



**Transatlantic Christian Council**  
Building Bridges between Europe and America

## Newsletter 15, December 2019

### Transatlantic Christian Council

Dear reader,

Together with representatives from Christian schools from the Netherlands, we had a very good meeting with the American Secretary of Education Mrs. Betsy DeVos in Washington DC at the end of October. The well-prepared minister is very interested in the Dutch education system. And especially in the equal funding of special education, the freedom to fill in curriculum, the involvement of parents and the freedom of choice of school. In America, only public education is funded. Mrs. DeVos wants to introduce a voucher system in which parents can choose their own school with those vouchers, including Christian schools.

Together with two school directors from New Jersey and Michigan, who are also in the delegation, we also met Congressmen from their states and the chaplain of the Senate. We ended the trip with a visit to a school in New Jersey and the UN in New York. [Click quickly for the fascinating report.](#)



A large Pro-Choice population summit took place in Nairobi from 12-14 November. Trying



to make the meeting as official as possible many countries and like-minded individuals and organizations tried to make abortion a human right and to impose comprehensive sexuality education in schools. TCC was denied access and joined a Pro-Life counter summit with the US and 10 other countries and held a prayer service in the Kenyan Parliament.



Also in the newsletter are impressions of a church visit and business meeting in NL with US Ambassador Pete Hoekstra, the annual prayer breakfast in the European Parliament and the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the NATO alliance in London.

**Support? If you would like to support TCC's work, you can donate a gift to Transatlantic Christian Council, Account no. 101015616705 Routing and transit no. 272480678. Even easier to donate via the website, [click here](#). – Tax Exempt Status -**

## Washington D.C. Report

In our last newsletter, we published an article about School Choice. This is an initiative promoted by our current Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos who is very concerned about the dismal academic performance of many of our nation's public schools. School Choice offers a financial and philosophical opportunity for parents to choose from charter schools, faith-based schools, vocational schools etc so their children get an education of their choice. Secretary DeVos is particularly interested in the Dutch form of education which has good quality and is free for all students.

Recently, James Bazen and I had an opportunity to join a group of educators from the Netherlands and the United States to visit and speak with Secretary DeVos about her initiatives. We also had an opportunity to speak with her about the current threats to Christian education in America – the growing influence of the LGBTQ community.

Mr. Henk Van Schothorst, the President of Transatlantic Christian Council has contacts with leaders at the government level in several countries. He is the one who initiated and organized the meetings we had with Secretary DeVos and several other leaders in Washington. We had a very busy 2 ½ day visit, but were able meet with several leaders who were very receptive and sympathetic to our concerns. The following is a report of our visit.

Delegation Our delegation consisted of the following:

- 1) Bazen, James – Principal of Plymouth Christian High School
- 2) De KLoe, Wim – Member of the Board of Driestar (Secondary School with 4000 students, 400 staff).
- 3) Moens, Pieter – President of the Executive Board of VGS (Policy advisor for 170 primary and 7 secondary school in the Netherlands. 70,000 students) His main work is representing denominational schools in the Dutch government.
- 4) Sloof, Gijs – Managing Business Director of TCC
- 5) Van Der Brink, John – Principal of NRCEA school in New Jersey
- 6) Van Meeuwen, Dick – Board President of Van Lodenstein (Secondary School with a total of 4,000 students) and on the board of Hoornbeek (Secondary Vocational Schools with 6 locations and 7,000 students)
- 7) Van Schothorst, Henk – Executive Director of TCC who worked and built a relationship with the NRCEA over the past 1.5 years. He is the one who organized this trip through his many contacts and connections in Washington.
- 8) Verwijs, Andre – Board President of VCPOZ (Christian Primary Education in Zeeland with 11 primary schools and 2,150 students)



*Monday Evening (10/28/19):* We had a working meeting over dinner. We each had a focus on what we would bring to the table with Education Secretary Betsy DeVos and the order in which we would bring things up. It was divided up:

- 1) Dutch Delegation – Each took a different aspect of the Dutch educational system since their government supports Christian Education.
- 2) J. Bazen – School Vouchers and school choice and how this could work within the framework of freedom of religion .
- 3) J. Van Der Brink – The LGBTQ community, civil rights, and the threats to Christian education in America.



