



Transatlantic Christian Council
Building Bridges between Europe and America

Newsletter 16, March 2020

Transatlantic Christian Council

Dear reader,

Freedom of education is a fragile privilege. A constant battle is being fought over who has primary responsibility for education and upbringing: governments or parents. And how tight the parameters have to be set. We experience this in the Netherlands, but certainly also in the US and Canada. By necessity because of the corona crisis, **homeschooling** is now taking place all over the world. A good opportunity for parents to experience what that means, but also to realize how important Christian schools are!



New Jersey

New Jersey is the state in the U.S. that you see from Manhattan, downtown New York, across the Hudson River. On January 13th, after a battle of 2 years, in the Senate of this 'Garden State' 1 vote turned out to be too little to make vaccination mandatory for schoolchildren. Mandatory vaccination would have led to a significant proportion of parents moving to another, 'free' state or giving home-schooling. And hence the closure of several identity related schools. On January 16th I was

invited to a Christian school with Dutch roots in Pompton Plains to talk about religious freedom and threats to Christian education. The high turnout reflected the sense of urgency.



Alberta

Subsequently on January 21st we were at the Calvin Christian School in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada. Here too we spoke with hundreds of parents who attended about the same topic and how TCC is dealing with it. The context: the school had just survived a withdrawal of its teaching authorization. A last minute change of government there prevented that from happening. The already adopted bill

Support? If you would like to support TCC's work, you can donate to Transatlantic Christian Council, IBAN: NL29 RABO 0135 9749 09 BIC: RABONL2U. Even easier to donate via the website, [click here](#). – Tax Exempt Status -

would have required unacceptable changes in the biblical foundation of the school.

UN Geneva and New York

This type of decision-making takes place at state level. But it often finds its origin in guiding trends from international forums such as the United Nations (UN). Both in Geneva (UN Human Rights Council of 47 member states, World Health Organization (WHO)) and in many discussion platforms of all 193 UN member states in New York. Especially 'Western' countries, bureaucratic elites and left-liberal NGOs are continuously trying to arrive at standards with a secular basis. In order to enforce them on UN member states. Especially in the sensitive area of 'human rights', we must maintain room for a Christian perspective and a biblical view of human beings and the world. This requires an active participation.



Consultative status and TCC presence

In order to reverse these trends and standards, Transatlantic Christian Council is accredited at the UN. This advisory status gives us access to these buildings and bodies. This quarter we again attended meetings in both Geneva and New York. TCC was present with oral interventions and debate. Other tools include the submission of written statements and the organization of side-events.



Corona

Right now, the coronavirus is holding the world in its grip. For us, too, that meant the end of a number of plans. Planned promotion of Christian principles at the Commission on the Status of Women in March and at a meeting on the UN Commission of Population and Development at the beginning of April, both in New York, have been cancelled.

Blocking attempts to elevate sexual rights and abortion to a human right requires our presence and input there. In the Netherlands, a TCC public event and a TCC Business Network dinner could not take place. The same applied to a meeting in the European Parliament in Brussels. George Roller, missionary in the American Congress, and his wife would have attended. Hopefully we'll get a second chance in the future.

In the Netherlands TCC could be listened to such as on [Radio 1](#) and at [Family7](#).

Registration TCC in USA

On March 16 in Washington DC, last minute before corona measures came into effect, we managed to initiate our official registration as a charitable NGO in the US. That process may take half a year to a full year, but it will expand our scope and possibilities.

We hope that you will continue to support the work of TCC, especially in this difficult time for us and many, with your gifts and prayers.

With kind regards,

Henk Jan van Schothorst
Board of Directors TCC – www.tccouncil.org

January

HenkJanvanSchothorst @tccouncilorg

Picked up my TCC 2020 NGO pass in Manhattan on 15th January. Our @UN consultative status provides access to #ecosoc + its many aid agencies such as the Geneva 47states #unhrc. Empowers TCC to: attend meetings, submit written statements, make oral interventions, participate in debates, etc.

8:10 p.m. · 23 jan. 2020·Twitter for Android



New Jersey

The Netherlands Reformed Christian School in Pompton Plains, New Jersey, escaped on January 13 with 1 vote difference in the New Jersey Senate to shut down the school because of the vaccination requirement. TCC was invited on January 16 to talk about religious freedom and threats to Christian education for parents/students. The high turnout reflected the sense of urgency.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/13/nyregion/nj-vaccines-bill.html>

8:06 a.m. · 24 jan. 2020·Twitter for Android



Bill 2173

By now, most of us will have heard that the concerted attempt to pass S2173 was withdrawn again because its proponents realized once again that they were one vote short of what was needed to pass the bill. This bill was one of the most controversial bills in the legislative history of our state. Proponents pointed to the measles epidemic that broke out last year, and hoped that widespread inoculation would eradicate, or at least prevent from spreading, this and other diseases.

