

Chairman's Report

Arie Veenendaal

Gratitude

Last week Monday we held our Annual Membership meeting. It was again overwhelming the number of members who attended. It was especially evident that many of those in attendance were seniors and grand parents. It is very encouraging that so many of you see that the words "covenantal education" means that you feel very much a part of the school community. During the intermission I had opportunity to speak with one senior brother who told me that he had served one term as chairman and two terms as treasurer, (9 years). I was reminded of the number of men and women who have served the school community over the years. We owe these people our gratitude for laying the groundwork for our school today. Where would we be if we did not have the services of DCS to assist the parents in the task of educating our youth!

"At the annual meeting an open letter was presented. Some of you have asked to receive a copy of this letter so as to respond to it. Remember that this "open letter" was addressed "to the School Board" . How and when this matter will be dealt with will be tabled at the next Board meeting scheduled for November 7th.

"Sharpen the saw"

Also evident was the number of single and young couples who for various reasons stayed away and who are not yet members or donors. The board has at times discussed how we can facilitate a greater awareness as to the requirements and benefits of school membership? As you could hear on Monday evening we need many hands to work together if we are to expand the school as per the vision shown at the meeting. It would be great if all of you members would take another look at the member list and see if you could approach anyone as to why they have not yet made the commitment to join. Undoubtedly there are some valid reasons but in many cases it could be a simple matter of not understanding their responsibility in this regard or that they are not aware that we do need their help. It takes not only the financial commitment but also their prayers and helping minds and hands. Many hands do make the load lighter. Please consider if you can do anyone a favour by having this type of conversation in the next week. It would be great if we could see even more participation.

Welcome and Thank-you

Welcome to Nick Barendregt to the school board. We pray that God will grant you both the love and joy to do your task to the best of your ability. In speaking with Nick he told me that he is excited to begin the work and we in turn look forward to working with you.

Also, thanks to Jeremy Kamminga for the faithful years of service on the board. Like was spoken at the meeting, your careful reflection on all of the issues was something that we came to expect from you. May God grant His blessing for your time off.

Troubling times

As reformed believers we live in troubling times! Canada is not longer a country of freedom of speech and expression. Just try and speak publicly about God's requirements about our relationships as that refers to gay and lesbian lifestyle and the press and the government will soon label our views as "hate propaganda". We need to teach and preach tolerance they will say. Us reformed people need to get with the times!! Recently a Roman Catholic school in Winnipeg was ridiculed by the press for allowing high school students to record their anti-abortion crusade as "volunteer hours towards some credits" on their school portfolio. "Why do we give private schools like this public funds when they have these "exclusive" type of teachings they ask? This issue was quickly brushed out of the media limelight but the brief time that it was debated was a warning to those who listened to it that we better be careful what we do because someone may be watching. Freedom of speech and expression is more tolerated among the Muslim high school students in Toronto than among Christian schools in Winnipeg! Troubling times!

How concerned are we as school society about these types of events? Are we focused? In the bylaws of the CRSSOC we make reference to our collective adherence to the 3 Forms of Unity. I believe that today, more than ever before, these 3 forms of unity provide us with focused clarity on what we believe as members of the school society. These 3 forms of unity give us clarity of vision. Should we at some time in the future also be challenged on matters of principle, the statements of faith summarized in the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort and the Heidelberg Catechism will become invaluable tools for our defense. Let us hold onto and cherish these documents. They will for sure be the "glasses" that we need as we make decisions regarding policies and direction for our school. They will keep our eyes focused on the truths of God's word!

Recently at a Bible study kick off meeting we read together a portion of the preamble to the Belgic Confession. There we read about the dire circumstances that were prevalent during the time of Guido deBres (the author of this confession). People were beaten and tortured and brutally persecuted, and during these trying times the Lord granted Guido de Bres the courage to draft a letter to the government in his day. I want to share a few sentences with you . . .

"To protest against this cruel oppression, and to prove to the persecutors that the adherents of the Reformed faith were no rebels, as was laid to their charge, but law-abiding citizens who professed the true Christian doctrine according to the Holy Scriptures, de Bres prepared this confession on the year 1561. In the following year a copy was sent to King Philip II, together with an address in which the petitioners declared that they were ready to obey the government in all lawful things, but that they would "offer their backs to the stripes, their tongues to knives,

their mouths to gags, and their whole bodies to fire," rather than deny the truth expressed in this confession."

