



LEADERSHIP

30 Years Later:
The Impact
of Government Funding
on Our Christian School
Communities

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The LINK

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30 Years Later: The Impact of Government Funding on Our Christian School Communities

It's been more than a generation (1977) since our SCSBC schools and the majority of independent schools in BC began receiving some partial government funding.

This past December's release of the Ministry of Education's final per student grant amounts for the 2006-07 school year has prompted some healthy discussion regarding who should benefit from increased government funding.

Perhaps it's time for our SCSBC community to once again take a communal look at the impact of government funding on our Christian schools. Has increased funding been a blessing . . . or a road block? What impact has government funding had on our



various stakeholder groups such as students, teachers, administrators, boards, parents, and the SCSBC? Has government funding diminished or strengthened parental and staff commitment in support of our Christian schools? Does funding come with too many 'strings' attached? Should the SCSBC be encouraging the Federation of Independent School Associations (FISA) to lobby for increased funding beyond the current 50% level?

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)



Intentional Interactions

Marlene Bylenga, INTERNATIONAL
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One of the most important tasks of administrators, board and committee members is to ensure that the mission and vision of the school is communicated and upheld. As we develop new programs and seek to improve our current programs our challenge is to ensure that the vision is reflected in the policies and procedures we establish.

In the last LINK, we discussed the rationale and vision for establishing an International Program: how do we continue to uphold our vision as our programs become more established and as we deal with the reality of differing cultural expectations and norms? If our program's goal is to model inclusivity and mutual respect, how do we stay the course when tensions arise and we are challenged to look at things from the perspective of another culture—a culture which differs from our own? How do we "listen" to

each other in a way that brings positive change rather than resulting in misunderstandings and breakdowns in relationships? How do we continue to maintain our vision and yet have the flexibility to adapt our way of doing things to reflect the diversity of cultural perspectives which are represented in our schools?

Bringing groups of individuals from differing cultural perspectives doesn't necessarily involve mutual understanding; Christian school leaders

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)



need to be intentional in building communities that affirm each other's values and seek to develop meaningful relationships with each other. "Believers share the same identity in Christ however each have a personal history and come from differing cultural perspectives. When individuals and communities seek to follow Christ and live as he lived, their values and rules are transformed as people apply them in such a way as to honor him and love others. Our school communities should model forgiveness and grace as we seek to understand each other."

The keys for successful relationships "are obedience to the commands of Scripture and accepting that others have a viewpoint that is as worthy of consideration as our own. Obedient Christians create communities of inclusion and embrace."

"Such communities stand in contrast to the communities of exclusion and rejection that are typical in the world's cultures."¹

It has been my experience that the reason for tensions and communication breakdowns is that the parties involved do not listen to each other, or they are unwilling to take the time to hear each others perspectives. We often unwittingly offend each other because we do not have an understanding of each other's culture, language and non-verbal communication patterns.

We also tend to judge individuals based on the stereotypes we may have of their culture. "In intercultural encounters, then there are several filters that can prevent us from accurately understanding what others are trying to communicate, and that can prevent others from accurately understanding what we are trying to communicate: our tendency to interpret and evaluate behavior before

"My dear brothers, take note of this. Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires."

James 1:19

"Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification."

Romans 14:13, 19

we understand it, and our willingness to stereotype groups of people, which prevents us from interpreting behavior accurately. When we are looking and listening, the remedy is to try and increase the range of our perception, to observe and suspend our interpretation (what we think) and evaluation (what we feel), to ask for clarification when in doubt. When speaking, we should take care to clarify the intention behind our words and check to see if our message has come across correctly."²

So then, as we deal with change within our school communities let us be intentional in our interactions. Let us challenge each and every one within our school communities to take time to hear each other's stories and to be willing to share in each other's joys and sorrows. Take time to hear how God has worked in the lives of your students and families and celebrate the differing expressions of the Christian faith within your

community. And as you do so, be sure to take the time to evaluate what you have learned and if necessary make changes to policy, curriculum etc., all the while maintaining the vision and mission of your school.

