



Long Term Thinking
For Today's Issues

Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario Newsletter

Published for members and friends of the CFFO

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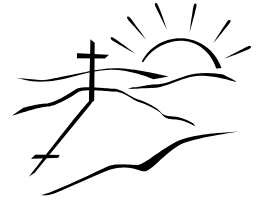
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ABIDING PRINCIPLES

By John Clement

I believe that our faith in Jesus Christ needs to find concrete expression in our day-to-day world. And I don't mean just those things that pertain to our spirits. Our faith needs to find concrete expression in how we tackle our jobs and the types of social arrangements we create.



It's my contention that the CFFO has been one of the few Christian organizations that has figured out how to combine the tenets of our faith with direct advocacy on public policies. Not all Christian groups can make that claim. Many have foundered because they haven't quite figured out how to combine their knowledge of the Word with knowledge of the world.

Since taking up employment with the CFFO in 1994, I've spent some time studying the beliefs behind the successful model employed by the organization. They stem back to a Christian statesman by the name of Abraham Kuyper. His ideas influenced many of the early CFFO members who immigrated to Canada from the Netherlands. They carried with them unique ideas on concepts like "sphere sovereignty" and "the cultural mandate."

After studying many of these ideas, I've become convinced that these unique ideas have helped craft an organization that is able to be both faithful and effective. In fact, I'm of the opinion that the CFFO would be well-served to preserve an understanding of the uniqueness of the founding principles of the organization. It's particularly important to keep some of these ideas front and centre as other faith traditions increasingly find a home within the CFFO and add their own distinct flavour.

I was privileged to recently make a presentation to the CFFO's Executive Board on the different faith streams within the organization and the contribution they make to our effectiveness. I have since condensed that presentation into five principles that I think build upon the CFFO's past and have abiding importance for the future. These principles are expressed in modern language and combine long-held beliefs of the organization with contributions from other faith streams.

- **Principle #1:** We are united in Jesus Christ, regardless of our faith background. Our activity in farming is a response to the grace of God and to His calling on our lives. He is the inspiration and empowerment of our actions and our goal is to please Him in our initiatives. We believe that our faith in Christ effects all of our actions in the world, not just those that could narrowly be described as "spiritual."

- **Principle #2:** We are an organization that is both “set apart” and transformational. Both parts are essential to preserving the CFFO’s unique approach to public affairs. We must continue to discuss agricultural problems and opportunities amongst brothers and sisters in the faith and then emerge together seeking to transform the world with faith-filled approaches and insights.
- **Principle #3:** We pursue “dominion” in light of the continual unfolding of God’s creation. In expressing our dominion, we open up and deepen the possibilities of creation, while serving mankind. This “opening up” of the creation is part of mankind’s task and brings glory to the Creator. Entrepreneurship is a concrete means of expressing dominion in farming and contains both individual and communal aspects that need to be honoured. Whenever possible, we seek to treat fellow farmers as colleagues, not competitors.
- **Principle #4:** We believe that farmers have been given the primary task and responsibility of “opening up” and developing God’s creation in regards to food production and appropriate creation stewardship. There is a certain kind of God-given authority that goes along with this task. Farmers, both individually and communally, need to take this task to heart and work together on developing and promoting new initiatives that express dominion and service to mankind.
- **Principle #5:** We partner with others in fulfilling the role that God has uniquely given to farmers. Although farmers should be the primary developers and promoters of agricultural initiatives, there is a proper place for like-minded groups and governments to come alongside farmers in helping them carry out their God-given mandates to produce food and contribute to rural communities.

FEDERATION BUSINESS



- Federation Executive Board members and staff met with Minister Dombrowsky in late April. The meeting focused on the following areas of concern: Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS), Green Energy, and the need to focus on maintaining a healthy rural economy during the economic downturn.
- John Clement, CFFO General Manager, is involved in ongoing discussions regarding the need to change the fee setting mechanism for Farm Business Registration.
- The Executive Board congratulated Nathan Stevens, CFFO Policy Advisor, on his recent graduation from the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program.
- An ad hoc CFFO Labour Issues Committee has been formed. The committee’s first task was to review the current CFFO policy statement on the issue of farm labour. Its first meeting took place in late April.
- The Executive Board has decided to create a CFFO Activity Fund to be proactively utilized to create more Federation activity. Details regarding the Activity Fund and the application process will be announced as they become available.
- Staff and Board members continue to work on redefining our district association model. The next step is to develop a Memorandum of Understanding between the Federation and the District Associations to clarify roles and responsibilities.
- Executive Board members re-affirmed their commitment to the Federation’s position regarding pork marketing in Ontario. The CFFO position includes support for ensuring that Ontario’s pork producers can still market through a marketing board, while also allowing some opening up of marketing options so that individual producers can directly market to processors and/or other buyers. Members of the

