

**President's Report**  
**"A Time to Build..."**  
**October 2013**

*Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. - Isaiah, about 700 BC*

Putting out fires, moving rocks, setting the foundation and consolidating friendships... These are phrases that would aptly describe the focus of our past few years at Prairie. As we have set our course, we have built it around a team of people who are determined to work well together, *delivering world class programs in a healthy and safe environment that will equip students to go out from here into careers to help meet some of the greatest needs of the world.*

Initiatives that are now underway include renovating Parable Place, recording courses that are being posted on-line for eLearning, and planning the re-launch of the Worship Arts program. This is in addition to the regular challenge of delivering excellent education.

It appears that we are now moving into our next phase as a school, *building*. This relates both to the programs that we deliver as well as to the campus on which we operate. I also believe we are entering a time of growth. And I'm convinced this will require two key ingredients: *innovation and partnerships.*

**Innovation:** We are rethinking traditional models of education, as illustrated by our GlobeTREK approach to Intercultural Studies, trying to find ways of delivering training that is efficient, effective and needed around the world,. We believe that our primary "flywheel", the Bible, potentially has a global market especially since we are teaching in English, one of the great trade languages of the world. Now we are figuring out how to deliver it anywhere, anytime, at any pace. The challenge is intriguing, the opportunity is enormous.

**Partnership:** To go where we think God wants us to go we will need some strong partners. We believe that partnership:

- Is good theology...
  - It seems that God has chosen to work on earth through us, and that he wants us to work together.
  - It illustrates the benefits of a healthy Christian community and allows us to live in reliance on one another as different parts of one great body.
  - It gives tangible evidence of the unity prayed for by Christ.
  - It demonstrates our reliance on God to provide as He works through His people.
- Is efficient...
  - It lowers the cost of access to talent that is available in other organizations.
  - It shortens the time required to implement.
  - It reduces mistakes by bringing in expertise.
  - It improves the reach and impact of both organizations.
- Gives us credibility.

Part of this next phase will involve recapitalizing the school, but I am beginning to think this will look different than we expect. Typically, recapitalization has meant raising great amounts of money which go into various accounts for scholarships, buildings, plant maintenance, faculty endowments, etc. I believe this will happen but the money may remain in the hands of our partners. I believe partners will help us build programs, renovate this campus and build new buildings as each need surfaces. If we are good stewards of their gift, they will likely share more of their capital with us. We will have to be good long-term partners with them to continue to have access to their capital.

Parable Place has been re-built, singularly through partnerships. It began when we recognized we needed:

- A good recording classroom for our on-line education initiative,
- A recording studio for filming the Discipleship Essentials series, and
- A good performance / worship theatre.

Jack and Carol Klemke started the ball rolling by covering the technology we needed, some friends of the school's in the US matched the Klemke's to buy new seats, Stronger Together provided enough to cover a new heating ventilation system, the government of Alberta offered to help with some of our utility costs, so we paid our utility bills with their money which freed up enough to help pay for some of the re-wiring that was needed. Then Billy Coles showed up with carpet, that he refused to put down on lousy flooring or next to crummy walls. He rebuilt the floor, the walls, repainted and added wood trim (finally put down the carpet), replaced the concrete in the entry and tiled it, reframed the doors so that new doors from Gord and Linda Wiebe at All-Weather Windows would look beautiful, Ron and Mary Belt put the finishing touches in place with black out blinds from Phantom Screens. Billy then went outside to fix the sidewalk. Wayne Nelson showed up with a crew from the Evan Cullum's construction firm to clear out the old concrete, frame it and pour the concrete that was paid for by the Wiebes. What a partnership!

I'm afraid that Billy has just begun. He is now prowling the campus looking for the next ugliest and most urgent need. He hopes to help us whip this facility into shape over the next few years with the help of a small infrastructure-consulting group (including our good friends Wayne Nelson and Greg Rector). We can get so much more done with the money we are given when it is put in the hands of these professionals who will also bring their teams and their trades to the table for us. What an amazing group of partners!

Nathan Rooke wondered if Brian Doerksen would consider coming to Prairie to help us build a premiere Worship Arts program. So in the summer, Nathan made the call and we approached Brian and Joyce. They said, "Yes!" Plans are now underway for a September 2014 launch of the program. Every professional that comes to help us is sharing his or her capital with us, helping us build this school. The reputational capital and talent brought by Brian and Joyce could not be purchased. It is a gift from God that they are sharing with us. What partners!

Our most important partnership is with our staff and faculty. These people are sharing their capital with us in crazy generous ways and it is my privilege to take this opportunity to recognize them and let you know how indebted we are, as a school, to them. We enjoy a strong sense of harmony across the campus, perhaps the most important measure of our community health. Yes, vision leaks, enthusiasm flags and irritation flares when we tire. But it is indeed a privilege to work with this team of professionals who stand guard, looking after our campus and our students. What a great group of partners!

As a member of our board, you are very much a partner in what God is doing on this campus. We need you and appreciate your joining us in this effort to improve Biblical literacy so that we can “know Christ and make Him known”.

Let me take this opportunity to, once again, thank you,

*Mark*

Mark L. Maxwell

**President**

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