It is my prayer, that our school communities will become examples of what it means for Christian brothers and sisters from every tribe and nation to live in unity; the unity that comes from serving the same Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

References

¹ *Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships*. Sherwood G. Lingenfelter. Baker Academic. 1986, 2003

² *Exploring Culture*. Gert Jan Hofstede. Intercultural Press Inc. 2002

● *Richmond Christian School began its 50th anniversary celebrations with a Golden Gala Benefit Dinner on Feb. 3 at Bethany Baptist Church. About 230 guests enjoyed the candlelight evening, including an address from former Richmond MLA (and the only student in the first RCS grade 7 class in 1957) Mr. Nick Loenen. Recording artists and alumni, "The Suspenders" delighted everyone with their energy and musical talent. A highlight of the evening was*



a video presentation showing how RCS and the world have changed since 1957. Board Chair Abraham Sayson closed the evening with a heartfelt challenge and a reminder: the world has changed but our message has not. We need to continue to provide a quality, Christ-centred education for students now, but we also must think of the future, as those early families did so sacrificially. An appeal was made for the new secondary campus building campaign. It was truly a gala night and school spirit is high!

Doing it Right: The Annual Drive at Vancouver Christian School

Gerald Ebbers, FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT geraldebbers@shaw.ca

An interview with Dan Dowber, Director of Development for Vancouver Christian School and Carver Christian High School

GE: Dan, you've done an annual drive the last three years. How does it work?

DD: We send a mailing to all of our VCS families explaining our vision, our needs and our request for their partnership in supporting the school. On the response card there is a box for indicating prayer support; that way, everyone can support the school. Two weeks later, a team of volunteer parents phones those parents who have not responded. We ask them if they have received the information and if VCS can count on their support. I back this up with articles about our vision and mission in our newsletters.

GE: What are the key factors in your annual drive plan?

DD: We educate all new parents when they enroll their children that we expect them to give to the school beyond just paying tuition.

GE: Does that include anything besides financial support?

DD: Financial support is not our primary goal. We want three things from our parents:

- Prayer: we ask our parents to pray for our students, teachers, staff and the VCS community.
- Participation: we expect our parents to be involved in the school through volunteering and serving on committees and the board.
- Partnership: we explain our funding model and ask parents to prayerfully consider how they will give above tuition. We also tell them that we will not sell products; instead, once a year we will ask for their gift to this ministry of Christ-centered education.

GE: Do you use incentives or rewards for giving?

DD: We explain to parents that they get a charitable tax receipt for their gift and that it is more stewardly for them to make donations than to buy numerous products. This year we also gave a copy of the book *The Treasure Principle* for all gifts of \$200 or more. This book clearly states biblical principles of stewardship so it helps our families to grow in this spiritual discipline. And this year we made a large visual display of the gifts we received. We put an outline of a tree on the wall in the lobby of the school and we added various fruits to the tree based on the kind and size of gift.

GE: How's the drive going this year?

DD: Three years ago we had 29 'nickel and dime' fundraisers in the school and we collected \$20-30,000. This year we have already raised \$104,000. But it's not the amount that is most important to us. Our participation this year is 40% of our parent community and it is that number that we are going to keep raising. When your community understands and believes in your mission, they'll support it.



GE: Any other suggestions for schools that may be considering an annual drive?

DD: Even if the amount raised is less than what you expect, remember that it comes from people who believe in your mission and vision and that should be celebrated. Don't focus on the amount raised, but rather on the participation rate. Don't expect overnight results, but keep repeating [the message] and re-educating your parents on the importance of their involvement in the school. Use the example of those parent generations who have gone before us and who sacrificed so much to make our schools a reality. Bottom line: what we do in Christian education is exciting and has enormous value. Seeing children commit their life to Jesus Christ and develop their God-given talents is the most exciting thing in the world. Who wouldn't want to support that?

DID YOU SEE US THERE?

*MissionsFest Vancouver,
January 26 - 28, 2007*

The SCSBC proudly represented (and displayed promotional materials from) our member schools at this three-day event, which last year had an aggregate attendance of over 30,000.



“For eleven years, the members of the FISA [Federation of Independent School Associations] fought to achieve legal recognition and public funding for British Columbia’s independent schools. In September 1977, with the passage of the Independent School Support Act, finally their efforts were achieved.

Yet, such was the importance of independence to the member schools of the FISA that many schools stated that they would forgo financial assistance if the government attached too many strings to funding.