- CFFO board and staff will continue to attend meetings related to this issue.
- The CFFO is on the ALUS Alliance Steering Committee and played a key role in an ALUS workshop, held on March 27 in Guelph. John Clement, CFFO General Manager, and Henry Stevens, CFFO President, both spoke at the event. About 130 people, mostly organizational representatives, attended the workshop. Attendees have been asked to sign on to the request for provincial support for ALUS.
 - CFFO staff continues to investigate additional ways of communicating with the membership. Research is being done on the use of web cams, video conferencing and speaker phones.
 - As the 2009 CFFO Policy Days are wrapping up, plans are already being developed for next year's events. Several options are being looked into.
 - Board members and staff are putting the finishing touches on the plans for the upcoming CFFO Convention. It will take place on Wednesday, November 18, 2009. Building on the success of last year's event, the theme will focus on multi-generational farming. Details will be announced at a later date.
 - The CFFO Executive Board has endorsed the audited 2008 financial statements. The statements will be circulated to Provincial Council and will be published in the CFFO Newsletter before final endorsement at this year's Annual Meeting.
 - Executive Board members have attended many agricultural organization annual meetings in the past few months and continue to be involved in coalition meetings and other agriculture related events.
 - The CFFO will once again have a booth at the Canada's Outdoor Farm Show, to be held September 15-17 in Woodstock.
 - The CFFO Commentaries have now been added to a Christian radio station in Chatham which will also broadcast in the Belleville area.
 - Bobby Seeber, OMAFRA Senior Trade Policy Advisor spoke about the Ontario-Quebec trade discussions at the March Provincial Council meeting. Members of the Provincial Council subsequently adopted a policy statement on this issue.
 - Provincial Council also endorsed forwarding a series of recommendations to the Catholic bishops for consideration as they review the document, *The People and the Land*. The recommendations were developed by the CFFO's various policy committees.
 - Members of Provincial Council also approved a position statement regarding Hydro Time of Use. The statement includes the recommendation for a transition period to allow farmers to adjust to the rate changes.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - by Henry Stevens

As I write this in mid-April, it would appear as though we can safely say that spring is here for good. After a long winter that seemingly did not want to end, it has been great to go outside without a jacket as temperatures hovered in the high teens and even higher. The April showers we have been blessed with have been very welcome, as things were very dry. The winter wheat in particular (at least in our area) badly needed a nice, warm rain. As we head into another very busy spring, I again urge you all to be careful and put safety first!



The past two months have been extremely busy for our staff. Along with all the regular meetings, they planned and facilitated 12 policy days across the province. I had the privilege of attending five of them and thoroughly enjoyed each one. At each location there were several recurring themes and at each there was something new. I commend staff for a job well done.

We have already done much of the planning for this year's annual convention, scheduled for November 18, again in Waterloo. We want to build on last year's convention. Look for more information elsewhere in this newsletter.

We continue to receive very positive feedback on our CFFO Commentaries. The commentaries are now heard on three radio stations and we may be able to add a fourth in the near future. Having a mix of staff and Executive Board members write the commentaries works very well and serves as an excellent communication vehicle for our organization.

In some areas of the province, we are seeing our districts working well with the local OFA and NFU groups. I would like to see more of this co-operation at the local level wherever possible. If you have a local issue, do not hesitate to contact the other organizations and suggest you work together to solve the issues or at least advise local authorities from agriculture's perspective.

John Clement, the CFFO's General Manager and I had a very encouraging meeting with Deputy Minister George Zegeerac and several of his staff on April 20. We found him to be very approachable. A few days later, the Executive Board met with Minister Leona Dombrowsky. She has indicated that she is open to meet with us several times a year to discuss pertinent issues of the day. We are eager to take her up on her offer.

I have been on the road a lot the last couple of months and am glad to see the heavy meeting schedule slow down for a while. Having the number of meetings slow down from April to September suits me just fine!