*Tuesday Morning (10/29/19):* We went to the Education Building in Washington D.C. to meet with Education Secretary Betsy DeVos. She came with Assistant Secretary of Education Frank Brogan and several of her staff including Maureen Dowling with whom

we had an initial contact back in November 2018. Brogan was the Education Secretary of Florida under Governor Jeb Bush. Secretary DeVos carried with her a book she said was “hot off the press” called On Education by Abraham Kuiper.

We were received very graciously and were welcomed to participate in a discussion about the Dutch education system, School Choice, and the threats to Christian education.



The Dutch Educational system is different than U.S. education in that:

- The new curriculum is bottom up instead of top down (like Common Core)
  - 70% of the curriculum comes from instructions from the government.
  - 30% is free for each school to decide such as Religious Studies. (For this, the philosophy can be your own). For example, a school may have to teach evolution, but in this 30% you can spend time apologetically (Christian perspective) refuting the evolutionistic philosophy.
  - Note: The Dutch government just shut down an Islamic school for straying too far from the norm.
- At 15 years of age a student makes a choice in secondary education to:
  - Vocational education that leads to a job after secondary school.
  - College Prep education that leads to a university education.
- There is freedom of education to go wherever you wish
  - 20% of NL schools are public
  - 80% of NL schools are private

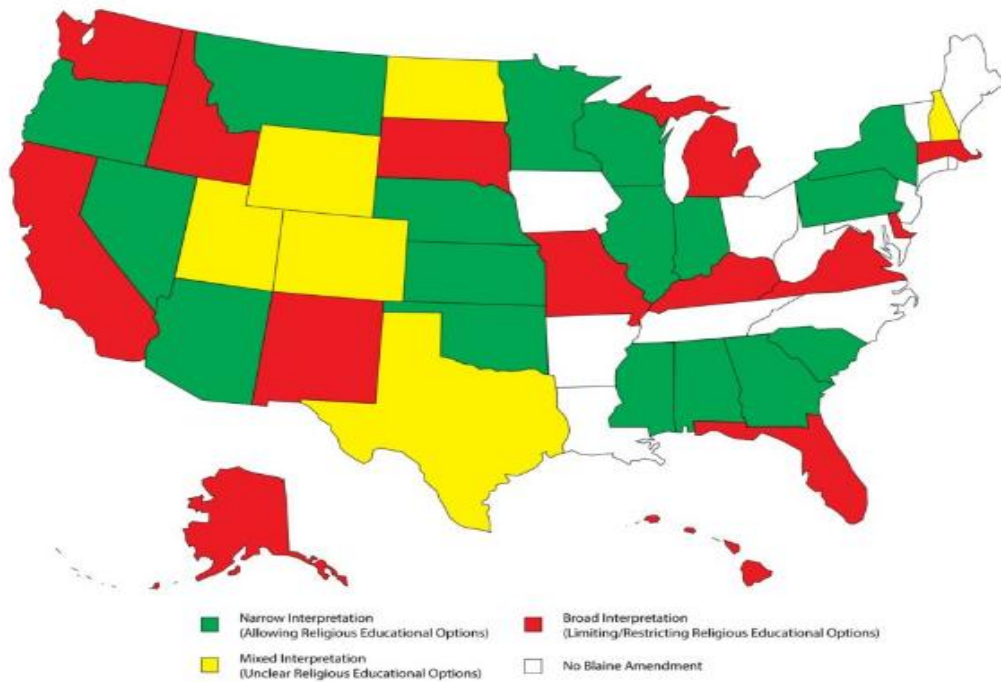
Currently, schools in the U.S. must sign a document that the school:

- Admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin, and that these students have all the rights and privileges of the other students.
- Does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin.

What will happen when the state or the federal government adds transgender, homosexual, or other sinful practices to this list? Many of the democratic candidates promise to remove our 501c3 tax exempt status for not endorsing and promoting these sinful practices. Given the current trends in America, that inclusion seems not very far away.

Some states and provincial governments support the rights of the child over the parents when it comes transgender, homosexual, other LGBTQ ideas. Secretary DeVos promised to fight for parental rights and freedom of religion in education.