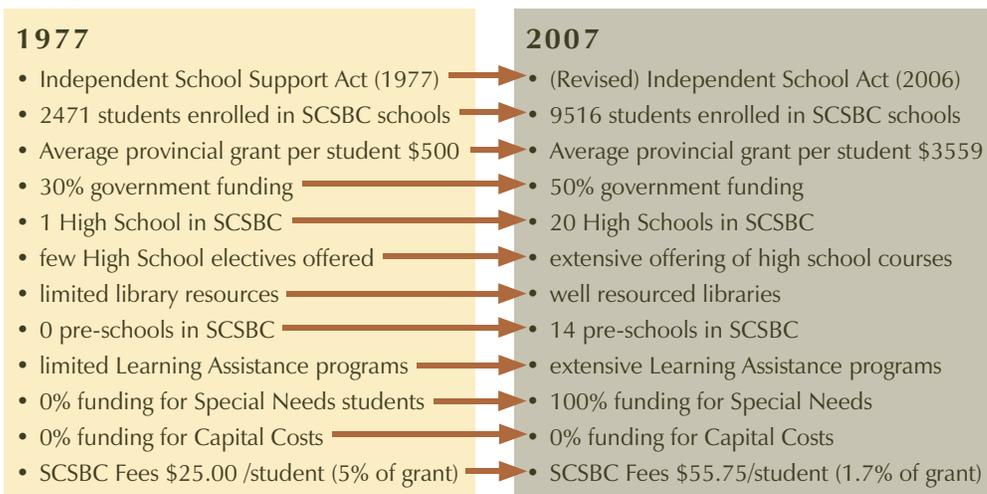
After Bill 33 was passed, the FISA’s then four member associations adopted a wait and see attitude, reserving a final decision on whether to apply for funding until the nature of the attendant regulations was known.

For the FISA [and SCSBC] member schools, remaining independent meant retaining control over the crucial areas of a school’s operation: curriculum (including the freedom to teach religion from the perspective of their own faith or values), staff employment (including teacher qualifications), student assessment, (including graduation criteria), and admission policies.

Independent school supporters contended that decisions on these matters should be made by the school community, not the government, thereby ensuring that the school was run in accordance with the wishes of its parents and in keeping with its own specific educational philosophy. The FISA [and SCSBC] maintained that an independent school that receives government funds could be held financially and educationally accountable without being forced to sacrifice control in any of these key areas.”¹

So what does the educational landscape look like 30 years after SCSBC schools first began receiving government funding? A few comparisons (FIGURE A):

FIGURE A



¹ Cunningham, *Justice Achieved*. pp. 213-214.

Thirty years ago the collective discussion among our SCSBC school leaders focused on questions such as:

- How will our Christian schools maintain and strengthen their unique distinctive and Biblical perspective?
- How will our schools teach the mandated BC core curriculum without compromising the integration of a Biblical perspective or worldview?
- How will our teachers receive the necessary training and professional development that will assist them in the important task of teaching Christianly?
- How will our school boards develop/maintain necessary policies that will ensure appropriate independence from government in terms of governance, admissions, hiring practices and finances?
- How will our principals deal with the increased accountability expected of independent schools by the Ministry of Education and other governmental agencies?
- How do we promote our schools and attract new families in support of Christian education?



In fact, the vision to establish the SCSBC was—to a large extent—a collective response to support our Christian schools in BC as they addressed the above mentioned issues. School leaders recognized that our Christian schools should seek to do certain things collectively that no one school could or should do individually. Funds were set aside by school boards to support the efforts of the SCSBC in meeting these challenges. Since the SCSBC’s formal inception 30 years ago, it has assessed membership fees based on a per-student fee. In 1977, fees were set at \$25 per student (5% of their government grant) at a time when government funding was approximately \$500 per student.

Let’s fast forward 30 years. Today there appears to be virtual unanimity among our Christian schools (and all independent schools in BC) that the effects of government funding have been overwhelmingly positive.

CONSIDER OUR STUDENTS: Undoubtedly, government funding has assisted schools in providing additional programs and resources that would otherwise have been unlikely. Thirty years ago Fraser Valley Christian High School was the only Christian high school within the SCSBC. Today there are 20 Christian high schools. SCSBC school students are currently served through an extensive offering of course electives in the academic, fine arts, information technology and vocational areas. Strong athletic, music, drama,



missions, and student leadership programs are challenging our students to develop the full spectrum of their God-given gifts. Additional government support for special needs students has further encouraged the development of excellent programs for those students that require support for Learning Assistance, Special Education and ESL. Because of partial government support for operational costs, many com-

munities have, in turn, been able to make considerable investment in the upgrade and construction of modern school facilities.