Opponents were persistent, and well organized. Most had either religious or medical objections to this bill. Many parents claimed that immunizations are not safe, and can be positively harmful to a child's physical health. Others objected to the state intruding into the medical decisions that they say are the right of the parents. Finally, many others object to immunizations on religious grounds saying that it is an attempt to be self-reliant and reduces our dependence on God for His protection and care.

Even in our own church school community, opinions about the above matters will vary, perhaps even widely. The reason that we needed to be concerned, whatever our opinion, was that it would have had a significant if not devastating impact on the operation of our school. The original legislation would have made it illegal for parents of unvaccinated children to send their children to this or to any school. Because we have a number of families with unvaccinated children, that would have presented a huge obstacle.

Lawmakers realized the impracticality of that situation, and so proposed a compromise which would have exempted private school families on the condition that all other families agreed that non-immunized children could come to their private school. Also, a list of unimmunized children would have to be kept and provided to the state. Public school families would have to be immunized or stay home.

This amendment, had S2173 passed, would have been problematic for us and for public school parents. In our situation, one parent who objected could control the enrollment of all unimmunized children. For public school parents who could not afford private education, there would be no solution but home schooling.

Fortunately, S2173 was withdrawn. This past Tuesday, was the last day it could have been past in its currently form. We ought to be grateful for the reprieve that has been received. However, its proponents have already introduced a similar bill, and are determined to get it past in the next session,

What will happen in the future, no one really knows. But we do know that all things are in the Lord's hands, and whatever He wills no one can intervene. We should use the means, and ask for His help in blessing in the days ahead.

One thing does seem fairly certain. The voice of those who have religious convictions and objections to what happens in society seem increasingly ignored and ridiculed. Religious freedom in general is being attacked in many ways. The implication of these movements sometime threaten the operation of Christian schools. So far, some imminent threats have been averted. May the Lord continue to remember us in mercy and grant that we may continue to lead a quiet and peaceable life and may He preserve the cause of Christian education in our country.

Alberta

On 21st January TCC was invited to Calvin Christian School in Lethbridge, Alberta, to talk to parents and students about worldwide attacks on biblical sexuality. They have just survived the threat of deregistration due to a change of government in Alberta. Bill 24 would have required unacceptable changes in the biblical foundation:

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/opinion/albertans-protected-their-kids-from-evil-bill-24-jason-kenney-must-finish-the-job>

8:13 a.m. · 25 Jan. 2020 · Twitter for Android



In the church magazine of the Netherlands Reformed Church in Lethbridge:

Our next meeting will be held on January 28 at 7:45 PM in the Lethbridge church. Marvin Oudshoorn will present a topic on Romans 12. After coffee we hope to read the third chapter in Rev. Van Reenen's book about the parables and beatitudes. We welcome interested men from all the congregations to join us.

Canadian Lord's Day Association

The Canadian Lord's Day Association would like to invite you to our annual meeting to be held on January 30, 2020 at 7:30 PM in the CCS gym. Rev H. de Leeuw plans to present a topic. There will be voting for board members and an update on the activities of the CLDA.

Community Evening on Biblical Sexuality

All community members are encouraged to attend a presentation about global attacks on Biblical sexuality by Mr. Henk-Jan Van Schothorst on Tuesday, January 21, beginning at 7:30 PM in the CCS gym. As we have experienced all too clearly through Bill 24 and related developments over the past years, the attacks of Satan against what God's Word reveals about human sexuality, gen-

der, and marriage are becoming more and more open in our culture. These matters also affect other areas including the value of human life, freedom of education, and freedom of conscience.

Worldwide, activists are seeking to impose anti-Biblical approaches and messages through international laws and treaties. Some of these attempts are blatant and shocking, almost unbelievable; even though we may not hear much about them, they can and do affect our freedoms as well! Mr. Van Schothorst, as executive director of the Transatlantic Christian Council (TCC), has direct experience in dealing with these threats. The TCC is an organization with standing to participate in deliberations at both the UN and the EU, where it works to preserve Biblical standards in the face of activist pressure. The consistories of the southern Alberta NRC congregations, along with the Board of CCS, have invited Mr. Van Schothorst to share his experiences and recommend ways that we can respond. Copies of the Synod-approved report about a Biblical view of homosexuality will also be shared. We encourage all community members to attend this important presentation.

