



The Messenger

Washington Christian Academy
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WCA at the Dawn of the Year 2000. As we enter the new millennium, WCA has much to be thankful for God has blessed our efforts to provide covenant children with an academically excellent education that has a distinctly Reformed Christian worldview. The stability of the school over the last 40 years is derived from its mission being rooted in the Word of God, and this is also our rock for the future. I have been a part of the school for the past three years, and I thank God that I can be a part of the WCA family of teachers, administrators, parents, and students.

As I revel in what God has done in our community, I also realize the importance of staying focused on our God-given mission. We can very easily get caught up in the day-to-day affairs of the school and neglect to keep our eyes on the vision that God has laid before us as teachers and administrators. This question has come into clear view for me particularly this year with the various hats that I have worn within the school, as I have interacted more with parents, teachers, administrators, and students. Now I see that we seriously need to contemplate how to apply God's Word to this unique place, WCA. Through my work this year as the Protestant chaplain at Georgetown University, where I interact with numerous students of various backgrounds, I have come to see more and more the need for the work we do at WCA. How we can better prepare our young people to be salt and light for Christ in a postmodern world, particularly in liberal humanistic colleges?

The book of *Ecclesiastes* provides a tremendous model for us. The writer challenges us very early in his work, stating that all of life is meaningless under the sun. The Israelites had become complacent in their faith, took God for granted, and developed an outwardly ritualistic religion. Most of our the students can recite various biblical doctrines and catechisms, but we must continually challenge them to display a true living faith in their thoughts and actions.

Formalistic faith lacks the depth necessary to explain all realities in our lives, and therefore it leads us to seek meaning in various aspects of the created order—movies, music, relationships, etc. These things will ultimately be found to be vanity.

To help our students overcome this obstacle, we as faculty and administrators need to even more consciously show them a living faith that enjoys the life that God has given us, and, at the same time, seeks the highest

excellence in all we do. This also challenges us to intentionally interact with our students in a way that is much deeper than abstract Christian rhetoric and slogans. We need to provide them more resolutely with a biblical view in all subjects we teach, and in all interactions we have with them. Moreover, we need to constantly challenge our students to overlay the Christian worldview we are teaching them, with the experiences that God has brought into their individual lives. I pray that God will give us the wisdom and courage to carry out this mission as we prepare our covenant children to be beacons of light in an increasingly decaying world.

George Sanker
 Upper School Teacher

OUR TEACHERS AND STAFF

"The Best is Best for Everyone!" One day after school, I was talking with Dr. Furlong, math and chemistry teacher in our high school, when a fourth grader came up to us to ask Dr. Furlong some questions about crystals! As I listened, I learned that Dr. Furlong had been a guest lecturer in Mrs. Robinson's Fourth Grade class, speaking about rocks, stirring the children's interest in geology. (See the comments from the fourth graders on p. 2)

How gracious God has been to provide an outstanding faculty for WCA! Our successful teachers create an excitement for learning among our students. Eme Furlong received her Ph.D. in geochemistry from Cal Tech and has taught math & chemistry at WCA for four years. She has conscientiously helped our high school students navigate these challenging subjects and go on to excel in college. This year, Dr. Furlong teaches Algebra 3, Chemistry, and Advanced Placement (AP) Chemistry. AP Chemistry is equivalent to first year college chemistry, and is considered one of the *two* hardest AP courses; in addition to the substantive work, there are numerous required laboratory experiments. Dr. Furlong has created a wonderful chemistry lab to meet the needs of these courses. Check out the bulletin boards in the Upper School hall to see pictures of our students in the lab! The chemistry students are frequently found at WCA computer work stations logging on to chemplace.com. Next year, Dr. Furlong will open an Honors Chemistry section which will allow WCA juniors to "jumpstart" the coursework for AP Chemistry and

expand their opportunities to compete in national high school science fairs, such as the Westinghouse Competition.

So, do WCA 4th graders need a PhD from Cal Tech to learn the basics about rocks? Yes, it ignites their curiosity, provides clear teaching with subject area expertise, and whets student appetites for what will be taught in the upper grades. As our elementary students learn from, and talk with, our high school teachers, their horizons are broadened and the step up to upper school is less intimidating. This is one example of how WCA teachers work together. Indeed, the best teachers are best for all our students!

