



# The LINK

MARCH 2006

**Gerry Ebbers**  
FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP  
& DEVELOPMENT  
geraldebbers@shaw.ca

## Missions Trips: Time for an Evaluation?

### A MISSIONS STUDY

- 92% of workers from one short term missions project reported meaningful contact with locals during their trip; less than a quarter stayed in touch.
- Locals from the same project said, if given their choice, they would have preferred financial support (so that less resources would have been spent on travel, and more where it was needed).

- from Abram Huyser Honig,  
"Study Questions Whether Short-Term Missions Make a Difference"  
[www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/125/12.0.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/125/12.0.html)

Most SCSBC member high schools now include mission trips to a foreign country as part of their program. Some high schools, the exception rather than the rule, do not offer trips because local churches are providing the experience.

These trips have become popular not just for young people, but adults and seniors as well. In 1965, about 500 short-term mission trips were taken by North Americans; in 2005 that number was between 1 and 4 million (!) depending on how such trips are defined. Trips used to be primarily to Mexico, but now trips are being planned to South America and the Philippines.

It is easy to stack up arguments supporting such trips and the rationales that schools have used seem unassailable. But now that such trips have been offered for some years, there may be enough data for schools to establish some criteria by which to judge the effectiveness of these trips and to determine whether the outcomes justify the significant investment of time, energy and dollars that such trips require. This article is not intended to answer this question; rather, its intent is to provoke some good discussion and evaluation, something which schools are good at doing. Other organizations have done just such evaluations and their conclusions could be part of this discussion.

### What are the reasons that mission trips have been added to a school's program?

- Cross-cultural experience: Living in a foreign environment even for a week is a much



stronger learning experience than reading about it or seeing it in a video.

- Adjunct to course material: If you can experience first hand the place or people or problems you are studying, obviously you will have a much broader and deeper understanding.
- Service: A core requirement of our schools (and of our personal relationship with Christ) is the service of others and a concentrated experience in an area desperate for assistance certainly meets that requirement.
- Team building: Another component of our academic experience is to learn to work as teams. Planning for the trip and doing the activities on the trip builds teamwork and allows natural leadership abilities to surface.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)



- *Anti-materialism:* Living in a third-world country certainly reinforces the material benefits we have in the West, and should force us to re-consider our priorities and the use of our resources, financial and otherwise.
- *Long-term mission commitment:* Just like the job-shadowing experiences that we expect of students at home, shadowing a missionary may be the factor that causes a student to pursue mission work as a career.
- *Spiritual growth:* This is the biggest expectation of a mission experience: that our students will grow closer to God, that their prayer life will become real, that they will come to depend on God, that they will see that God loves all the children of the world.

**How successful have we been in achieving our goals?**

I put that question to my church’s College & Careers group – 10 individuals in their early twenties who have all been on at least one mission trip, mostly to Mexico but also as far away as Thailand. Here’s what they told me:

- *Spiritual growth:* First and foremost the trips were awesome spiritual experiences. Sharing devotional time, worshiping together, listening to dynamic speakers all produced the spiritual highs similar to youth retreats. Coming home was a let down and each of them admitted that you really have to work at your devotions to make them valuable.
- *Bonding:* Traveling together, living together, and working together created strong bonds among them which have outlasted the trip. Bonds which formed with locals have not lasted and none of them maintain any contact with the people they met despite their determination to do so.

- *Life changes:* Can they point to specific changes in their lives, in their struggles with materialism since the trip? Yes, they would say that there is a greater awareness, even some changes in habits and a greater commitment to give, but no where near what they know it should be.
- *Career choice:* One of these young people is in college pursuing training to become a missionary. Others have been or will continue to go on other trips.

The most important comment they made was that a person gets out of the trip what he puts into it. They went prepared to be affected and they were. They came back determined to be different and they are. But the trip itself was just one of many experiences that contributed to their spiritual growth and that growth would have occurred if they had not gone on the trip, albeit in a different way.

These are some of the concerns that have been raised about mission trips:

- *Cost:* The money raised for the students to go on the trip could be better used by long-term missionaries on the field. This question of stewardship becomes increasingly important as trips costing upwards of \$3500/student in airfare alone are being contemplated.
- *Jobs:* Service projects take jobs away from locals. The local contacts would rather have the money to hire locals



and improve the local economy rather than having people fly in to build something for them.

