remarks without touching on the issues that worry our government, and every parent including teachers. These issues include teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and drug abuse. These three issues are the worst enemies of every teenager, as well as every human being.

A bright future awaits each one of you here, but the formula for realising that the future lies entirely in your hands is DISCIPLINE. The easiest goal to achieve in life is

to be useless. That does not require any effort nor resources, but only indiscipline. I urge you all to set yourselves challenging life goals and commit all your efforts to achieve them. Then discipline yourselves, stay focused and you will emerge victorious. It is not by chance that the mission of your school recognises the importance of discipline.

“To provide education of the highest quality through dedicated team work in a Christian environment to produce disciplined, morally responsible and enterprising citizens who will be an asset to the community”.

I now wish to talk to you, pupils and of course all of us here, about the number one enemy facing our nation today, HIV/AIDS or SEGAJAJA. A lot has been said about the issue of HIV/AIDS publicly and in our homes, at schools, in churches, in parliament, let alone in hospitals. However, there is still a concern by all those who are taking this issue

seriously that the problem doesn't seem to reduce. Every individual, especially you the youth, hold a solution to the problem of HIV/AIDS. It is only through individuals taking responsibility to avoid getting HIV/AIDS that the problem will disappear since prevention is better than cure. Your responsibility as the youth is to stay away from sex as long as you are single. It is only after you marry or get married that you can start practising responsible and safe sex. After marriage you should also stick to your spouse. Of course this is a recipe for all of us.

In the Roman Catholic Church we believe that abstinence and morality are the only keys to an aids free tomorrow and not artificial methods like condoms.. The Sixth Commandment "You shall not commit adultery," subsumes virtue of chastity which prevents someone from being governed by impulses, desires and temptations.

Bagaetsho, do not allow yourselves to be misguided by people who show you the wrong way by offering you condoms. There is a famous Catholic Church slogan which says: “use your common-sense not condom-sense.” Abstain from sex before marriage and be faithful to your spouse in your future marriage – this is the way Christ shows us. If you read 1 Corinthians 3 verses 16 – 17 it says; “Surely you know that you are God’s temple and that God’s spirit lives in you. So if anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and you yourselves are his temple.” And 1 Corinthians 6 verse 13 says; “...The body is not to be used for sexual immorality but to serve the lord; and the Lord provides for the body.” The Lord Jesus also prescribes the following text as a rule for abstinence and morality to all of us: -

“A man does well not to marry. But because there is so much immorality every man should have his own wife and every woman should have her own husband

Now, to the unmarried or widows I say that it would be better for you to continue to live alone as I do. But if you cannot restrain your desires, go ahead and marry – it is better to marry than to burn with passion. (1 Corinthians 7:2 and 8).

Those who try to depart from these prescribed principles by introducing concepts like condomising are trying to amend the Bible which is not possible. Whilst man made laws governing the Church can be amended or even repealed, the laws of God enshrined in the Bible cannot be tempered with by acts of a human being.

Often there is a tendency for students after sitting their final year examinations to start telling themselves that they have finished school and therefore they can start misbehaving because they have achieved a certain degree of freedom. Firstly, let me tell you that you will never finish school. Learn from me, I may not be in a formal school

today but I still take opportunity to learn everyday. Secondly, finishing school does not give one a licence to misbehave. In fact, anybody who has gone through school education is expected by society to behave respectfully because the society has spent its resources on him or her. It is therefore a form of a social contract.

I have spoken at length and I do not wish to spoil the mood of today i.e. celebration, celebration, and celebration of achievements. Once again let me congratulate all those that will be receiving prizes. To those who have not made it to the honours list this year, you already have a goal to work towards, receiving a prize at next year's prize giving ceremony.

Finally, allow me to recognise the efforts of everybody involved, the Manager, School Head and the staff of Mater Spei, both academic and support as well as parents. You

seem to have discovered the formula that works. May you continue setting the pace for the rest of the country to follow. With Mater Spei as the benchmark, I have no doubt that Botswana will be the power to reckon with in the global academic world.

It is now my pleasure and privilege to donate to the school four computers, two printers and a laptop on behalf of BTA in order to augment what you have to enable the school to raise its computer literacy.

Pula... Pula... Pula...

September 2005

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