Have a happy and safe planting season.



POLICY NOTES



The Ontario-Quebec Economic Partnership Agreement

The governments of Ontario and Quebec are hard at work developing an economic partnership agreement for our two provinces. One of the key areas that they are trying to reach an agreement on is the area of

agriculture. While there is certainly the potential for our two provinces to play a more important role in the North American economy by working together, the CFFO sees a major stumbling block in reaching an agreement in agriculture: disparities in provincial support programs. The CFFO believes that if there is to be an agreement in agriculture, Ontario and Quebec farmers need to be competing on a level playing field.

The People and the Land

The Christian Farmers Stewardship and Policy meetings recently provided a review and update on agriculture issues featured in the Catholic Bishops of Ontario's paper *The People and the Land*. This document was written in the late 1980s and it was time for a review of the issues and concerns listed at that time. The CFFO offered fresh perspectives on issues ranging from debt to the environment to food sovereignty. In some areas, the issues are still the same, but in others Ontario's farmers have made tremendous strides in improving the rural community.

The CFFO on Time of Use Rates for Hydro

The CFFO Provincial Council passed a statement arguing that Time of Use Rates for Hydro are consistent with our stewardship values. That being said, the CFFO believes that farmers need to have a full understanding of the impact of this change long before this pricing scheme is fully implemented. It was recommended that farmer's bills show both rates for a long period of time, so that they can implement change before paying the new price has an impact on their bottom lines. Along with this recommendation, the CFFO wants to see new support programs for farmers to make improvements on the farm and start their own energy production projects.

The Pork Industry continues to change

Ontario's pork producers continue to struggle with the future of Ontario Pork and its marketing powers. The Farm Products Marketing Tribunal is in the process of holding pre-hearing conferences on appeals that have been launched regarding the decision of the Farm Products Marketing Commission to allow for dual marketing of hogs. As the industry

continues to struggle financially, the leadership within the industry is struggling to establish a direction that will ensure that the hog industry remains viable and profitable in Ontario.

The CFFO meets with the Ontario Minister of Agriculture

Members of the Executive Board of the CFFO met with the Minister of Agriculture in late April to discuss a number of issues important to the Christian Farmers. Although the course of our conversation covered many issues, we focused on three key topics.



The CFFO is strongly supportive of efforts to establish a system of Environmental Good and Services and is on the steering committee of the Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) Alliance. The CFFO believes that ALUS can be a win-win for farmers, for government, and for the environment. We asked the Minister to commit to such a program, based on farmer-to-farmer communication, continuous reliable financial support, and most importantly incentive-based programming rather than being regulatory in nature.

The second key discussion point of the conversation was on the provinces' new Green Energy Act. This act contains both benefits and concerns for Ontario's farmers. On the positive side, farmers looking into green energy projects should see a reduction in the barriers, red tape, regulatory hurdles and access to transmission lines that are currently making projects too difficult to complete. There are also provisions for cooperative green energy projects.

Of uncertain value are the provisions that allow green energy projects to proceed despite municipal Official Plans. Clear rules may be good, but it will need to be tempered with some regional flexibility.

On the potentially negative side, there are provisions that will allow our government to set energy and water efficiency standards for goods available in our stores, rather than allowing the market to influence consumer decisions. Our energy prices will rise as more green energy comes on-line. Finally, the CFFO

is very concerned with the potential for energy projects to be constructed on prime farm land. It makes little sense to take productive farmland out of production for these types of projects.

The third topic of conversation focused on the necessity of maintaining a healthy rural community in this time of economic uncertainty. Many of today's farmers or their spouses also have off-farm jobs. For many of these farmers, the well-being of their families is dependent on the availability of these jobs. The CFFO urged that the Minister in her meetings with her fellow ministers ensure that rural Ontario not be forgotten when it comes to stimulus plans and programs.

DISTRICT NEWS



Chatham-Kent

The Chatham-Kent Annual Meeting took place on March 13, and was well attended. Members enjoyed a presentation by the Campbell's. Dr. David Campbell, a dentist in Ridgetown and his wife Margaret, an employee of the Chatham-Kent Health Alliance, have spent the past five years helping the people of Belarus. Many members participated in the *Pennies for Bursary* collection by bringing their small change to the Annual Meeting. More than \$10.00 worth of pennies (that's 1000 pennies!) was collected for the bursary; adding in additional change brought the total up to over \$52.00 in new contributions for the bursary fund. The board would like to thank everyone for their donations. Bursary applications are once again available at the local school boards, private schools or online at www.christianfarmers.org under the district's link to Chatham-Kent. Jacques Tetreault has taken on the position of president to replace Dale Maris, who has completed his term.