CONSIDER OUR TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS AND SUPPORT STAFF:

Since employee salaries make up the largest part of any school budget, increased government funding has allowed boards to offer steady increases in Christian school employee salaries and benefits. Rightfully, the compensation gap between public school employees and SCSBC school employees continues to narrow. School boards have also invested considerable resources for further professional development and training for staff.

CONSIDER OUR PARENTS: Schools no longer depend solely on tuition fees for their operational budgets. Government grants are now the largest single source of revenue for most school operational budgets. Tuition fees, fundraising, and charitable gifts account for the remainder of the revenue for most Christian schools. Government grants have assisted boards in keeping school tuition fees affordable for many families and allowed school boards to extend tuition assistance to low-income families. The development of the SCSBC **Framework for the Issuance of Charitable Tax Receipts** allows SCSBC schools to issue tax receipts for parents worth approximately \$20-25 million annually.



CONSIDER OUR BOARDS:

The school boards of most of our SCSBC schools act as the designated 'School Authority'. As such, boards are called to be more accountable to a wide variety of government agencies. Compliance with the Ministry of Education, Canada Revenue Agency, Employment Standards, WCB, Ministry of Children and Family, and other agencies

is required. Questions of financial accountability, safety, risk management, development and adherence to appropriate policies, etc. have increased the work and responsibility of our boards.

CONSIDER THE SCSBC:

Given the increased complexity and accountability required to operate schools in the past 30 years, the importance of the leadership and direction offered by the SCSBC has only increased. The ongoing desire to maintain and strengthen our distinctive of offering a Christian curriculum with a fully integrated Biblical worldview requires leadership that goes beyond the local Christian school. This point was affirmed in the extensive 2006 evaluation of the work of SCSBC; Christian school boards, principals, teachers, teacher assistants, curriculum coordinators, business administrators, secretaries and development directors all indicated their dependence on the services of the SCSBC to do their tasks more effectively.

The ongoing desire to maintain and strengthen our distinctive of offering a Christian curriculum with a fully integrated Biblical worldview requires leadership that goes beyond the local Christian school.

In December 2006, the Ministry of Education announced that schools will be receiving an average increase of \$224 FTE above the estimated grant amounts announced previously. This good news has prompted various stakeholders to raise the question, "who's really 'entitled' to benefit from this latest grant increase?" I believe the appropriate response ought to be **the entire school community**.

Clearly the steady increase of government funding over the past three decades has been a significant blessing to teachers, parents, students and school boards. Government funding has allowed boards to:

- provide excellent programs and resources for students,
- offer regular salary increases for administrators, teachers and support staff,
- keep tuition fees relatively affordable for parents, and
- support the collective work of the Society of Christian Schools in BC.

I encourage our Christian school communities to keep a balanced perspective when making decisions regarding the distribution of resources in support of Christian education.

Changed Requirements for Graduation: What does it mean for your school?

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“Starting in 2007/08, students will be required to meet three standards to graduate, and we will leave it up to school boards to decide how students meet those standards.” (BC Ministry of Education News Release February 1, 2007)

What’s the change?

If you compare the three mandatory standards identified in the Minister’s News Release, February 1, 2007, you’ll see that all three were components of the Graduation Portfolio CORE:

- 80 hours of physical activity (in addition to PE10),
- 30 hours of work or community experience, and
- a graduation transition plan.

If you look back at the three parts of CORE that are no longer required, students were more likely doing those activities elsewhere. For example,

Arts and Design – ‘respond to an art, performance, or design work’ would be accomplished through the Fine Art/Applied Skills 10, 11, or 12 requirement;

Information Technology – ‘use information technology skills’ would be accomplished by the end of Grade 7; and

Community Involvement and Responsibility – ‘participate cooperatively and respectfully in a service activity’ would likely be part of other school learning.

This change primarily involves making the graduation portfolio more flexible. It is no longer mandatory to meet graduation requirements by means of the graduation portfolio as originally designed. However, school boards may still continue to use a portfolio format for their graduates.

“Boards may still choose to have students develop a portfolio to demonstrate they have met the standards or boards may use other ways to ensure students have met the standards.” (BC Ministry of Education News Release Feb. 1, 2007)

Where to from here?