- *Western superiority:* Despite how well they’ve been taught to blend in, North American young people on mission trips exude western superiority and wealth. They are usually unable to appreciate the local wealth (things like the work of God’s spirit) since they are so blinded by their own materialism.
- *Here today; gone tomorrow:* A week in a community reinforces the perception that there is no long term commitment to the local people. It’s only a ‘working vacation,’ especially if the trip includes days at the beach or buying ‘tons of souvenirs’ in the marketplace. (“They’re so cheap here!”)
- *Burdens of hospitality:* The local missionary or even the local people use

up scant resources, energy and time to be hospitable to the young people. The locals are not as able to stretch their resources as we North Americans are and it takes them longer to recover from their largess.

**Are there some alternatives to consider?**

- There are other, closer opportunities if we want our students to see poverty and spiritual need. Consider working with charities in your community who serve the needy and the marginalized. That would help to overcome the attitude among some of us that such folk just need to ‘pull up their bootstraps.’
- Canada’s own native reserves are places where Christian compassion could make a difference.

• *New principal appointment:*



- *Duncan Christian School is pleased to announce that Kevin Visscher has been appointed principal for the upcoming school year. Kevin Visscher has served as Vice Principal of*

*Curriculum and Advisory Coordinator at Fraser Valley Christian High School.*

- *The Timothy Christian School community is praising God for His faithfulness as they look forward to making full use*



*of the new addition to their campus. The addition includes three standard classrooms, one smaller*

*(elective size) classroom, one music room, one large lab for 35 students at lab stations as well as at separate tables, one smaller lab with a capacity of 15-20 students, and a common area/lounge bathrooms.*



- *Langley Christian School is also celebrating a new addition. Staff and students have moved into the new middle school*



*wing of the LCS Middle and High school campus.*



- Spiritual growth happens in many activities at school and if we are intentional about it happening, there are numerous opportunities available.
- If your school wants to include mission trips to foreign countries, plan one under the auspices of Worldwide Christian Schools. Ensure that your contacts with the school are year-round; that teams include students and parents and grandparents; that the school tithes its fundraising to support the school; that resources like teacher exchanges are part of the overall ministry you do.

After 10 years of mission trips, it's time to evaluate what we've accomplished. Your school may have 10 years of students who have gone on these trips. Are they less materialistic? Do they have a knowledge of the world that forms their opinions on international issues? Do they exhibit the fruits of the Spirit in their compassion for the needy? These and other questions could be discussed in a focus group or asked via a questionnaire.

For further reading on the subject, check out **Christianity Today's** excellent series of articles on the subject:

[www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/125/12.0.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/125/12.0.html)

## THE 2006 CENSUS TEACHER'S KIT

*Tuesday, May 16, 2006 is Census Day. Approximately 31 million people in Canada in 12.7 million households and all agricultural operations will count themselves in by completing and returning their census questionnaires on-line or by mail. Statistics Canada has developed the 2006 Census Teacher's Kit for use in elementary, intermediate, secondary and adult classes across the country. Students play an important role as future respondents to the census, and as some students may help parents complete their household's questionnaire. The Teacher's Kit contains 8 teacher-ready activities as well as a guide to provide:*

- *an explanation of why Canada conducts a census and how census results benefit society*
- *an introduction to census data as an information source for school papers and projects*
- *an alternative approach to studying math, geography, English, French, and social sciences*



*The kit is free-of-charge; one kit is suitable for a class and can be passed on for use in other classes. Order the kit online at: [www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/teacherskit/about.cfm](http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/teacherskit/about.cfm)*

# Board Leadership Lessons from the Track Coach

*Every track and field coach will tell you that the most important part of a relay race is the passing of the baton. In fact, the success or failure of all relay teams depends on a proper exchange.*

**Henry Contant**, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR    [contant@twu.ca](mailto:contant@twu.ca)

If the receiving runner has not started running before the exchange, valuable time/momentum will be lost. If the runner lets go of the baton before it is firmly in the hands of the next runner, the baton will fumble or fall and, again, cost valuable time/momentum. If the passing runner does not let go of the baton after it's in the hands of the receiving runner, they will drag the receiving runner and prevent them from freely carrying the baton on the next leg.

Board leadership has often been likened to a relay race. The current board is entrusted with carrying the vision and direction of the school—the board leadership

'baton'—on a carefully chosen path. Yet eventually they will become weary in their task

and will need to pass the baton to new board members. How this exchange takes place is crucial. In fact, the success or failure of the school board's leadership may depend on it.

If new board members have not started 'running' in preparation to receive the leadership baton, valuable time, experience, and momentum will be lost. Board leadership should not stop, fumble, or change direction with the annual turnover of board members. Appropriate training

and coaching of new board members needs to occur before the leadership baton is passed. It would be unfathomable for a relay team member to randomly pick someone from the crowd of spectators to carry their baton further; they only trust another team member who has been trained. Yet, retiring school board members often simply 'throw' the baton to anyone who might be willing to catch it, hoping (and praying) that whoever catches it is ready and able to run, hopefully in the same direction.

