

The Messenger

Washington Christian Academy

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SPECIAL ARTICLE ON REFORMED EDUCATION

As the barbarian hordes threatened his North African city, Augustine labored at the task of writing and preaching on citizenship in the City of God. He confessed that for him as a citizen of the Roman Empire, the conquest was a looming tragedy and an occasion for weeping. But as for a citizen of the Kingdom of God, it was an unparalleled opportunity for evangelism. The mission field was crowding through the gates to live side by side with the missionaries.

The Reformers honored and expanded this vision of our Christian life as they too lived in two kingdoms. We, likewise, are citizens of two cities, with responsibilities and duties in two kingdoms. Clearly, our ultimate allegiance is to the Kingdom of God: our chief end is to glorify God, and our greatest educational objective is to know Him. But our feet are firmly planted in the kingdom of this world. We, and our children, live and work, eat and play, listen to music and compete in sports, find creative expression, etc. in the kingdom of this world. How should we live *in* this kingdom without becoming *of* it, is at the very heart of Christian discipleship. It also determines the character of our Christian School.

We believe that the Reformed perspective on the two kingdoms is very helpful in sharpening our vision of education in a Christian community. The dangers of the solitary emphasis on either kingdom are obvious. Any Christian school, by definition, cannot prepare students to be citizens of this world only. C. S. Lewis said, "aim at Heaven and you get the world thrown in, aim at earth and you will get neither." The opposite extreme must be avoided as well, but not every Christian school does. The systematic, comprehensive Reformed view of God's created world and human culture balances the two allegiances. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." We honor and celebrate God's creation because He called it good. Though now fallen and distorted, it will one day be redeemed.

We recognize God's gifts through human culture and civilization. By exposing our young people to the best of our cultures' music, literature and art, we enrich their souls and broaden the interface through which they can exert a Christian influence. Being reformed means we recognize all that is good, true and beautiful in the kingdom of this world. Franky Schaeffer states in *Addicted to Mediocrity*, "the arts, creativity, enjoyment of our own creativity...in short, all the beauty that God has put into this life--comes as a direct good and gracious gift from our Heavenly Father above." Not only should we teach students to appreciate and respond to our rich cultural heritage, but to exercise their minds to critique human culture where it is contrary to God's kingly rule.

As citizens of the Kingdom of God, we engage in the life of our culture, we affirm it where appropriate, but we also seek to transform it. A Christian education should aim for transformed minds that discern what is good and true in the kingdom of this world; renewed affections that respond to what is beautiful; and wills that are subject to the lordship of Christ who alone is the source of all perfection. This is training for God's children who live by God's Word in God's created world.

The WCA Board of Directors believes this perspective inevitably leads to a serious quest of academic excellence, a clear recognition of the Christian student's place in this world, and a positive motivation for the Christian community to pursue the vision of education for the Kingdom of God. We ask for your prayers as we seek God's guidance and provision.

--Sterling Mehring

President of the Board of WCA

FROM OUR TEACHERS AND STAFF

4th annual WCA Grandparent's Day. On March 19, over 110 grandparents traveled from near and far, even from Haiti, Florida, and New Jersey, to join their grandchildren in the classrooms and be honored by the school for their role in the lives of our students. Charlton Meyer, grandparent of two at WCA,

provided a wonderful half hour of piano music, followed by a musical presentation of *the WCA Upper School Band*, the *High School Choir*, and our elementary *WCA Children's Choir*.

Prior to their visit, grandparents were informed of the 1999 Computer Upgrade Project. Mr. VanderHaak and Mrs. Gropp shared about the role of computers in today's education and how grandparents can support this effort and help put the latest in computer hardware in the hands of our students and teachers. We have already received gifts and pledges totaling \$10,860 toward our goal of \$22,000, the great majority of it from grandparents. We are thankful for their generous gifts. And we are thankful for our Christian grandparents who model for our children a lifelong faith in God that transcends trials and time; they offer the familial foundation so often missing in today's world. --James H. Koan, II
Headmaster

College Application Seminar. How and when to apply for college? How to choose the right one? What about the financial aspects? What financial helps are available and how? Should one take SAT I, or SAT II, and when? How does one prepare for these? What is "early decision" and "early action"?