The SCSBC Secondary Curriculum Team met on February 2 to discuss the implications of the Ministry’s change, to develop suggestions for our schools, and to initiate a process by which schools can share ideas and practices related to meeting graduation requirements and celebrating their students’ learning.

We know that more details will be coming between now and September 2007:

“The Ministry of Education will provide school boards with information sessions and materials to support

the standards, including a teacher resource guide and a student planner.” (BC Ministry of Education News Release Feb. 1, 2007)

We also know that:

“Schools and districts may choose to add other requirements, based on their philosophy, school culture and the needs of their unique learning communities.”

Because of the Ministry’s emphasis on flexibility, we sense that in all likelihood students will be able to earn four credits for these standards through:

- their existing Portfolio (however that is structured at their school) OR
- a ministry-authorized course (Program Guide being developed) OR
- a BAA course OR
- independent self-directed learning OR
- some combination of the above, as determined by the school or board.

The SCSBC Secondary Curriculum Team suggests that your school:

- review your school’s mission-based graduation requirements and graduation profile
- identify connections with, and completion of, requirements of the Ministry 2004 Graduation Program (including the January 2007 adjustment) and the Attributes of a BC Graduate
- affirm (or explore) the rich potential of a graduation portfolio, including some form of public presentation/exhibition; namely, celebrating growth – reflecting on experience – demonstrating achievement;
- keep your school’s portfolio, with further simplification and/or modification, with goal of authentically demonstrating a Christian high school graduate;
 - explore other creative and meaningful ways to fulfill the three standards noted previously;



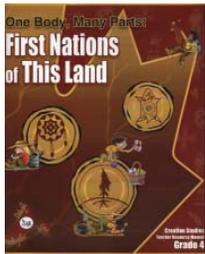
- avoid a natural tendency to merely meet the three requirements.

The SCSBC Secondary Curriculum Team will continue to monitor Ministry initiatives related to developing standards for these three graduation requirements. In the meantime, boards and staffs should explore how these three requirements fit with their vision for their schools' graduates.

- What do you hope your students come to believe?
- What do you expect your students to know and be able to do when they graduate from your school?
- What would be included in an excellent graduation transition plan for a graduate from your school?

- How do your school's graduation standards prepare your students for life beyond Grade 12? More importantly, how does your graduation program involve your students in life today so that they face life tomorrow with the confidence that comes through faith-infused learning?
- What are some ways your graduates could demonstrate accomplishing your requirements?
- How could their demonstration be valued and recognized by the school community?
- How might their reflection on their learning experiences serve as an accountability check for themselves? for their parents? for their teachers and principals? for their school boards?

New RESOURCES

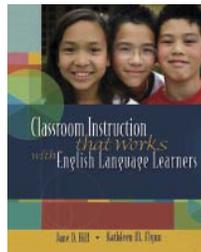


One Body, Many Parts: First Nations of This Land (Creation Studies Teacher Resource Manual, Grade 4). Genevieve Amaral and Jackie Sybersma (2006) Ancaster, ON: OACS (www.oacs.org/catalogue/data/catalogue/OACS_CatalogueUpdateDEC2006.pdf) ISBN:1-894292-73-1.

This strand is intended to be taught prior to its partner unit, **God Keep Our Land: Conquests and Consequences—Healing and Hope** in Grade Four, although students in Grades Five and Six as well would find both units challenging. These units provide a strong foundation for an informed understanding of how Canadian citizens and Aboriginal peoples share this land. This unit challenges students to identify and dispel stereotypes they may hold regarding Aboriginal peoples, past and present. Through small group research, students learn how the lives of First Nations peoples were—and continue to be—a reflection of a distinct and faith-based worldview that reveals the created order and God's image.

Classroom Instruction that Works with English Language Learners, Jane Hill and Kathleen Flynn (2006). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). ISBN 978-1-4166-0390-0

Classroom Instruction that Works with English Language Learners applies the strategies from the best-selling book **Classroom Instruction that Works** to reaching English language learners (ELLs). It describes ways for mainstream K–6 teachers to adapt the strategies to meet the needs of ELLs at different stages of language acquisition. Teachers also will learn how to use culturally appropriate methods to increase parents' involvement in the education process. Find out how nine types of instructional strategies that maximize learning can be applied to ELL students in every grade level. And get specific steps and guidance needed to keep practice up-to-date with the rapidly growing population of ELL students.



