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**REPORT**

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*1961-2002: Served as principal and superintendent in several public K-12 schools and member-schools of Christian Schools International in Ontario and Alberta, Canada, and in Washington, U.S.A.*

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**Discipline/Research:** *Ethnography in education, School leadership as community building, Implications of the philosophy of the cosmomic law idea for educational leadership*

**Dissertation (unpublished):** *Building School Community: An Ethnographic Study of Educational Leaders, Classroom Covenants, and Community Ceremonies, December 1994, Washington State University, College of Education*

I consider it a genuine privilege and honor to participate in this Education Consultation. After a 40-year career in educational leadership in Christian and public K-12 schools, I was invited several years ago to serve Trinity Western University as adjunct professor to teach courses in philosophy of education and educational leadership. This new position enabled me to look back at four decades of service to North American Christian Schools in a special way, by reading all the books I always wanted to read but never had the time for during my busy years as school administrator, and by meeting and interacting with young people who aim to become Christian School principals. The books I have read have served to affirm my belief that through Christian schooling more than anywhere else the children of Christian families can learn to become disciples of Jesus Christ in daily life. The young people I meet in my courses remind me that the Christian Schools in North America have come a long way in forty years. They are full of energy and ambition for their Lord! At the same time, they have so many more resources—especially in terms of mentors and good literature—than I did in the 1960's.

I enter this Education Consultation with one main concern, and I look forward to connecting with others from the wealthy West with whom I might share it. I trust that those of you from younger institutions of Christian higher education in developing countries have your own viewpoint on the problem I present, and I'd like to speak to you as well.

I am concerned that North American Christian Schools, as I have come to experience them in recent years, have been lulled into a false sense of security by

decades of enculturation under the influence of public colleges and universities, and of our friends in the public school educational establishment. In the 1960's the small group of Christian School principals representing the member-schools of the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools of which I was then a member met every month for conversations about our work in our schools. I have fond memories of these meetings--I found them to be a tremendous source of emotional and spiritual encouragement. Additionally, I remember with fondness many deep-into-the night conversations about the task of Christian Schools in the Ontario cultural environment. Ought we to be agents of change in our secular society? Or, ought we to be polite and accommodating in our relations with public agencies and our secular environment, perhaps even save ourselves time and money by adopting their curricula, textbooks, and testing programs rather than producing our own? We often encouraged one another to orient our schools' curricula on a vision of "Christian discipleship" rather than on a vision of worldly success. That was during the early years when our schools had so much to learn from our public school neighbors! Ironically, in more recent times, as the principals and teachers of Christian Schools became increasingly "socialized" and "professionalized" under the influence of secular universities and by interacting with public school personnel, I have observed, increasingly, a tendency among Christian School teachers and principals to serve the idols of our age rather than the God of the ages. As I share this concern with you, I'm wondering whether our school leaders and our colleges ought to be addressing it by means of a concerted program of Christian education for adult members of our Christian School communities. More often than not, in my view it's the *parents* of the students enrolled in Christian Schools who are encouraging our teachers to prepare their children for success as the world measures success. Can we muster the courage to appeal to them with an alternative vision?

And those of you from younger institutions in developing countries—is there something we can learn from you? While Christians in the wealthy West might be in a position to support you in your needs for technology or expertise, perhaps you can inspire us and encourage us for the challenges we face? I have seen models of help from Christian schools in the West to those in developing countries. World Wide Christian Schools comes to mind, but there are many others. Perhaps the time has come for Christian school leaders from developing countries to inspire us in the wealthy West with your stories!

I look forward to our conversations! May God bless our time together.