. . . amazing words, courageous words! I wonder what Guido would think of our "tolerant" society today. Are we as reformed believers sometimes in danger of slipping into this tolerant mentality as well rather than defend what is right?

Prayer

As always, remember the many aspects of DCS in your prayers. We certainly need the reassurance that with our God all things are possible. I wish you all a good Sunday and a good month of November. May Remembrance day serve as a reminder that God is stronger than our foes!

Principal's Report

Andy Huisman

"How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!"

Psalm 133

Unity of Church, Home and School

As I read through the many documents that can be found in our school, I find wonderful statements about Christian education, statements about how the church, home and school work together, statements about service to God out of thankfulness. Many of these statements were diligently worked on by the older generation amongst us. Statements that, after all of these years, are still in force and central to DCS and have become the foundation of our curriculum documents, protocols and policies. As well, we have our school logo, the church, home and school. Many schools have such logos as identifiers as to the partnership we have with one another. Some use a triangle, there have even been references to a three legged stool and a three corded rope.

At the recent Principal's Conference that I attended, Derek Stoffels, Principal of Ebenezer Canadian Reformed School in Smithers, BC, presented a portion of his findings in conjunction with his Master's Thesis. It is based on the one question – *Why do Canadian Reformed Schools exist?* His study was sparked by a presentation made at the Principal's Conference in 1999 by Leo Kampen. Kampen asserted that School Boards that were founded by people with Canadian Reformed Church membership would need to articulate anew the reasons for the existence of these schools. Kampen felt that the coming

generation would not necessarily see the need for Canadian Reformed Schools as self-evident. In other words, do our young parents see the importance and need for unique Canadian Reformed Schools?

Derek Stoffels stated that in order to articulate the reasons for the existence of Canadian Reformed Schools it is crucial to explore what motivated of Canadian Reformed people to establish these schools in the first place. What was the vision when the schools were established? Is it still true today? The discussion went further when Derek started to address the many facets of our lives today – i.e. our school life, our social life, our home life, our sports life, our spiritual life, our farm life, etc. It was at this point that our guest speaker Dr. Nelson Kloosterman made one very poignant comment. “ I don’t know how many lives you have but I have only one – a Spiritual life – under which all of the other components are guided.” That caused everybody to think for just a moment. How true. Do we compartmentalize all of the aspects of our lives on a daily basis rather than under the one umbrella of our Spiritual life? Take a close look at our logo. The blue arch reminds me of that umbrella – perhaps we need to think on these words. Are we united in our common goal, are we united in our enduring understandings and are we united in our essential questions? Dr. Kloosterman said many things at this conference but one of the items that really resonated was the need for Canadian Reformed Schools to **hire and support** dedicated Christian teachers to implement the vision and mission of the school. Staff that see the need for Christian education within the context of their community - staff that love the Lord and want to serve the community that they are in. I firmly believe that we have those staff members right here in Carman. Dedicated, God fearing men and women who only want to do the best to serve the Lord by serving the children and parents of this community. They love what they do, they love the children, and they love to serve. I am extremely proud to serve with them, each and every one of them. But please realize, that they are also human. They make mistakes just like each and every one else does. If we truly believe in the unity of the church, home and school, we will all strongly support and encourage each other in this important task. Trust me when I say that they all respond very well to words of helpful criticism, encouragement and appreciation for the work that they do in serving your children.

Other News

Dates to Keep in Mind

- Monday, October 31 – Reformation Day Assembly begins at 2:45 pm in the gym. Everybody is invited.
- Monday, November 7 – Picture retake day
- Thursday, November 10 – Remembrance Day Assembly begins at 2:30 pm in the gym. Everybody is invited.
- Friday, November 11 – Remembrance Day – no classes
- Monday, November 14 – Administration Day – no classes
- Monday, November 21 – First Term Report Cards go home
- Thursday, November 24/Friday, November 25 – Parent-Teacher Interviews

This Beacon contains many items of interest. Grab a coffee and have a blessed day of rest.

CRTA REFLECTIONS

"To go fast -- walk alone. To go far -- walk together."