Abbotsford Christian School is pleased to announce the appointment of two new campus principals and a Director of Financial Development.



- Julius Siebenga, from Contra Costa Christian School in Walnut Creek, California has been appointed principal of the Secondary (9-12) campus.
 - Roy Van Eerden, current interim co-principal, has been appointed principal of the Elementary (Pre K- 5) campus.
 - Alvin Scholing, CFP, has been appointed Director of Financial Development
- Langley Christian School is sending a team on their first even student and teacher visit to Gondolikhwa Christian School (Gondo) in South Africa. Gondo is LCS's sister school among the Venda people in the northern province of Limpopo. The team, which will include Peter Van Huizen and Peter Roukema, will spend the month of March in South Africa working with Gondo teachers and students as they solidify the bond between the two schools.



NEW SCSBC STAFFING APPOINTMENTS

The SCSBC Board is pleased to announce the appointment of Joanne den Boer and Bill de Jager to staffing positions in the area of curriculum and instruction. These appointments not only fill a staff vacancy precipitated by the retirement of Robert Koole, our current Director of Curriculum, but help the SCSBC move forward in the implementation of its strategic plan and respond to feedback received during the recent evaluation by member schools, providing: more focused attention on the needs of pre-school/elementary; student support services (K-12) in the areas of Learning Assistance, Special Education, ESL, and Enrichment; and focus beyond curriculum to include instruction.

Miss Joanne den Boer – Joanne has served in Christian schools for many years as elementary teacher (Timothy Christian), Curriculum Coordinator and Director of Student Support Services (Kelowna Christian), and Curriculum Coordinator (Jordan Christian). Joanne has served on BC Ministry of Education External Evaluation Teams. She earned her Masters degree at Royal Roads University in Victoria, researching *Identifying Factors that Enhance Student and Self-Learning*. Joanne's areas of responsibilities at SCSBC will include:



- Elementary/Middle Curriculum
- Elementary/Middle School Instruction & Staff Development
- Early Childhood/Pre-school Learning Assistance
- Special Education
- Enrichment

Mr. Bill deJager – Bill's 34 years of Christian education—as teaching principal, (North Carolina) high school teacher and curriculum coordinator, (Lethbridge & Abbotsford), vice principal of educational services, and high school principal (Abbotsford Christian Secondary)—have given him a broad range of educational experiences. Bill is one of the co-authors of the SCSBC publication **Responding to a School Emergency** and has served as a training consultant on this resource, leading workshops throughout Canada. Bill has been an integral part of the SCSBC High School Curriculum team and a participant in the *New Dimensions in Christian High Schools* Renewal project with Christian Schools International and Calvin College. Bill's areas of responsibility will include:



- Middle/Secondary Curriculum
- Middle/Secondary School Instruction & Staff Development
- Technology (PreK- 12)
- *New Dimensions* – High School Renewal Project
- **Responding to a School Emergency** (CSI contract work)

We look forward to welcoming and introducing Joanne and Bill to our SCSBC community in a more formal way when they begin their respective duties in August 2007.

Upcoming EVENTS

Leadership in a Postmodern World Spring Conference APRIL 18-20, 2007



cpabc

Cedar Springs Christian
Retreat Center, Sumas WA

Featuring: **BRIAN D. MCLAREN**, author of
Church in Emerging Culture; Five Perspectives,
A Generous Orthodoxy, and *The Secret Message of Jesus*

www.cpabc.ca/conferences.html#spring

March-April CALENDAR

March

- March 2 • Lower Mainland CTABC Pro-D Day - Primary (K-5), John Knox Primary; Middle/High (6-12), Richmond Sec.
- Secretaries/Admin. Assistants Pro-D Day
- Library Meeting, Richmond Christian Secondary
- March 7-8 SCSBC Finance and Business Administrators Conference, Cedar Springs
- March 19-23 Spring Break - one week
- March 12-23 Spring Break - two weeks (dates may differ from school to school)

April

- April 6 Good Friday
- April 9 Easter Monday
- April 5 Interior CTABC Pro-D Day - Vernon
- April 18-20 CPABC Spring Conference, Cedar Springs
- April 22-28 Christian Education Week
- April 26-27 Northern CTABC Pro-D Day - Prince George

www.scsbc.ca/calendar.html



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