Secretary DeVos is optimistic in the fight. She is pushing for vouchers nation wide with religious freedom intact. This road is currently blocked. The alternative is with EFS (Educational Freedom Scholarships). With EFS's companies can donate and receive federal tax credit for donating into a scholarship fund which empowers elementary and secondary students and families to choose the right educational options for them, regardless of where they live, etc. Though EFS's are gaining traction, the Blaine Amendment stands in the way. The Blaine Amendment sought to amend the U.S. Constitution to prohibit state governments from, among other things, fund religious schools with public money. It was really aimed at Catholic schools. This amendment eventually failed, but many states have added provisions to their constitutions that accomplish what Congressman Blaine could not. The following map show which states have the Blaine amendment in their state constitution in some form.



A bit of History on the Blaine Amendment: In 2015, the state legislature in Montana passed the Montana Tax Credit Scholarship Program, which allows Montanans a tax credit for \$150 of their contributions to a privately-run scholarship program. However, the Montana Department of Revenue refused to implement the program citing the state’s Blaine Amendment, an archaic anti-religious law that forbids tax credits going to schools owned or operated by a “church, sect, or denomination.” The Department then created its own rule that limits the use of scholarship funds to children that attend non-religious private schools, leaving religious schools out in the cold. By denying religious schools the ability to participate in a widely available public program, the Montana Department of Revenue stands in defiance of the Supreme Court’s June 2017 decision in *Trinity Lutheran v. Comer* that ruled religious groups cannot be barred from participation in widely available public programs simply because they are religious.

The U.S. Supreme Court voted to hear *Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue*. With a conservative majority on the court, the outcome poses the likely rescission of all 38 Blaine amendments by means of a precedent-setting ruling. If that happens, DeVos believes a world of options will open for children nationwide. A decision is expected in June of 2020.

The best way to get lower income students out of failing school is by School-Choice. This should be put back into the hands of parents. It should not be that this house with this particular zip-code must go to a particular school. If you don’t like it you can send your kids to a private school. But what if you can’t afford to? You are stuck. Parents need to





get organized. Teacher unions are already organized against these changes. In gender issues, the parent's rights are stripped of any control. The rights of the child trump that of the parents. It was noted that public schools are mis-named, they are really government schools. Pieter Moens recommended that we promote the formation of parent groups so that a stronger collective voice can be heard.

Pieter Moens promised to send her a book entitled: *The Dutch Way in Education* by Gert Biesta. We shook hands wishing her God's blessing in her important work.

*Tuesday Afternoon (10/29/19):* We went to New Jersey Congressman Christopher Smith's office. We discussed the same issues. Congressman Smith is a Christian man and the only Republican Congressman in all of New Jersey. His two main issues of focus are anti-abortion and anti-trafficking. He is also concerned about religious persecution in China and feels that the United States is hindered in doing something about it because of Trump's potential trade deals with them. Regarding the pressures on Christian education, he stated that if the Democrats regain the Senate and the White House in the next election, a wave of gender identity issues would be faced by the schools. He encouraged us to caucus at the local level about these things.



*Tuesday Evening (10/29/19):* We had dinner at George Roller's home. George is the ambassador of H.O.P.E to the Hill (Helping Others Prepare for Eternity). George's mission is to speak to any and all Congressmen about the mostly Biblical matters. His goal is not to get them to change their vote, but rather by preaching, praying and pointing them to the only hope that their lives would be transformed. Then all their votes would be in accordance with the Scriptures. He is an amazing man who helped unlock many doors for us, to get us into places that we could not otherwise come. He and his wife are friends of Mike and Karen Pence. Mr. Roller also took us to the Bible Museum. He may prove a valuable contact for future trips of our grade 12 class.



*Wednesday Morning (10/30/19):*

We went to see Dr. Barry Black. Dr. Black is the Chaplin of the Senate. He leads a prayer-meeting one day per week. He also leads a Bible study one day per week with several congressmen. Whenever Vice-President Pence (president of the Senate) comes to the Hill, he seeks out Dr. Black to first pray with him.

