

President's Report April 28, 2011

Very often, charities don't make sense/cents.

But their mission does and then God provides the resources, both people and funds. Rather than detailing the depletion of our resources over recent years, I would like to focus on the progress we are seeing and the challenges now upon us.

A normal view of Prairie Bible Institute, as a business, would suggest that the model is unsustainable. Tuition and fees do not cover the costs of payroll and running the campus. This is simply compounded by the current divergence of size: our student numbers are at the lowest point in many decades and our campus is large enough to handle a school 3 to 4 times the current size.

It is a truth: we have much in our hands – perhaps too much and so we are “blessed with a burden” of surplus capacity. We make ends meet through donations. This has been true throughout the school's history; illustrated by Grandpa Maxwell saying “I don't know where we would be without our friends.”

Perhaps the real question for us at this point in our history is, “Should Prairie continue to exist?” If so, it can only be with a larger student body and a larger base of donors. It appears the student body is beginning to rebound now. Our next task is to rebuild our donor base.

The amount of momentum that we have gathered in the past year and the evidences that God seems to be at work among us and on our campus merits some attention:

- Campus harmony – A year ago the disharmony on campus was palpable. At one point I simply asked God to give us harmony or allow us to close the school. Within a week of that time, I felt an enormous improvement in campus harmony, evidenced in part by the returning interest in Monday morning prayer meeting, which has climbed through the year from about 10 to 70 or more in the past week. Another highlight of each week has been the well attended Community Chapel with a variety of speakers addressing the questions: “Who is this man Jesus?” and “How shall we then live?” (Glenn's report)
- Bible content – Over the past few decades our curriculum had been progressively less Bible-centric, a complaint heard by almost all constituents: alumni, students, local community members, friends and supporters. Again, I had suggested to God that if we couldn't get Bible back to the centre of our schooling and the core text in the Bible College then we should close the school. The faculty helped us pull together a one-year program that would qualify as a Bible-immersion program and have followed with a revision of the curriculum for years 2, 3 and 4 that would allow a student to study the entire Text. I'm sure we do not have all the fine-tuning finished, but certainly the master-plan is well set, with Bible back at the centre of the school and the foremost text in the Bible College.
- Donations – We have received many “welcome” gifts this past year as donors have responded to the return to our basic call of Bible Schooling. (Wayne and Elaine's report is not included here but will follow shortly)
- Applications – Our student enrolment pipeline has been growing steadily since May last year, to the point that eight of the past ten months have been the best month for

applications since we began tracking them in 2003 (the best May, June, July, September, November, December, January and March). At this point the sum of applications from September to March is 199. This compares with 126 applications over that same period last year, which turned into a class of 142 new students in September. (Peter's report)

- Islamic Studies - Without much effort on our part, other than being willing to listen and share our under-utilized campus, a two-pronged plan has come together to train students to reach into the Muslim world, one that is focused on Bible and discipleship training for Muslim Background Believers and another that would provide an Islamic Studies major in our Bachelor of Arts in Intercultural Studies. The support and interest from our constituents has been resounding and continues to grow. We will be having a special presentation on this opportunity on Thursday afternoon during the Board meeting.

Although finances are tight right now, many schools would be delighted to have our campus, our debt load **and** our current momentum. And yet...

We have the challenges of managing in a situation of substantial surplus capacity.

Our objective in the Board meeting will be to provide a time of candor and honesty. We will be laying the facts before you of our challenges and our opportunities.

We have re-focused our programs and taken out as much as we think is possible from expenses. But we need to survive until students arrive in the fall.

There are a number of ways we can see getting through the summer - draw down funds from our investment portfolio, grow donations or increase our line of credit.

Now that we have rebuilt our programs and the student body is beginning to rebound, I believe our focus for the next year needs to be on re-building our balance sheet and recapitalizing the school.

You'll find further information from each of our Management Team members following in this report. And you will get a chance to hear from each of them during the Board meeting and in your various committee meetings.

We are looking forward to having you with us at the end of the month,

Mark L. Maxwell
President
April 12, 2011