*Jan Adams
Associate Headmaster of Academics*

Praise for Provision. We have a computer lab because God gave us a geometric increase of the earliest gifts toward the project. Every charitable check you write is both a gift and a statement of confidence in the recipient. It is that statement of confidence that sometimes enables the gift to grow geometrically.

Many grandparents were able to make small gifts, and a few gave thousands. A few parents and a friend of the school gave \$500-\$ 1,000 each. Two foundations, each of which represents the personal wealth accumulated over a lifetime by a devoted, Reformed Christian family, gave \$50,000 and \$20,000. These people gave not "to computers," but to the mission of WCA. They want our students to "worthily occupy their places in society, church, and state."

We told the grandparents about our technology needs in a letter last spring, and again on Grandparents Day. We sent a proposal to the Richard D. Van Lunen foundation, letting them know that our grandparents were already showing support for the project. Then we sent out a proposal to the Edgar & Elsa Prince Foundation, able to demonstrate that grandparents and the Van Lunen Foundation were already behind the project.

Every parent and friend of WCA can thank God for the increase. Make a visit to Room 15 and see what's to see, so far.

Matching Gifts Mount Up. In the short time our matching gift offer was in effect (ending December 31), 27 people sent gifts to WCA for the first time. Most are parents, many are new parents. Some are grandparents. We are so thankful for your support! The total amount that qualified was \$8,494, so we earned the full \$5,000 that the matching donors offered. Our wholehearted thanks to the two school families who offered this match.

*Robin Gropp
Director of Development*

CAPITAL BUDGET

Capital budget donations (i.e. undesignated) are at \$67,050 for the fiscal year. Don't stop now - we still need \$57,950 for the capital budget by July 31 for the roof, the modulars, and the technology development.

Computer Lab. God has generously blessed Washington Christian Academy with the ability, in one year, to advance our school's computer resources further ahead than in all previous years combined. Instead of piecing together older donated equipment, the above donations, and the inclusion of computer management as a budget line item by the Board has given us a unique opportunity to create a dynamic and effective learning environment.

Our LAN (local area network) is in place, and ready to be extended to every classroom over the next year. The 26 new Gateway computers are here. Six of them are being set up in a Media Center in the library, and 20 of them in a lab located in Classroom 15. All these will have access to the Internet. New computers have also been purchased for the teachers to use in their workroom. The best of our older computers will be reserved for classroom teachers' use and the creation of mini-labs, distributed throughout the school. They will join the computers generously donated to specific classrooms by individual families over the last few years.

And now the real work begins. Software needs to be researched and purchased, teachers trained, and the academic aspects of the technology plan implemented. We have an immediate need for legal, newer versions of word processing software. If you are no longer running an application on your computer, we may be able to use it. We also need additional printers for classroom use.

Now that the technology is almost in place, we need to address the proper stewardship of it. For guidance, we look to the parable of the talents. We have been entrusted with state-of-the-art technology, but if we do not use it to its best advantage, we are burying it in the ground. When Christ returns, He will hold us accountable as to how well we "invested" this opportunity. Careful, creative, and intelligent use of these computers will allow our students to further understand God's creation and their role in it. It is in this way we can take this gift and multiply its benefits for His kingdom here on earth. Please pray for the teachers, students, and administration as we put this gift from God to use for His glory.

*Brian Vander Haak
for Technology Committee*

OUR STUDENTS

Appetites Whetted for Geology. Dr Furlong (see Mrs. Adams' article) visited our fourth graders and talked to them about rocks. Here is what the students said: *She explained stuff so that we can understand. ♣ I liked how she talked about rocks and how she got to see a real volcano. ♣ I liked when she talked about the rock school. ♣ I learned how rocks change to different rocks when they are heated. ♣ She told us about crystals and different layers of rocks and I want to be a geologist.*

New Millennium Celebration. Our third graders had a special evening of welcoming the new millennium. They had a play, a fashion show of the past 1000 years of fashion, time capsules filled with their

favorite things, and displays of the past millennium's greatest discoveries, such as the airplane, indoor plumbing, the clock, electricity, the light bulb, etc. They also wrote poems of their wishes for this historic new year. We would like to share some excerpts with you.