By: Tim VanderHooft

The CRTA Convention has again come and gone. The topic was *Inclusive Practices*. During, and following the convention, I came to a number of conclusions and items to reflect on. Some significant ones are these:

- As God's people, we have no choice but to include every covenant child into our education plans.
- To 'see' how each child 'fits' into education and schooling, we need to consider first 'God's eyes' before our own – we do not always see clearly what can be done.
- Zero-order skills... I challenge myself and others to research this more.
- Inclusiveness includes (it's not redundant).

"Hide not your talents. They for use were made. What's a sundial in the shade?" – Benjamin Franklin

Of Balconies and Boterkoek

By: William Hoogerdijk

Suppose for a moment that you've been invited to a local gathering. You know, one of those stereotypical Dutch flavoured gatherings where there's plenty of strong coffee, boterkoek, and other gebakjes. The problem with this gathering, though, is that you're stuck out on the balcony. You're not sure whether you locked yourself out by accident or whether someone purposefully locked the door when you stepped out. All you know is that you are definitely on the outside looking in.

As time passes, someone sympathetically notices your predicament and graciously unlocks the door to let you in. One problem remains: as much and as hard as you try, there is no way in which you can get your hands on that delicious boterkoek – homemade with real butter too! Others in the party seem to be getting their fill. Plates continue to go around filled with boterkoek but always come to you empty.

Even when they start off full near you, they somehow always get diverted quickly before you can take a piece.

Now imagine that you are a student with an exceptionality, whether a gifted student or a student with a learning disability. You've been invited to the gathering, the school, but maybe you're stuck on the balcony. You're stuck in a room in an isolated hallway somewhere in a far-off wing of the school. Are you really part of the gathering? Or have you just been invited as a way of placating someone or as a way of someone being able to say we include children with exceptionalities.

Realizing you're not really a part of the gathering, someone decides to invite you into the classroom. But you find yourself sitting off to the side doing something obviously different from everyone else. Are you really a part of the gathering now? Or are you still trying to get your hands on the boterkoek?

This theme was presented to us at the CRTA convention during the keynote speech by Ronn VanAndel and Tina Morris. While speaking to us about the methods and practices they use at Guido de Brès Christian High School in Hamilton, they constantly challenged us to change the culture of the school. They deal with the same difficulties as other schools often face – how to get the community in general to buy into including children with exceptionalities in the classroom.

It must be understood that "inclusion" does not simply mean having the children present in the classroom but busy doing something else entirely different and separate from other students. Inclusion means more than finding students a place to sit in a classroom. It means meeting the learning needs of the student in the classroom as well.

This definition means that there may, at least to some extent, be a limit on how inclusive we might be able to be initially. There may be some students with severe exceptionalities that may find it difficult to be included in higher level high school classes on a continual basis. However, with a culture change in the school environment, we will be looking for ways in which to include these children as often as possible, even if it is only four or five days in one semester.

For those with less severe exceptionalities, it may be possible to include them on a daily basis. This inclusion may take the form of modified or adapted assignments, the aid of an educational assistant, help with organizing material, pre-teaching techniques, modified methods of assessment, etc.

Perhaps now it is obvious why there may need to be a culture change. This inclusion can necessitate a fair bit of work on the part of parents, administration, educational assistants, and teachers. In some cases, adaptations need to be made to enhance the learning process. In others, modifications to the curriculum may be necessary to the point where the specific learning outcomes of the student with a learning disability may be very different from the specific learning outcomes of the other students, even though they are working through the same activity or quite similar material.

Ronn and Tina continued to refer back to this theme – creating a culture change within the school. They emphasized the need to bring the administration and teachers on board with the philosophy of

inclusion. This is often initiated by ensuring the topic comes up regularly at staff meetings. It is promoted further by having teachers work with educational assistants to develop individual education plans (IEPs). As more input is gained for IEPs, they can be tailored more specifically for the benefit of the student. Teachers and EAs are then encouraged to work together to implement these IEPs most effectively in the classroom. This includes considering how lessons are taught; how the particular student is taught; which learning objectives are kept, which are modified, and which may be dropped for that particular student; how the student is assessed; where the student is placed in the class; how the lesson is structured; and more.