Dufferin-Wellington

Nathan Stevens, CFFO Research and Policy Advisor, was the guest speaker at the Annual Meeting on March 17. He updated members on several issues, such as the CFFO's involvement in ALUS (Alternative Land Use Services) and labour issues, the

organization's push for better support for diversified farms and an upcoming meeting with Minister Dombrowsky. He also presented a slide show and talked about his recent trip to California as part of the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program, focusing in particular on the issues of water and farm labour.

Haldimand-Norfolk

Haldimand County put on a successful "Growing Your Opportunities" workshop with help from OMAFRA, the Haldimand-Norfolk Christian Farmers Association and the Haldimand Federation of Agriculture. Dr. David Sparling was the keynote speaker, while four farmers talked about their value-added projects. On March 26 the district held its Annual Meeting featuring a presentation by Ontario Power Generation (OPG). Members indicated their concerns about the direction the OPG is taking with the biomass for fuel program. The local board wants farmers to be aware of the implications of this biomass program, as it will require a large land base to produce product for the burners rather than food for people or livestock. The district is also involved in the Agstravaganza Committee, which is stepping up its efforts to bring agriculture to the schools in Haldimand or when possible, to bring the school kids to agriculture. Bruce VanderMolen and Dick Eigenbrood have both completed their terms on the local board. New board members are George Elzinga and Mark Deboer.

Huron

Approximately 30 people enjoyed the presentation of Eleanor Wood, motivational speaker at the district's Annual Meeting on April 3rd. Eleanor shared some of the humorous events that she and her husband encountered on their dairy farm over the years. She stressed the need to choose to be positive and to "put your trust in God because He will build a better you." Lorne Small was on hand to give an update on the work of the CFFO, including its ongoing involvement in compensation to farmers for losses due to predation. The board thanked Evert van Sligtenhorst for his years of service to the Huron board. Paul vanDorp, a sheep producer, is the new board member.

Oxford

A large number of members turned up for the potluck Annual Meeting in this district. Henry Stevens, CFFO President talked about his goals for the organization and provided an update on the ongoing work of the CFFO and issues of concern to farmers, such as farm labour issues, trade negotiations, supporting the development of a program to pay for environmental goods and services, urging for fair safety net programs and the challenges in the beef and pork sectors. Elections were held to replace outgoing board members Nico VandenAkker and Peter Bakker. Out of a slate of six nominees, three new board members were elected: Wim Duizer, Rob Koppert and Calvin Veld. The members thanked Nico and Peter for their hard work on behalf of the district.

Quinte

Quinte was well represented by several board members at the CFFO Stewardship & Policy meetings and Policy Days this winter. Terry Spicer, secretary of the Quinte board, represented a district member at several township council meetings in a Minimum Distance Separation dispute. Due to that involvement, the issue has come to a satisfactory resolution. The district has also been involved in several meetings organized by the Ministry of Natural Resources, regarding the proposed development of a Natural Heritage System in Quinte and surrounding area. The Quinte Annual Meeting was held on April 1 and also featured Henry Stevens as the guest speaker. Henry provided updates on the CFFO's ongoing provincial issues as well as progress in policy development. The local OMAFRA representative also gave an informative presentation to the members.

Simcoe County

Approximately 25 people attended the Annual Meeting in late March. Ted VandenHurk provided the membership with an update on CFFO activities, including its work on the Time of Use hydro rates, the Clean Water Act and inter-provincial trade. On behalf of the district he thanked both Peter VanderZaag and Chris Litster for their hard work on the board. Chris is now the President of the

Ecological Farmers of Ontario. Morning speaker Peter Victor, author of the book "Managing Without Growth," focused on sustainability and stabilization in today's world. In the afternoon, a panel of producers presented their perspectives on how to move forward in the current market.