If retiring board members let go of their leadership baton without preparing someone else for the

exchange—coaching them in the direction the school ought to be going—the leadership baton may fall to the ground. Untrained new board members end up retrieving the

baton from the ground or in mid-air and start running again: in the wrong lane or in a different direction.

Sometimes retiring board members forget to let go; they hang on to the leadership baton too long. Eventually weariness, fatigue or burn-out causes the baton to slip out of their hands before it has been properly passed to new leadership.

Within three months most school boards will be passing their leadership batons to new board and committee members. What is your school board doing to ensure a 'clean' exchange? Has your board identified and prepared new board members to run along side you 'in training' so the leadership baton will not be fumbled or dropped? Will these new leaders carry the baton in the same direction and understand their responsibilities as trustees of the school's vision, maintaining a 'big picture' view? Will they understand and see the obstacles that may lie ahead in their journey? Will they be prepared for decisions they will have to make?

One SCSBC school board wisely adopted the following two motions to ensure an effective transition between incoming and outgoing board committee members. The policies were designed to ensure adequate continuity during the transition, mentoring of new board members by current board members, information sharing on on-going issues, and annual training for all new/potential board members:

- "...that the school board implement a three month overlap period for retiring and incoming board members." (new board members begin in June; retiring board members voluntarily continue—in an advisory capacity—until September)
- "...all current and potential board members attend the annual SCSBC Board





Leadership Conference each November, with costs to be included in the school's annual operational budget."

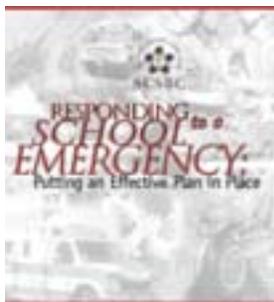
Boards, plan now for a good leadership baton exchange later this spring. How well your school runs its race next year will depend on it.

If you think these incidents are somewhat excessive and probably embellished for the sake of impact, you need to know that these events actually happened in schools in Canada and the United States. (Two of them happened in Abbotsford schools.)

The suggested answers to the questions (and a multitude of others) for each of these incidents can be found in two workshops that SCSBC offers to its member schools and to other schools and organizations that request such training.

Using the SCSBC handbook, **Responding to a School Emergency; Putting an Effective Plan in Place**, (written by Darleen Kifiak), Bill de Jager has developed a **training workshop for school administrators** and a **professional development workshop for school staffs**.

For the **training workshop**, Bill walks administrators



## Prepared for Trouble and Trauma?

Got a minute? Good! Read the following incidents and think about your possible response as a principal, as a teacher, as a school board member or as a parent:



1. During a volleyball practice, one of your Grade 10 students collapses of an apparent heart attack. Paramedics are immediately called. They administer CPR while transporting the athlete to the hospital; however, the student dies.
  - a. How does your school effectively inform the school community and the student body of the news?
  - b. What resources would your school use to deal with the outpouring of teenage and school community grief?
2. During school, one of your high school students hides a loaded gun under a napkin, and then proceeds to open fire on the admin team, killing one of them and seriously injuring the other two.
  - a. Are you aware of your school's lockdown procedures?
  - b. Does your Crisis Management team have alternates ready to fill in?
3. One of your high school students brings in a pellet gun that resembles a real gun. The local SWAT team is called in. The student attempts to threaten the SWAT team with the gun; the student is shot and killed by the team.
  - a. Are you prepared to handle the international media barrage that would hound your school for days?
  - b. Are you aware of any resources (handbook or otherwise) that your school has at its disposal to help manage a crisis such as this?
4. During the weekend, one of your students takes a deadly dose of medication; three weeks later another student is found dead of self-inflicted wounds.
  - a. Is there someone of your staff who is capable of monitoring and supporting those staff members who will be deeply distraught over these two events, possibly struggling to teach effectively?
  - b. Is there someone on your staff who has the assertiveness to handle the traffic of pastors, parents, youth leaders, friends from other schools, and any aggressive individuals who insist that their presence is required (when it is not)?

through the contents of the handbook and provides scenarios for practice. Those who attend this training are treated to a day of building a crisis management team and then to controlled bedlam as they practice situations as a team.

The **PD day** consists of bringing a school staff "on board," showing them how they can assist their school's crisis management team and allowing them to experience the tension of their school team's decision-making through scenario practice.