Arizona

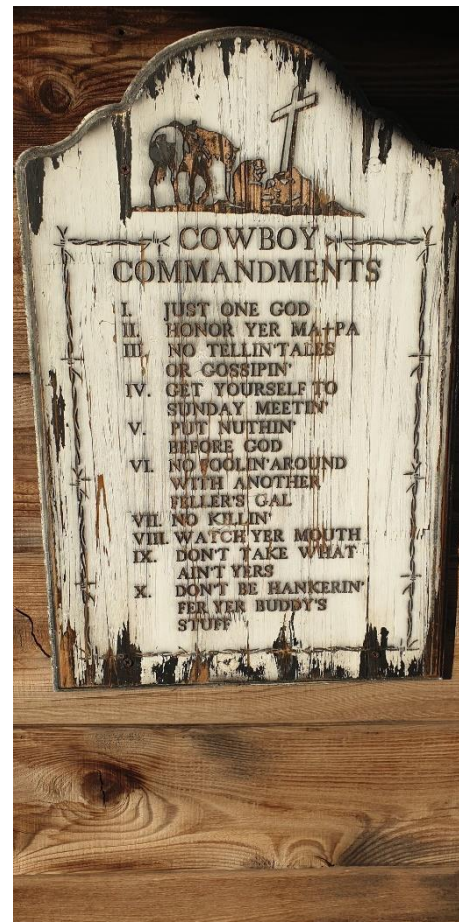
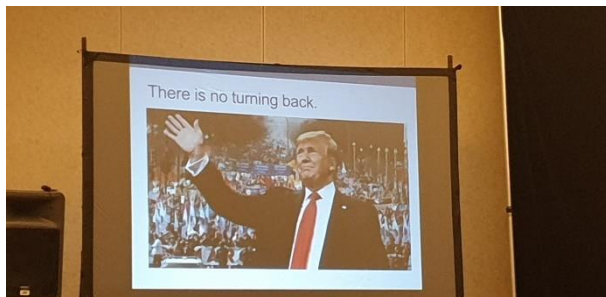
Useful networking in Phoenix, Arizona. At the same time 2 special meetings in Washington DC:

1. U.S. President Trump spoke pro-Life at the Mars for Life.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/24/us/politics/trump-abortion-march-life.html> and

2. The Preacher of the Senate, Barry Black, whom we met recently, opened the Senate deposition trial against Trump with prayer for wisdom.

10:51 p.m. · 27 jan. 2020 · Twitter for Android



February

"Trump is a great president for America." @SpraakmakersOp1 @nporadio1 asked my reaction to this statement of Stand.nl (<https://www.nporadio1.nl/standpunt/2020-02-05>), based on his State of the Union.

President Donald J. Trump
U.S. Embassy The Hague

See video below or via this link (min. 6:45-12:30):

<https://www.nporadio1.nl/spraakmakers/onderwerpen/528070-stand-nl-trump-is-een-geweldige-president-voor-amerika>



11-12 February: Advocacy Forum – EU Cord Network – Brussels

This event brought together people involved in all aspects of advocacy across the network with a focus on building capacity, sharing knowledge and mutual encouragement as we work on our advocacy vision for greater social, economic and environmental justice.

TCC spoke at this event: 'Countering ubiquitous secularization in the public domain' - developing a public policy network at the UN level: advocacy and practice. - Henk Jan van Schothorst, Director of the Transatlantic Christian Council, The Netherlands (40 minutes)



Geneva

24-26 February attended a part of the 43rd session of the human rights council.

[Speech by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Stef Blok, at the opening of the Human Rights Council in Geneva on 24 February 2020](#)

On Minister Blok's timeline:

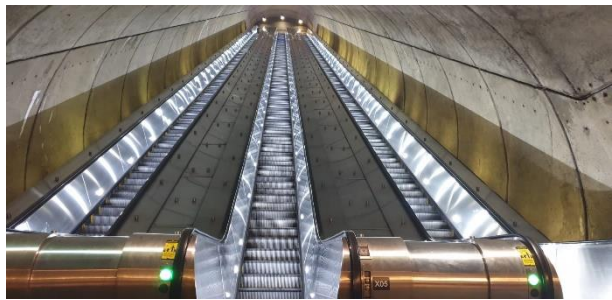
Thank you [@ministerBlok](#) UNHRC for this balanced contribution. Attended the meeting and kindly shook hands. Can issues such as the right to life, the value of the natural family as a fundamental building block of society, parental rights and freedom of education be added as priorities? - at [UN Geneva](#).



March

New York/Washington DC: With Corona spreading, TCC-VS registration process just started.

9-16 March, TCC was to attend the Commission of the Status of Women, CSW64 , but due to the coronavirus this meeting has been canceled. After the scheduled CSW64 meetings in New York other meetings were planned, such as the establishment of a TCC board in the US and its legal incorporation in Washington DC. The flight to New York could be rescheduled from 9 to 13 March, the last possible entry date before the travel ban for EU-US flights entered into force. Precisely that evening, all places were closed and many people lost their jobs. On my trip to Washington DC, the day after, I was haunted by the measures that were taken. After the closure of New York, everything in Washington DC slowly closed down as well. On the pictures below you can see how the always overpopulated places (like Times Square) are completely deserted. Despite the fact that many flights were cancelled, I was able to travel back to the Netherlands on Monday evening, as planned.



Take a look at my interview about experiences with the coronavirus in the US (Dutch spoken):
Featured! March 18, 2020 - Henk Jan van Schothorst on the American approach to Corona



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