At the end of all this, we come up with a culture that begins to look more and more like your ideal car insurance: zero deductible – nothing special or extraordinary required up front by the parents or student before there is a willingness to act, and comprehensive coverage – involving the student as much as possible in the day to day functioning of the classroom, all the while tailoring the educational experience for the maximum benefit of the student. Yes, there is a cost to doing all of this as there always is when the deductible is reduced and coverage is increased. Yet in the end, the cost may be quite small when compared with the benefits for the student and the community involved in the process.

Enduring Contributions – CRTA West Convention

By: Nick Gunnink

All my carefully taken notes are lying on a table at Arlington Beach Camp in the dining hall. They are on the corner of the table closest to the double doors facing Last Mountain Lake, you know, the one where the camp staff sat to eat their meals...? Either way, that's where my notes are. That leaves me with what I remember, or, the enduring contributions of that Convention. The grade eights will recognize the phrase "enduring contributions" from Social Studies class. Simply put, they are those items or events from the past that endure by having an impact today.

Here they are then, in random order but ending with the most profound.

1. A school in Alberta put on a math fair. We're familiar with science fairs and fine arts evenings but this was a math fair. Every student in each grade was involved in preparing a math station. The station had to pose a math problem and provide a hands-on experience for the participant. The students then prepared themselves to give hints to solve the problem they had mastered. On the evening of the fair, students gleefully challenged visitors to take on the problems they had prepared.
2. Your own bed is the best place to sleep, especially after two nights at a kids camp.

3. Planning for differentiated instruction needs to include gifted students as well. As Christian schools with limited resources, we have often focused on students with learning challenges and neglected students with exceptional abilities. These students need to be challenged according to their abilities and they are done a disservice when their abilities are not given opportunity to develop. It was a helpful reminder for us teachers to remember the gifted students because our extra attention is often solely invested in those with learning challenges.
4. The challenges of canoeing on a choppy unfamiliar lake in the dark are a great way to find out who people really are.
5. Many of us wrestle with God's reasons for allowing our lives to unfold the way they do. Sometimes we are blessed with glimpses of God's purposes in the events of our lives. On the Thursday evening of the convention Lorie Thiessen presented a monologue on the true life story of a Dutch woman named Diet Emman. Diet was a powerful instrument in God's hand to save many Jews from the hands of the Nazis but she lost her fiancée/husband(?) towards the end of the war. The monologue grappled with God's will in this loss but ended with hope and encouragement. There was hardly a dry eye in the audience at Mrs. Thiessen ended her presentation, a presentation that was an encouraging testimony of how God truly does work for the good of his people in all situations

Gifted Learners in the Christian School

By: Alice Linde

This is a short summary of the keynote address given by George and Sharon Hofsink at the CRTA convention in October 2011.

Scripture teaches that all of us have been gifted. Romans 12:6 states "We have different gifts according to the grace given to each of us". A gift is unsolicited and undeserved. As such, it is to be received with thankfulness. The gifts we see among the children in our schools are given for the purpose of building and strengthening the body of Christ. (Eph.4:12) The Reformed school must recognize the diverse abilities and gifts of its students and seek to address them. Reformed educators strive to teach students to serve God and that belonging to our Saviour means that we belong to, accept, and serve one another as well. With this in mind, we as educators are encouraged to recognize our gifted students and provide outlets for intellectual curiosity and creativity.

Whole School Enrichment Activities were suggested by the speakers as a way to reach, encourage and include all learners. Activities like: Fine arts festivals, Year book club, Drama performances, Christmas concerts, Jump rope for heart, Read-a-thon, Student Leadership opportunities, Local fair entries, Poster Poetry and Writing contests, Science and Math fairs. These activities which take place at DCS have a much broader purpose than entertainment alone.

MFIS *Beacon Report*

Tim VanderHooft

Each year, as a school society, we choose to belong to and support the Manitoba Federation of Independent Schools. Some of you may wonder what is MFIS? Why support them? What do they do for us? To those who are Manitoba natives and to those who have been involved in independent education in Manitoba as a long-time parent or grand-parent, teacher, committee member or board member, this may seem like a silly question. Yet, to those new to the society or school, an answer is deserved.