# It's Not Too Late to Prepare Better Curriculum Documents

**Robert Koole**, DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM koole@twu.ca

*We often say to each other that the purpose of Christian schools is distinctly different from public schools. Christian schools teach with and toward a life of love and service, not self-fulfilment, toward discipleship, not personal autonomy, and toward stewardship, not human mastery.*

Yet, when new parents walk through our schools, attend school activities, talk with principals and teachers, do they sense and experience distinctly different relationships and learning environments? Can you and I show them approaches to teaching and learning that clearly reflect God's love for people, our love for each child and young adult, our love for each parent and each staff member? Can you and I show parents unit plans and course outlines that embody faithful learning, or will they see primarily documents that meet external requirements?

It is time to face the fact that we need to revisit the degree to which we focus on compliance—on doing what we are required to do—and not giving enough attention to expanding the degree to which day-to-day curriculum embodies our mission.

All written documents should, first of all, be centred around our core commitments: the beliefs, values, and principles for Life that our mission statements reflect. We need to place more emphasis on what we believe we should be doing, and give written form to our verbal expressions.

Excellent unit plans and course outlines arise from choice and commitment and will not come about as a result of coercion. Ministry of Education evaluations do not force principals and teachers to develop high quality curriculum. These evaluations often tend to make us go through the motions and write up curriculum because it's required. Evaluations may lead to well-managed and requirement-fulfilling schools which at the same time lose their purpose along the way. Rather than requiring compliance, we need to build commitment and develop shared goals based on our mission.



External requirements can not make your school become excellent. A school becomes excellent when its members commit themselves, individually and collectively, to becoming excellent based on biblically-sound educational principles.

This is a good time for schools to review the format of their curriculum documents. The Ministry of Education's new Integrated Resource Packages are moving away from the four column template initiated in 1995. Provincial changes of this nature should stimulate our thinking about the way we think curriculum should look like at the school level.

Our first inclination may be to ask, "What will the Independent Schools Office expect to see?" However, we need to ask a prior question: "What curriculum format will help us reflect and embody our mission more clearly and more directly?" Too many of our unit plans and course outlines continue to look no different than public provincial documents.

We face a number of challenges in reshaping curriculum. We need to

1. **be faithful to Scripture and our school mission** – express the Story in ways that demonstrates its present impact in people's lives; propose the vision in ways that gives purpose and meaning for daily living; model the decisions and actions that demonstrate choosing Life

If we are not faithful, how will others see the direction of our curriculum?

2. **be relevant to current personal, communal, and societal needs** – build awareness about the ideas and beliefs behind the surface; draw from daily experiences to teach and learn about the

human condition; address current issues and events and connect them to the bigger picture.

If we are not relevant, others will believe we have nothing to say.

- 3. be distinctive** – explore alternative interpretations to the apparent dominant public perspective; illustrate biblical principles in action in people’s personal and work lives; nurture unique approaches that model loving service  
“...if parents send their child to a Christian school, it’s because they expect the school to do something different from what they understand the local public school to

be doing, and because they want that difference for their child.” p. 59, N. Wolterstorff. *Educating for Life: reflections on Christian teaching and learning.*

If we are not different, we have nothing to offer.

- 4. be engaging and participatory** – develop schools as Christian learning communities of children, young people, parents, and teachers; encouraging involvement, giving responsibility, building community.  
If we are not engaging and participatory, how will children and young people ...

## What Will the Class of 2007 Say?

*How will the class of 2007 of your Christian school answer questions like: In what way did your school prepare you for service in God’s world? for everyday life? further study? work?*

**What will their portfolio presentations reveal about the relative success and achievement of your school’s mission?**

**Now is the time to renew our framework for educating young people. To be a school that is a place of learning that connects young people with all aspects of life in society. What is school like for young people in your community?**

**Does your school separate young people from the issues of life? Does it ignore the very inner human questions that are crying out for conversations? Do young people in your school experience learning primarily as preparing for life in the future?**

**Do young people in your school truly experience learning as participating in life today? Are they engaged in the very questions that our society is facing? Do they discover that their teachers are in touch with what is happening all around? Do they find that their teachers know the context of the general issues of the day and the specific issues of the subjects they teach? Do they feel that their teachers care about them and treat them as trustworthy people?**

**Christian schools should educate young people in life today for life tomorrow. We should educate young people:**

- in personalized learning communities
- through real world projects
- with direct outside-of-school connections
- towards personally-relevant and

society-related standards

- connected with parent and community mentors
- enhanced by teacher expertise and on-going learning, and
- guided by Biblical principles applied for this time and in this cultural setting.