Dr. Black is the product of Christian Education and has the ear of most of the senators. He admonished us on the following:

- Christian Education must include: Physical, mental, Spiritual, and Social learning -- holistic (Luke 2: 52). Students must be fashioned into life-long learners. Many Christian schools today are not really teaching the whole child. They are actually not much different than public schools.

- Christian Education must seek to impart what is taught in 2 Peter 3: 18.
- Christian Education which does not focus on eternity is not Christian. e.g Daniel 5: 17-28 – “Let thy gifts be to yourself.” You are going to die.
- Christian Education has nothing to fear if it is like Daniel 1: 20. Others will find us 10 times better than the best that the worldly kingdom has to offer. Christian Educators must seek accountability in all because if you can’t measure it, you cannot manage it.
- Don’t seek to use carnal weapons against the foe. Jesus said that the disciples could not cast out the devil because it will not go out but by fasting and prayer (Matthew 17: 21). We were admonished not to forget prayer, specifically James 1: 5. “If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God.”
- As Educators we need to draw a line in the sand. When it comes to bow or burn (Daniel 3: 17-18), it is not time to negotiate. We need courage to stand firm and not give an inch. Jesus said, “All power is given unto me in heaven and earth”...do you believe it? Daniel’s three friends experienced it. Nebuchadnezzar said that he threw three men in the fire, but there are four, and the fourth is like the Son of God (Daniel 3: 25).
- David served God in his generation (Acts 13:36). This is what we are called to do in our generation....a different time in history. Wherever God puts us, we need to serve him in our generation.
- We need to stop and listen (1 Sam. 3: 9). We cannot always be talking. Let us ask God to speak, and then let us listen!
- Pray every day James 1: 5 and God will keep you from doing long-term unwise things. Prayer is the force multiplier. This is how we can receive wisdom for our life.



*Wednesday Afternoon (10/30/19):* We met with Bill Huizenga, the congressman from Michigan. We talked about similar things that we did with Betsy DeVos and Christopher Smith. Bill is not very optimistic that anything will get done via the legislature. He believes it will be done in the courts. We also briefly visited a building near the Capitol which was formerly used by Hope on the Hill, but is no longer available. The Dutch entrepreneur was interested in making it available for the work of Transatlantic Christian Council.



*Thursday Morning (10/31/19):* On the way home, we were hosted at Dave den Hollander for dinner. He hosted the Dutch group at a local hotel for the night. The Dutch delegation toured his greenhouse the next morning before coming to school.



After touring the school, we had lunch together with the group and with Rev. Vogelaar, Rev, de Leeuw, Elder Mol and Tim Mol. During that time, we reviewed the events of the trip. The value of this trip was acknowledged, and it was pointed out that it was good that we could do what we were given to do. It was stated that relationships had been established that could be for the benefit of our schools in the future. After lunch, the Dutch

delegation departed for Newark and New York City. Some of them returned to the Netherlands that evening. Henk Jan Van Schothorst and two of them attended a United Nations meeting on Friday, and returned to the Netherlands on Friday night.

#### Action Items

We hope to follow up this event with the following Action Items.

1. Try to keep an open line of communication with Secretary De Vos, and with Congressmen Chris Smith and Rich Huizenga.
2. The Dutch delegates look forward to working with Secretary DeVos to further her efforts for Freedom of Education.
3. Henk Van Schothorst is willing to host an Information Evening here in New Jersey to inform parents about the work of Transatlantic Christian Council. We would like that to happen in January or February. He is willing to host similar evenings in other NRCEA localities to which he is invited. Hopefully this will generate some financial support for TCC.
4. Pieter Moens suggested that we start some type of Parent Group in our locality that has a voice to political leaders.
5. Investigate and research the pros and cons of Education Foundation Scholarships and the influence of the Blaine Amendment. Are there opportunities to receive some unfettered financial support for Christian education?
6. Pursue an approach that seems the most feasible to defend the Christian liberties of our nation's Christian schools. What is the best approach from preventing civil rights (gender ideology) from gaining control over freedom of religion? If freedom or religion in Christian schools is secured by School Choice and Educational Foundation Scholarships, perhaps that would be the best bulwark against the efforts of the left to promote gender issues in all schools.
7. There are probably other people in influential positions with whom it may be worthwhile trying to establish connections. Attorney General William Barr recently gave a very encouraging speech at Notre Dame which outlines precisely the kind of concerns we share. It would be worth exploring which other political leaders could help and guide us in these concerns.