Many similar questions cause confusion and anxiety among our Juniors and their families. On a Saturday morning Jan Adams presented the students and their parents with a thorough yet clear outline of all major areas relating to college applications, and the timetable of steps to be taken. She also provided us with helpful handouts and even treated us to coffee, juice, and sticky-buns. This seminar turned the gigantic and confusing college application task into a clear and manageable undertaking. We thank Jan Adams for her unselfish hard work, and God for this kind of leadership for our school.

--The Juniors and their parents

Encore of the College Application Seminar. Jan Adams will repeat the above seminar on *Tuesday April 2, at 7PM* for all interested students and parents. College might be a few years away, yet knowing and planning ahead is wise, prudent, and prevents much future stress.

WCA is about developing all students' talents to their fullest, teaching every subject from a distinctly Christian perspective, and building Christian character. An important part of this mission is to prepare our students for college well. Our senior classes over the last 4 years are testament to this. Six

of the last 16 WCA seniors have been recognized in the National Merit Scholarship program. The same four graduating classes have averaged over 1300 in their SATs, including 3 perfect 800 scores.

What does all this mean? If your son or daughter has intentions of going to college, there is no finer preparation available for your child than the academic attention of the Upper School teachers of WCA. Average students become excellent students, and excellent students become tomorrow's leaders. We don't offer scholarship sports or gleaming facilities; instead we offer results in the classroom that are sought after by colleges and universities, and students who will be able to take Christ with them wherever God will place them in society. --James H. Koan, II

Homework/Study Skills. On February 18, Carol Parent led this informative and helpful seminar. She gave a thorough, all-encompassing presentation for all grades. She covered specific skills that can be learned and would enhance a student's grades and learning, and also provided a wonderful selection of handouts to help put these ideas into practice. We are thankful to Carol for her hard work on our behalf.

--Merida Hurkett

Parent

Athletics Update. In our second year of track and field, our schedule includes meets with several Christian schools, a few public schools, and the return to the ASCI track meet in Beaver Falls, where we got second place last year. Coach Sanker resumed the head coaching position for our 25-member team.

Our tennis team started up with 16 students, practicing four days a week, preparing for meets with six schools including Grace Brethren, Takoma Academy, and Queen Anne.

As our WCA teams meet with many other schools, we praise God for the opportunity to work for Him even through our talents in sports, and by exhibiting godly behavior before others.

--Coach Jay L. Barnhart

Athletic Director

CLASSROOM NEWS

Second Grade. Our students are expanding their horizons in science, learning about the wonderful world God created, and about man's duty to care for it. They fortify learning by great activities (see the hallway posters on endangered animals and on the human body), and field trips to the Baltimore

aquarium and the butterfly exhibit at Brookside Gardens. They are amazed at the greatness of our Creator. They are also busy preparing a spring program to present in May to their families.

Fifth Grade. The students had an exciting visit to the Newseum in Arlington. They learned the history of making news, and had a chance to produce and record their own newscast.

The music class is preparing to present the musical, *Kids Tellin' Kids*. (Look for details in the *Koan Zoan*).

Upper Elementary.. The students visited the Kennedy Center for a performance of *The Marian Anderson Story* musical. What enriching experiences our students are blessed with!

Upper School Report Cards. Look for information in the enclosed *Upper School Update*.

High School Seniors, Congratulations! All of our high school students have been accepted to the college of their choice (Geneva College, the Naval Academy, UM Honors College). We ask God for continued blessings on them, and thank Him for these achievements. (See details in *Upper School Update*)

SCHOOL LIFE ACTIVITIES

Odyssey of the Mind. This is a competition of students from 1st through 12th grade, comparing their reasoning abilities and creativity on local, state, and national levels. This year, a team of 3rd-5th graders presented our school, for the first time. It was a great experience, and hopefully a new tradition has been started.

Model United Nations (MUN). Students from many schools research an assigned country and then they represent and discuss the current concerns of "their" country in a one-two day meeting, modeled after the United Nations. They serve on committees, debate, and draft resolutions to current international issues. Seven of our 7th graders took part in the Middle School MUN last month, and we plan to participate in the High School MUN in April. An enriching and truly valuable experience for our students! Watch for details in *Upper School Update* and *Koan Zone*.

Talent Show. God has given our children many great talents for the enrichment of all of us and for His

glory. In April we will have an opportunity to show forth these talents during Fine Arts week (details in the *Koan Zone*).

WCA Children's Choir. We have been learning hymns of praise and testimony to share with our school family. We sang *Great is Thy Faithfulness* and *Salt and Light* for the grandparents. We are invited to sing outside of our school as well (look in the *Koan Zone* for times and places, and, please, come). We desire to share the joy of singing to the Lord with all who listen.