In this quick report, I will not delve into the history of MFIS. I will save that for a future presentation. Instead, I will simply say that we operate as a 17-member elected Board, utilizing a structure inclusive of five sub-committees and 2 employees. For now, I can offer you a snippet of what's been going on from my perspective as one of those members. Some information is taken from various MFIS files.

In a nutshell, The MFIS seeks to:

- Represent its members at all levels of government
- Strengthen the educational mosaic in Manitoba
- Encourage cooperation amongst its schools, together with related educational institutions, organizations, and departments
- Promote the place and responsibility of independent schools in our pluralistic society
- Respect the diverse heritage, culture and faith of member schools
- Foster the pursuit of high moral and academic standards of member schools

The MFIS continues to nourish the positive relationship that has grown between the MFIS and the Province of Manitoba over the past few years. The MFIS is enjoying an increasingly important role as a partner in Education with the Government advising and working alongside the Province in various capacities.

The MFIS continues to receive invitations from the province to participate in provincial committees relating to Curriculum, Awards, and regulations as well as from universities and other provincial organizations as a Partner in Education.

The visit with the Minister of Education in 2010-2011 was postponed because of the provincial election and a busy schedule. We are currently awaiting notification regarding our meeting soon after the Minister is sworn in. During the visit, the Minister will meet with Liaison Committee members, parents, and school staff in addition to spending some time in classrooms reading to students and answering questions. This is a great opportunity for the MFIS to showcase independent education and for the Minister to see the wonderful job that independent schools do on a daily basis.

In January of 2011, MFIS was invited to meet with the Education Critic from the Official Opposition (Cliff Cullen). During this meeting we spoke about the role of the MFIS and independent education in general. The dialogue during the meeting was cordial and productive.

MFIS provides a variety of Professional Development opportunities for school staff. This past year we held our largest ever Educator's Conference with 519 participants. In this coming year we will also have many excellent PD opportunities.

Many of our Member schools (not just Dufferin Christian) are experiencing **increasing enrollment** and many are considering or are in the midst of building programs.

Some interesting facts according to 2010-2011 data:

- **13,847** students enrolled in Funded Independent Schools
- There are approx. **8,800** Families in Funded Independent schools
- MFIS represents **13** Rural and **38** Urban Funded Independent Schools
- Funded Independent Schools make up **7%** of enrollment in the Province
- Enrollment makes Independent schools the **4th largest group** in the Province
 - Winnipeg School Div – 32,705
 - River East Transcona – 16,350
 - Louis Riel – 14,221
- **If** considered a school division, MFIS would have 59 schools, making it the **second largest division** (79 schools in Winnipeg School Division, 42 in River East-Transcona).
- Placing all of the independent school students into the public system would add approximately \$83,000,000.00 to the government budget. This does not include the additional finances required to build spaces to house 13,000+ students.
- Dufferin Christian School has maintained a seat on the Board of MFIS for many years, representing the Calvinist schools component of independent education in Manitoba.

Perhaps this gives you a bit of insight into the important and ongoing work of MFIS. Perhaps it heightens your interest in the broader picture of education in Manitoba. Hopefully, it also encourages you in your thankfulness for the rich blessings we have in this province.

Tim VanderHooft
Chair, Public Relations Committee
Manitoba Federation of Independent Schools

Dufferin Christian School

Carman, MB, Canada

“for living a life of Christian discipleship in contemporary society”

DCS, a K – 12 school in the tradition of the Reformed faith,
invites applications for:

Grade 3 Teacher

Duties to commence January 1, 2012

DCS is located 45 minutes southwest of Winnipeg, MB, Canada
and offers a highly supportive community, attractive facilities,
competitive wages and a friendly atmosphere.

Applicants must be able to obtain a Manitoba Professional Teacher’s Certificate
and be committed to the school’s mission statement.

Applications should be sent to

Dufferin Christian School, Box 1450, Carman, MB, Canada R0G 0G0

Attention: Mr. Arie Veenendaal

For more information, please contact the Principal:

Mr. Andy Huisman principal@dufferinchristian.ca 1-204-745-2278

or check out our website www.dufferinchristian.ca

Parent/Teacher Interviews

Thursday, November 24th

7:00 – 10:00 p.m.

Friday, November 25th

9:00 – 12:00 noon

Please call the secretary at 745-2278 / email at
office@dufferinchristian.ca a.s.a.p. to schedule your interviews