James Bazen

John Van Der Brink

## November 12-14, 2019 - Nairobi Summit - ICPD25

TCC (as Pro-Life/Family and UN accredited organization) was not welcome at the Nairobi Summit (<http://www.nairobisummiticpd.org/>) #ICPD25. Like-minded countries, organizations and individuals were, outside official UN-structures, together from 12-14 November to accelerate their wishes/demands to get pro-abortion and pro-comprehensive sexuality education regulations internationally implemented. Therefore we organized a counter conference opposite their place, had a prayer meeting with Kenyan MP's in their Parliament and [a great US-led Joint Statement](#) with other like-minded countries, see video and here:



[In Wall Street Journal](#)

[Also in Dutch press:](#)

### **Criticism of pro-abortion agenda at Nairobi summit**

An international summit on population and development in the Kenyan capital Nairobi is causing turmoil among local churches and pro-life groups. They blame the organizers for having a compelling pro-abortion agenda.

It is 25 years ago that a first conference took place in Cairo, Egypt, on the relationship between population growth and development. Themes included immigration, family planning, access to contraception and the position of women. At the summit, some delegates defended the view that access to safe abortion belongs to so-called "reproductive health," but there was no consensus on that. The closing text of "Cairo" spoke of the importance of preventing abortion.

The theme of abortion is fully restored a quarter of a century later during a summit in Nairobi, which is held from Tuesday to Thursday. Draft declarations aim to label abortion as a right. Critics accuse the organizers that they have now done everything possible to keep dissenting voices as much as possible away from the top. Christian and proliferation organizations were denied access. Criticism in advance on the agenda, including from the US government, was also discarded.



The American Republican Congressman Chris Smith called the summit Monday in [the Wall Street Journal](#) "a meeting of like-minded individuals and organizations ... promoting a pro-abortion agenda." Convinced by Smith, who attended the 1994 Cairo summit , they abuse the 'name and reputation' of that meeting for a different agenda.

The Vatican announced last week that it would not attend the summit because of this agenda. The Church of Rome criticizes, among other things, the fact that the summit, organized by Denmark and Kenya, takes place outside the framework of the United Nations. This would guarantee transparent consultation between nations. In addition to promoting abortion, the Vatican is opposed to a plan for comprehensive sexuality education in schools.

Local Kenyan churches were equally critical. The Roman Catholic bishop Alfred Rotich wondered why the Kenyan president "opened his country as a market where the pro-choice agenda can be sold. (...) Are we aware of the enemy that is constantly attacking our tradition and culture to protect life? "

Churches and Christian organizations in Kenya, including the Evangelical Alliance and the National Council of Churches, held a counter conference on Tuesday. "Many Kenyans do not realize what is going on," says Henk-Jan van Schothorst of the Transatlantic Christian Council who attended this meeting. "But the protest is growing." Van Schothorst was also not welcome at the official summit.

[\(Reformatorsch Dagblad, 13 november 2019\)](#)



*Prayer service with Kenyan parliamentarians in Parliament in Nairobi*

**November 20, 2019 - TCC at SGP Zuidplas, theme: Gender identity**

Is there a difference between man and woman, boy or girl? Not essential, says the gender (equality) ideology. Your gender is not biologically determined, it is just how you feel at a certain moment, male or female. A head-on collision with: "And God created man in His image, He created them male and female." This intense battle is being waged at the international level, including at the UN. Our families, schools and companies will not be safeguarded from the consequences. Transatlantic Christian Council has started a targeted counter-movement.

With these catchy words, Mr. Henk Jan van Schothorst introduced the theme for the evening of electoral association Zuidplas. He took us on to the more and more pressing issue of gender identity and how this and similar sensitive issues increasingly adorn the agendas of international organizations. An example is the recently established UN SOGI expert. This person is mandated with supervision of "violence and discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. Never before has the UN stated in such strong terms that investigations into alleged violations of LGBT rights by governments, individuals or institutions fall under compliance with international human rights. All in all, this kind of democratically barely controlled organizations do not follow trends, but increasingly set trends and set standards.