Modular Classrooms and Thanks. We expected to occupy those much-needed classrooms at the beginning of our school year. Yet, God in His wisdom allowed a significant delay in that process. One of the blessings from the delay was an incident that brought to our attention a break in the water pipe before it could cause much damage. In order to restore heat to our school, the pipe needed to be replaced immediately. So, on the freezing night of March 2, *Agur Adams* (senior), *Mr. Peter George* (pre-K parent), and two teachers, *Mr. VanderHaak* and *Mr. Sanker* dug up the frozen ground and replaced the broken pipe by 6 AM. What an example of self-sacrificial labor for our Lord's Kingdom! We thank you in the name of our whole school community!

Booster Club. We want to thank all of the parents for their continued support of the athletic program. Be certain to congratulate the players and coaches for their time and effort during this basketball season. Be aware of two quick reminders: bring in your pennies! We are on a mission once again to collect one million pennies by the end of April. And the Booster Club will host its second annual Sports dinner on May 21 to honor our student athletes. Watch the *Koan Zone* for details.

WCA on the World Wide Web: www.wca1.org. The Internet is the fastest growing technological system in history. With tens of millions of computers already connected, the Internet is being used by people all over the world to send mail, buy goods and services, conduct research, and search out new ideas and entertainment. On the Internet, you can be both a watcher and a doer, you can look at what others have posted and at the same time publish your own works. It's no wonder it has caught on so fast.

Seeing this tremendous potential for communication, a school parent funded and initiated a

Web site for WCA last year. It has recently been upgraded and expanded, containing useful information for both current and prospective school families. There are descriptions of who and what we are as a school, our academic mission and philosophy, the school calendar for the current year, athletic game schedules, lists and descriptions of special events and activities, registration and enrollment information, as well as information about the school Society.

We plan to continue to expand the contents of the site, adding more information about our growing athletic programs, student contributions, and provide more downloadable forms for enrollment and tuition assistance. Because the Web site is always there and doesn't suffer from the effects of paper handouts and newsletters getting forgotten in the bottom of a desk or a backpack, we hope that in the long term it will become the central communication hub for the school community. Each class could post lists of homework assignments, project due dates, as well as project results for all to see. Hot lunch menus, curriculum plans, class schedules, and club activities would have a permanent home where parents and students would always know they could be found.

Drop by and see us soon!

*--Howard Bushouse
Chair, Membership and
Long Range Planning Committees*

WCA's 25th Promise Tree Auction. We had great fellowship and raised over \$15,000 (a record), for our tuition assistance program. We sold approximately 180 items, which were generously donated by students, parents, friends of WCA, and local businesses. Heartfelt thanks to Doug Hill for serving as our entertaining and effective auctioneer! Many earnest thanks to our parents, who donated funds and items, and hours of labor, and who bought the items!

*--Karen Lees
Board/PTF representative*

The PTF is embarking on an endeavor to document and retain classroom and school traditions. Our goal is to come up with a calendar that highlights school-wide, grade-specific, and classroom-specific traditions. We think this would be a wonderful tool for teachers and families new to the school. It could also be a nice addition to the 40th anniversary celebration coming up next year.

Several parents have noticed that some favorite old traditions have faded into non-existence, some lost when teachers moved on. One advantage of keeping certain grade traditions is the excitement it can generate for younger kids looking forward to that grade in the future. Traditions can draw our school together and remind us of the rich history we hold dear. We are open to any suggestions (of memories, traditions) that WCA families, teachers, administrators, or faithful supporters may want to contribute. *--Karen Lees*

To Ponder. "He that stands beneath the Cross and understands the scene dares not sin; not because there is a hell beneath him or an angry God above him, but because Holiness is felt to reign there--the ground on which he treads is sacred, the glory of the Lord encircles him, and, like Moses, he must remove the shoes from his feet. The Cross is a venerable spot. I love to linger around it, not merely that I may study the greatness of everlasting life, but that I may study the greatness of God...God never appears to be so truly great, so intensely holy, as when, from the pure energy of principle, He gives Himself in the person of His Son to die, rather than that His character should be impugned. Who dares prevaricate with moral distinctions and talk of death as a greater evil than dishonor, when God, the Mighty Maker, died rather than that truth or justice should be compromised? Who, at the foot of Calvary, can pronounce sin to be a slight matter?" *--Thornwell*

Coram Deo