Wentworth-Brant

About 56 people attended the Annual Spring Banquet in early April. Ed Scharringa, CFFO Director, provided the membership with an update on recent CFFO activities, focusing on the issues of farm labour, the need for farmers to have access to proper crop management tools and the challenges faced by the pork sector. Bill Kenny, CFFO member, gave a presentation on his trip to Sierra Leone with Christian Veterinary Mission (CVM) of Canada. CVM Canada is an organization committed to serving Jesus Christ through the veterinary profession. Bill Kenny participated in a program aimed at developing sustainability for farmers in Sierra Leone, where people live in extreme poverty.

Farming With Mom and Dad

Exploring the Potential and Pitfalls of Multi-Generation Family Farming



This year's CFFO Convention builds upon last year's theme of family dynamics in the business of farming. We plan to have an engaging keynote speaker who can tell a good story of their farming involvement with family members. Also planned is an afternoon panel featuring parents and offspring who farm together and stay together. Along the way, we're also weaving in some theological reflection on biblical principles and family businesses. Finally, we will have a banquet speaker who can both entertain and inspire.

Mark your calendars for this year's CFFO Convention. And make sure you bring your offspring or parents to this educational and celebratory event. It will be held on Wednesday, November 18, 2009 at the St. George Banquet Hall in Waterloo, ON. Further details will be circulated as the event falls into place.

ROAD RULES FOR TRACTORS

Occasionally CFFO staff is asked about the rules for driving tractors and farm equipment on the road. The following is some information as provided by the Ministry of Transportation.

Driver Qualifications

A driver's licence is not required to drive a tractor or a Self Propelled Implements of Husbandry (SPIH) on, along or across a road. Drivers must be 16 or older to drive on, or along, a road. Drivers under 16 are only allowed to drive a tractor or SPIH directly across a road.

A person who has been prohibited from operating a "vehicle" by the courts, for impaired driving under the Criminal Code of Canada is prohibited from operating farm equipment on any road or in a public place.

Where to Drive on the Road

Farm equipment may be driven on the travelled portion of the road, on the shoulder portion of the road, except where prohibited, or on both portions when operating wide equipment.

Narrow farm equipment should be driven completely on the travelled portion or completely on the shoulder of the road. If the driver has doubts about the safety of operating completely on the shoulder, the driver should operate completely on the travelled portion. Drivers must exercise extreme caution when it is necessary to move between the shoulder and the travelled portion of the road.

Wide equipment, that requires the use of both the travelled portion and the shoulder, should be driven by using the complete portion of the travelled portion with the remaining equipment width on the shoulder.

Travelling partially on both travelled and shoulder portions of the road with wide or narrow equipment and not leaving the full width of the travelled portion of the road available to vehicles passing in the same direction can constitute a serious hazard for the equipment driver and motorists attempting to overtake.

Farm equipment, regardless of width, must by law, give up one-half of the roadway when being overtaken or passed in the opposite direction.



The CFFO and ALUS

The Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario is a firm believer in working with the public to provide top-knotch stewardship of the environment. In fact, we think the time is right to start putting together a coalition of farm organizations, plus environmental and public interest groups, to advocate for a publicly-funded program to help farmers create projects to enhance the environment.

The CFFO has long been a supporter of a concept known as Alternative Land Use Services. In essence, ALUS provides financial incentives to local farmers to create projects to enhance the environment. Through innovative projects, farmers are able to work with society on providing cleaner air, buffering against climate change, improving water quality and providing other environmental benefits like habitat for fish, wildlife and species at risk.

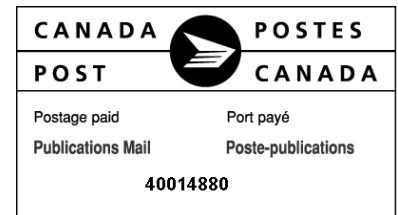
The CFFO partnered with Ontario Nature, Local Food Plus and the Norfolk ALUS Pilot Project to deliver a workshop on ALUS on Friday, March 27 in Guelph, Ontario. The meeting brought together over 73 groups from across the province that have expressed an interest in ALUS and are positioned to see the broad benefits it can deliver.

At the conclusion of the March 27th meeting in Guelph, delegates to the meeting were asked to consider signing on to the Alliance's Statement of Support, as the first step in cementing the Ontario ALUS Alliance. We're hoping to build a movement that will culminate in a provincially-funded program for delivering ALUS projects across Ontario.



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