[An impressive video](#) was shown about comprehensive education about sexuality and how it is propagated by all kinds of international bodies and organizations. For example, at the recently held Nairobi Summit of like-minded countries, organizations and individuals, billions of dollars were pledged to get this type of education and abortion generally accepted and imposed. TCC opposed this and participated in a counter-conference in Nairobi with Kenyan MPs and a US-led group of other-minded countries, who came together with [a powerful pro-life / family counter-declaration](#). The recent TCC visit by NL Christian reformed schools to the US minister of education, Mrs. DeVos, was also discussed.

All in all it was an educational evening. Sitting still and waiting is not an option, Ora et Labora is the motto!

*From: December 2019 newsletter SGP Zuidplas*



**December 3, 2019 - US Ambassador receives Bible in old Reformed congregation The Hague**



The old Reformed congregation in The Hague on Gaslaan received high visitors on Tuesday evening. The American ambassador Pete Hoekstra received an English Bible there. Rev. C. L. Onderdelinden spoke to him: "We are both ambassadors." See further (in Dutch): [Reformatorsch Dagblad, 4 december 2019](#)

**3-4 December: Brussels in contrasts**

After a network meeting in the EU Commission building and the prayer breakfast (<https://prayerbreakfast.eu/>) in the EU Parliament with keynote speech from Dutch SGP political party leader Kees van der Staaij, Henk Jan van Schothorst attended a hearing of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality for input EU Strategy for Gender Equality - From hot bath to cold shower.





**4 December, London: Celebration 70 years of NATO – NATO wants to improve political cooperation within the alliance. Gossip from Rutte then do no good.**

US President Donald Trump suddenly canceled his announced press conference "after he had talked enough" after the NATO anniversary summit in England on December 4. But from his entourage came the story that Trump left home angry because a number of colleagues, including Prime Minister Rutte, made a fool of him the night before. Rutte and his counterparts Trudeau (Canada), Macron (France) and Johnson (Great Britain) gossiped about Trump at the drink in Buckingham Palace. The conversation was picked up by cameras and went around the world.

When Johnson was asked about it, he talked about the "rock-solid bond" within 70-year-old NATO. Rutte responded in his characteristic laconic way: "You stand for hours at those receptions where everything and everyone is talked about." Nothing wrong with people, keep walking, the prime minister seems to want to radiate. But this mouse could still get a tail.

The summit lasted less than 3 hours, cost the British taxpayer several million pounds and yielded little to nothing. "We contact each other more often about the operational and political aspects of NATO," said Rutte afterwards. "This way we avoid surprises within NATO." Note, as if the alliance does not have an army of diplomats and soldiers in Brussels at work. Rutte referred to the statements by French President Macron about the brain-dead alliance and the sentences of Turkish President Erdogan towards neighboring Syria and the Kurds. Agreements were made behind closed doors to consult more often.

And the higher defense spending where Trump insists on? "With no word" talked about, says Rutte. Trump is apparently satisfied with what has been achieved so far. Nine of the 29 member states meet the NATO standard of 2 percent of the gross national product. A few years ago there were only three. Together the allies spend 130 billion more on defense than in 2016. In 2024, the year in which at the NATO Wales Summit of 2014 the NATO member states agreed to aim to meet the 2% standard within 10 years, that must have risen to 400 billion.

[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/events\\_112136.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/events_112136.htm)

The Netherlands dangles somewhere at the bottom with 1.3 percent. From 2021, the Netherlands will allocate more than 5 million euros per year to cover the costs of the NATO headquarters in Brussels. "Small beer," says Rutte. Annually, the Netherlands pays 73 million euros to the operational costs of NATO, out of a total of 2.37 billion.

Riekelt Pasterkamp

Original in Dutch, [click here](#).





**December 9, 2019 - Business Week event NL - North America**

Participated in Business Week event NL - North America, the 21st Century Economic Powerhouse, powered by Trade and Innovate with the Dutch. Great performance of @DutchMFA, @RVO\_Nederland, @usambnl, @CanAmbNL and @EmbaMexNL. @realDonaldTrump @ChuckGrassley. <https://t.co/FCBPe993bu>



**Colofon**

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