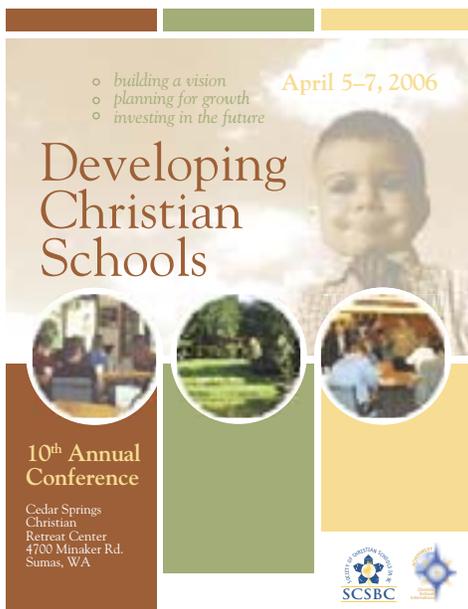
**Now is the time to reflect on what are you currently doing so that young people will be able to affirm very clearly**

- that your school prepared them for service in God’s world because you engaged them in service during their high school years;
- that you prepared them for everyday life because you engaged them in life-connected curriculum;
- that you prepared them for further study because principals and teachers modelled further study;
- that you prepared them for work because you provided them with work experience and internship opportunities?



# EVENTS

## Coming Up



o building a vision  
o planning for growth  
o investing in the future

April 5-7, 2006

### Developing Christian Schools

10<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

Cedar Springs Christian Retreat Center  
4700 Minaker Rd.  
Sumas, WA

### SCSBC'S 10<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL DEVELOPING CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS CONFERENCE

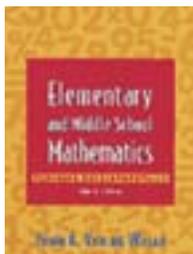
April 5-7, 2006  
Cedar Springs Christian Retreat Center

Space is still available—register today! For schedule and registration:

[www.scsbc.ca/services/conferences/dev/devcon.html](http://www.scsbc.ca/services/conferences/dev/devcon.html)

# RESOURCES

## Curriculum



**Elementary and Middle School Mathematics: Teaching Developmentally (4th Edition),** by John A. Van de Walle (2000).  
Newmarket, ON: Longman. ISBN: 0801332532 – This comprehensive elementary mathematics teacher resource book will:

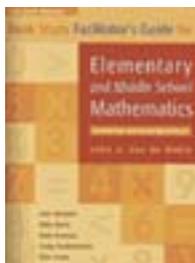
- Support teachers with math background information
- Provide concrete activities to try in the classroom
- Offer strategies to support teaching math for understanding

**Book Study Facilitator's Guide for Elementary and Middle School Mathematics,** by Bennett et al (2003).

Toronto: Pearson. ISBN: 0321176480 –

This companion text offers tips for setting up a Professional Development Book Club, and suggestions for which chapters to assign and good questions to facilitate discussion.

Available for loan to members schools from the SCSBC library.



# CALENDAR

## March-July

### March

March 3 Secretaries/Admin. Assistants Pro-D day  
Lower Mainland Pro-D Day - "In-house Day" (elem./sec.)  
March 13-17 Spring Break – one week  
March 13-24 Spring Break – two weeks (may differ from school to school)

### April

April 5-7 SCSBC Developing Christian Schools conference (Cedar Springs Retreat Center, Sumas WA)  
April 7 Interior Pro-D - Penticton  
April 14 Good Friday  
April 17 Easter Monday  
April 23-29 CSI Christian Education Week

### May

May 4-5 CPABC Spring Conference  
May 5 Secondary Principals Meeting  
SCSBC Board meeting

### June

June 21-29 Grad Program Exams  
June 30 Schools close for summer vacation

### July

July 3 TWU Summer Sessions for Educators begin  
July 3-7 "Called to Serve, Prepared to Lead" Leadership Seminar for New and Beginning Principals  
July 13-15 "Googling Youth in Troubled Times: Conference for Those Working with Youth" - Calvin College  
July 26-29 CSI Leadership Convention- Rehoboth, New Mexico

[www.scsbc.ca/calendar.html](http://www.scsbc.ca/calendar.html)



7600 Glover Road  
Langley BC V2Y 1Y1

Located in Fosmark Centre on the Trinity Western University campus

Telephone: 604.888.6366  
Fax: 604.888.2791  
Email: [scsbc@twu.ca](mailto:scsbc@twu.ca)  
Website: [www.scsbc.ca](http://www.scsbc.ca)