

## **CHOICES.....**

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As I pondered what to write, I reflected over the past school year and decided it was a year of choices that made it possible to celebrate excellence. Yes, there were glitches along this journey of excellence, however, the glitches only helped us be better teachers and administrators.



As I traveled throughout Alberta visiting our schools, I observed choices in excellent teaching skills, choices in excellent administrative skills, but most of all, excellence in leading students to Jesus. Teachers stepped outside their comfort zones and tried new teaching and classroom strategies. Administrators raised the bar of excellence for their teaching staff by providing opportunities to attend workshops of interest, allowing time to visit other classrooms, being on school visitation teams, being on committees outside Alberta, and mentoring new teachers/administrators, all the while holding teachers accountable. However, the best part was listening to teachers, administrators, and students praying together, sharing together, and talking about Jesus together.

Now that the school year has ended, what are you choosing to put on your agenda? May I suggest we celebrate excellence by making a choice to make time to get reacquainted with the God who helped us during the past academic year. Let us not permit the busyness of life to get in our way! We have choices to make!

A story came across my desk via e-mail not long ago entitled *The Brick* and it goes like this: A young and successful executive was traveling down a neighborhood street, going a bit too fast in his new Jaguar. He was watching for kids darting out from between parked cars and slowed down when he thought he saw something. As his car passed, no children appeared. Instead, a brick smashed into the Jag's side door! He slammed on the brakes and reversed the Jag up to the spot where the brick had been thrown. The angry driver then jumped out of the car, grabbed the nearest kid and pushed him up against a parked car shouting, *What was that all about and who are you? Just what do you think you are doing? That's a new car and the brick you threw is going to cost a lot of money. Why did you do it?* The young boy was apologetic. *Please, mister.....please, I'm sorry but I didn't know what else to do.* He pleaded. *I threw the brick because no one else would stop with tears dripping down his face and off his chin, the youth pointed to a spot just around a parked car. It's my brother, he said. He rolled off the curb and fell out of his wheelchair and I can't lift him up.*

Now sobbing, the boy asked the stunned executive, *would you please help me get him back into his wheelchair? He's hurt and he's too heavy for me.*

Moved beyond words, the driver tried to swallow the rapidly swelling lump in his throat. He hurriedly lifted the handicapped boy back into the wheelchair, then took out a linen

handkerchief and dabbed at the fresh scrapes and cuts. A quick look told him everything was going to be okay. *Thank you and may God bless you*, the grateful child told the stranger. Too shook up for words, the man simply watched the boy push his wheelchair-bound brother down the sidewalk toward their home.

It was a long, slow walk back to the Jaguar. The damage was very noticeable, but the driver never bothered to repair the dented side door. He kept the dent there to remind him of this message: *Don't go through life so fast that someone has to throw a brick at you to get your attention!* God whispers in our souls and speaks to our hearts. Sometimes when we don't have time to listen, He has to throw a brick at us. It's our choice to listen or not.

God did not promise days without pain, laughter without sorrow, sun without the rain, but He did promise strength for the day. Isaiah 40:29-31 (*Life Application Bible, New International Version*) states: *He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not faint.*

I am looking forward to the next school year when our journey of excellence will continue. With God on our side, we will run and not get weary.

Have a great summer!