"I dream
on January 1, 2000
that we will all pray
for God's grace
for love, peace, and joy for all the nations."

Amy Huntzinger

"I dream that snow will cover the earth so the earth
will be more pretty, and that no one will
be rich or poor, just happy."

Susie Branson

Athletics. The Wildcat teams have been blessed this year with a great coaching staff. The attitude of our players and the commitment each of them have towards their fellow teammates is admirable. All of the teams have had a very challenging and fun season.

During the Christmas break, the Junior Varsity girls and boys teams participated in a two-day holiday tournament. The Junior Varsity Boys and Junior Varsity Girls earned first place against From the Heart Christian School, and each team brought home a 3-foot trophy. Take a look at them in the trophy case located near the school office. Our Middle School teams are still undefeated after playing 14 games. Please check out the details of all our games on the Sports Board in the school lobby. Congratulations, Wildcats!

Did you know that WCA Wildcat teams have some of the best parental fans? We are very thankful for the parents who, under the watchful eye of God, safely and faithfully transport our players to and from practices and various games far and near. We also thank our entire WCA community for their continued prayers and general support! The teams really do appreciate you.

WCA is also blessed to have very enthusiastic cheerleaders, both for the Middle School and Varsity teams. Our cheerleaders are definitely an encouragement to our players, and their time and effort is much appreciated. Keep up the good work!

Don't forget WCA's Spirit Week, on February 7-11. Homecoming and Family Day will be held on Saturday, February 12th at Silver Spring Boys and Girls Club; including a whole afternoon activity, food and desserts. Watch for details in the Koan Zone and on special flyers. The season is quickly coming to an end, and it has been a great deal of fun. If you haven't had an opportunity to see the Wildcats in action yet, you still have a chance. Check the schedules on the Sports Board, and come and cheer the Wildcats on to give their best!

Yvonne Hollis

Alumni Update. Sandra Ritsema has been teaching in Uganda with World Harvest Mission, and WCA has joined in supporting her in God's work there. The mission team had to evacuate the Bundibugyo area before Christmas, as nearby rebel fighting got too close and dangerous. They relocated to the city of Fort Portal,

thinking they would have to stay about a week. That was eight weeks ago, with no significant progress towards being able to return. In the meantime, the mother of the family whose children Sandy is teaching has been diagnosed with an early cancer, so the family is returning to the States, and Sandy is coming with them. She hopes to return to Uganda after a month. Please, pray for Sandy during this time of great uncertainty, unsettledness, and searching for how best to serve our Lord.

BOARD AND SCHOOL FAMILY

Update from the Leadership Search

Committee. As you are already aware, James Koan has accepted a position to serve as Superintendent of the Lansing Christian Schools, in Michigan. His new position begins on July 1, 2000. Thankful for his faithful service at WCA, we all wish him and his family God's blessing as they make this transition to a new venue of ministry and service.

Spearheading WCA's search for a new headmaster, the WCA board has formed a Leadership Search Committee. Members of the committee are Jan Adams, Howard Bushouse, Ayanna Carter, Marcia DeYoung, Dorry Kenyon, Sterling Mehring, James Olthoff, and David Schutt. Since early January, the committee has been meeting weekly. Our goal is to search out and select 2-3 well-qualified candidates to present to the Board. The Board will make the final approval for the position, which begins July.

The Leadership Search Committee will involve the entire school community to the greatest extent possible. On January 11, members of the committee met with the faculty (in the afternoon) and parents (in the evening) to hear their concerns and priorities for the search. There was a large display of unity in the discussion, and the input we received has helped us create priorities for the experience and characteristics we are looking for in the new headmaster. As we seek to clarify WCA's needs more precisely, we want the community to know that we will not compromise in finding the best candidate.

The committee has prepared an advertisement for the position and is widely disseminating our need throughout the national Reformed Christian community. We are also exploring the possibility of using a consultant to assist us in the process. But most importantly, we recognize that networking is a very important means in this process. As of the last week in January, the advertisements and networking begun by contacting several possible candidates suggested by members of our school community, have already produced several resumes and expressions of interest in the position. We ask all members of the WCA community to contact any Leadership Search Committee member with the names of potential candidates, with other relevant contacts, or with any other information that might help us in our task.

