

Visioning Team • Meeting 1

Intro and Purpose

The Visioning Team met for their initial meeting on August, 14, 2009, at the DYM conference room. The team members that were present were Dick Broene, Ken Vanderzwan, Steve Machiele, John Kaashoek, Larry DeHaan, Bob deJonge, Mike Feys, Don VanDerKlok, and Mike VanderMeer. All of these men have had extensive experience as counselors and/or head counselors and many have served additionally on council boards, executive committees, and as congressmen. Dick and Bob are also paid employees of the CCC. Two team members could not be present — Pastor Ron Noorman, who has served many years as Corps Chaplain and Tim Kuperus, who is an experienced youth pastor.

After devotions (Prov. 3:1–6, Key theme: acknowledging God in all our ways) and introductions we got down to defining the purpose of our team. It was presented as four objectives.

- A. To combat apathy and promote excitement.
- B. To gain a vision for what cadeting will be like five years from now, and develop a plan to get there.
- C. To determine hindrances, or restraining forces that keep cadeting from doing ministry.
- D. To provide questions for the executive committee to ask councils. The answers to these questions will help the team understand the issues that need to be dealt with.

A Little History

Dick Broene provided some background information on what led to the formation of this team.

1. Congress has been good at dealing with minor changes such as suggesting additions and changes to programs and materials, but has a hard time wrestling with the more profound issues that would have far-reaching consequences for the ministry.
2. Dick shared some statistics that show declining numbers of clubs and the declining size of clubs. Examples: The number of Cadet clubs peaked in 1992 at 658 and is currently at 596. Cadet Quest issues printed, which is indicative of the numbers of boys participating in the program, was at 9,490 in 2002 and is currently at 6,854.

3. When Dick makes his club/council visits he has been conducting listening sessions and one component of that is asking the counselors who they think should be “allowed” to be members of the organization remembering that we are a “non-denominational” organization. The results of his pole were:

- A. Christian Reformed Churches only — No one agreed with this.
- B. Reformed (Calvinistic) churches only — 155
- C. Any Protestant church — 156
- D. Any church calling themselves Christian — 113
- E. Anybody — 22

Dick reminded us that presently, churches applying for membership in the Calvinist Cadet Corps must agree with the three articles of Reformed doctrine.

4. Program changes:

- A. The Recruit•Pathfinder•Builder program maintains its popularity. The number of merit badges we offer keeps growing, and existing badge requirements change as needed, but we haven't eliminated any badges in years.
- B. The Guide Trails program, once in more than 50% of churches with Cadet clubs, is now claimed by only 19%.
- C. The Voyageurs program has always appealed to only a few, and then only when enthusiastic leaders come forward.
- D. Junior Cadets is growing.
 - 30 years ago, there were no Junior Cadets
 - 20 years ago, it was in 29% of churches with Cadet clubs.
 - Ten years ago, it was in 46%.
 - Today, Junior Cadets is in 49% of churches with Cadets.

Most of the issues that were talked about to this point had to do with membership and promotion of the organization but Dick also reviewed the areas of communication, education, and uniform. Within these areas we talked about the importance of the internet to our ministry, the fact that the organization has adopted a regional model for a training network so that regional conferences have become a significant part of coun-

selor education, and that the uniform for the cadets and counselors has stayed basically the same since the organization's inception in the 1950s.

Hot Topics

We then moved on to some brainstorming on what are the hot topics we need to deal with. We talked about the loss of clubs, the lack of responsiveness of the organization's governance system, and how to promote the organization but we soon found that a good majority of the topics centered around the counselor. Issues such as recruiting, educating, encouraging, and retaining counselors. We decided that **counselors would be our primary focus** for our initial discussions.

Other things that were brought up that seemed to be important to members of the team were:

1. That it is very important that congressmen and fellow counselors need to be part of the process (in the loop). We need transparency about all that is being discussed and we need input from outside our team.
2. Building excitement about what the cadeting ministry is doing is key.
3. Getting support from the wives and families of counselors.
4. What part does a council play in the vitality of a club?
5. Are congressmen, presidents, quartermasters, and other go-betweens a help or a hindrance to communication and to building up counselors?
6. Perhaps we should suggest that churches hold commissioning services for their Cadet counselors.
7. Counselors need to have some accountability for their work.
8. Members of a club's church could become prayer partners for their Cadet counselors, one on one.
9. Do a better job of integrating the Cadet ministry with the life of the church

These are the questions that the team decided should be asked by executive committee member of the congressmen that they will call.

1. How do your churches recruit counselors?
2. How do you train / build counselors?

3. How do you keep counselors?
4. In each of the above cases, how do you think it should be done?
5. What causes your counselors to leave?
6. What can you or we do to make your counselors feel valued?
7. What is the best way to disseminate information to your council counselors?

Next meeting date: October 30, 2009 at 7:00 PM in the same place.