Above all, we ask the entire school community to bathe this search in prayer, asking our sovereign God to

lead us to the person of His own choosing. WCA has

experienced God's faithfulness over and over during its

40-year history, and we trust Him to meet our needs again, to the glory of His name. Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever.

Dorry Kenyon, for the Search Committee

we are preparing this semester will include a gym and Upper School classrooms. Opportunity for greater community input and discussion will be announced.

Long Range Planning Committee

Parental Satisfaction Survey. The Education Committee periodically conducts a comprehensive parent survey regarding all areas of school life. This is in accord with the foundational principle of WCA, which states that home, school, and church work together to nurture and educate each child. This principle necessitates good communication between school and parents. The survey, which will be sent to each family in the near future, assists the school in this important endeavor. Please complete the survey when you receive it, and return it promptly to the school. Thoughtful and thorough completion of the survey assists in the strengthening of the education of our covenant children, for their sake and for God's glory.

Annual Promise Tree Auction. This tradition of about 25 years raises funds for tuition assistance for families in need. It was so named because the "promises" of goods and services were written on pieces of papers, and were attached to the branches of a small tree, from where they were auctioned off. This "tree," full of promises, had a beautiful symbolic meaning, so we kept the name of the event, even though our promises became too numerous to place on a small tree. Last year the Promise Tree raised a record \$16,000 for our tuition assistance program. We hope to exceed that amount this year, to have even more funds available for this very worthy cause.

Make plans to attend this fun-filled evening at 7:00 p.m. on March 25, at Einstein High School. This location will be able to accommodate a larger number of people, so invite your family and friends—this is a great way to introduce others to our school. We are pleased that Channel 9 meteorologist Doug Hill will be our auctioneer again. Many thanks to ALKS & Associates, Group Dynamic Support Systems (GDSS), Llewellyn Realtors, and Washington Dental Center for Excellence, who are underwriting part of the costs of this evening. If your business is interested in participating in this manner, please contact Susan Minite.

Pray for God's blessings on this event, and on the use of the money raised for the benefit of many children, for God's glory. Thank you for your support!

Jean Visy, parent

Long Range Planning. In December, C.A.S. Engineering surveyed our property and all current buildings and features. This week they delivered the completed site plan. This is being used in our application for two more modular buildings. But more importantly, it will be the baseline our architects will use to prepare formal expansion plans for county approval. We have met with representatives of The Facilities and Services Department of Montgomery County, and they have endorsed our moving forward with a more detailed

proposal that would include long-term lease terms and protections for investments in capitol improvements. The plans

What is the PTF? The purpose of the PTF (Parent-Teacher Fellowship) is to serve the school community. Our mission is to:

- * advocate parent involvement in the classroom
- * advocate parent involvement in the advancement of the school
- * establish and strengthen ties within the community
- * carry on traditions, in the classrooms, and school-wide.

After some reorganization in 1999, the PTF has been slowly getting on its feet again. With strong representation by WCA parents, the PTF can do tremendous things for the school. May I personally invite you to our monthly council meetings, held at 2pm on the first Friday of each month, in the small conference room off the main office. We would love your insight, ideas, and help to enhance the life of the WCA community.

*Karen Lees,
Board PTF Liaison*

"Communication! Communication!" As

our school has grown, we need to find new ways to ensure a free flow of communication. To facilitate the exchange of ideas, we placed a "Questions and Comments" box in the office window of the main entrance hall. If you have a question, personal or broader in scope, or a comment that might help in building WCA, please drop us a line by placing it into the box. If you request it, someone will get in touch with you. Let us hear from you!

To PONDER

"Eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who out of nothing created heaven and earth with all that is in them, and dost uphold and govern them by Thy eternal counsel and providence, we thank Thee that for the sake of Christ Thy Son Thou art our God and our Father. Help us to trust Thee so completely that we may have no doubt that thou wilt provide us with all things necessary for body and soul. Help us to know that whatever evil Thou dost send upon us in this troubled life, Thou wilt turn it to our good, even as Thou art able to do it, being Almighty God, and determined to do it, being a faithful Father. Amen."

*Prayer based on Heidelberg Catechism's Answer 26, Guilt, Grace, and Gratitude
Modern Reformation, Sep/Oct 1999
Modern Reformation, a publication of Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, is
available in the WCA Heritage Library*