

The **Messenger**

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The Board Looks Ahead

As we are celebrating 40 years of God's faithfulness and blessings for WCA, we have also started the strategic planning process to define and shape the future course of the school that was so wisely conceived by our founders.

A strategic plan is a formidable task and rightly belongs to our entire educational community; founders, friends, alumni, faculty, and families all have a stake in the outcome, and will have a place in the process. Here, the Board would like to share its vision of where we see God is leading our school.

The Past Is Prologue

We desire to stay the course of our founding principles and Reformed convictions, instilling in our students the belief that God is sovereign over every part of His creation for His glory, and that we should live our lives in that light.

Real Growth Is Deeper, Not Just Wider

There is still some room for numerical growth within WCA, as the High School should be about 3 times its current size to be at a sustainable level. But we are also committed to filling the need for a new model of Christian schooling, for a new standard of excellence in the Washington D.C. area.

A New Campus

God's blessings of the past and present are compelling us to seek a new campus. The strategic plan will help us determine the exact form of future facility needs, whether it be one large new setting for the entire school, split lower and upper-school campuses, or even other alternatives that have not yet been considered. What is certain is that our space must be augmented in some fashion within the next two years, and that we trust God for provision of the opportunity and the necessary resources for such an endeavor.

Shared Blessing And A Leadership Responsibility

God has positioned us in a strategic location in our nation's capital, and given us a wealth of resources. We are blessed with the truly unique and powerful combination of a Reformed educational approach, diversity, and a track record of strong academic achievement. We believe that God wants us to be a leadership school that blesses all Christian schools in our region.

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PAST AND FUTURE

Thoughts from our Headmaster

Recently we celebrated the birth and 40 years of growth of Washington Christian Academy. In a series of events, we remembered and gave thanks for God's special blessings on an endeavor to educate covenant children for His glory, to prepare them for faithful and able work in His kingdom. Reverend Doug Bratt reminded the students of their rich heritage during Chapel. At the Reunion Coffee, we enjoyed the company of founders, previous headmasters, teachers, parents, and alumni, some of whom narrated a slide presentation of WCA's history. At the Banquet, held in a beautifully decorated white tent on our yard, 180 guests celebrated God's great work at WCA with a feast, delighted in our students' performance of a scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and were inspired by Reverend Richard Ellis' thoughts on the depth of our heritage and the height of our calling.

Our 40th anniversary accentuates all that God has done over these years in the lives of so many children who have grown to be men and women serving the Lord today. And we daily continue to experience God at work all around us, from the beauty of His creation displayed in the rich color of autumn foliage collected by the students or the bugs they studied in science classes, to the growing academic program of our school, to the godly character our student athletes exhibit as they continue to play hard with positive spirits regardless of their win/loss record.

While the leadership of our school is working on a strategic plan, the Board, the administration, and the faculty also established goals to focus on in the current school year.

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WCA Website

If you have never been to the WCA on the Worldwide Web, it is time to visit. Check out the many useful information items about our school, our programs, our staff, our students. Enjoy the many pictures, take a look at upcoming sport events, and be enriched by the articles relating to Reformed Christian education.

This might happen by developing a much needed curriculum for other schools, or by building a Reformed Christian High School that would serve our geographic area. The exciting strategic planning will flesh this out and make it a shared conviction.

A Community Of Learners

The Board's vision for WCA is to become a community of life-long learners, where teachers can come to grow; where personal development is encouraged, planned for, and subsidized; where parents are equipped to face the challenges of raising covenant children in a world that is saturated by popular culture; where the school community intentionally stands together.

-Howard Bushouse
President of the Board of Directors

We want to continually hold each other accountable for the fulfillment of these goals set before us:

-To experience an on-going refreshment and growth in our *personal relationship with Jesus Christ*, and to model this walk with integrity before each other, and before our students and their families.

-To further develop a *passion for high standards* throughout every area of school life and program.

-To continue to develop high qualities of *professionalism* among the faculty and staff (biblical stewardship – being accountable to God).

-To further develop and build the strong base of “*community*” throughout the school (faculty and staff, Board, parents and students, within their own group, and with each other).

VOCATION – THE CALL TO ALL BELIEVERS TO A PLACE OF SERVICE

The last of a series of seven articles on Reformed education

“Each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him.” (1 Corinthians 7:17)

“There is not a square inch in the entire creation about which Jesus Christ does not cry out, ‘This is Mine! This belongs to me!’” –Abraham Kuyper

“The action of a shepherd in keeping sheep, performed as I have said in his kind, is as good a work before God as is the action of a judge in giving sentence, or of a magistrate in ruling, or a minister in preaching.” –William Perkins (1558-1602)

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

There are no ordinary people, and there are no ordinary tasks for God's people. Christianity dignifies man by honoring him as the very image of the invisible God, and it honors the believer's work by making it a calling or vocation from God. The word vocation comes from Latin *vocare*, “to call.”

The Reformation was a watershed in social thinking. One of the revolutionary intellectual changes of that period was the radically new vision of the dignity and meaning of ordinary work. To the medieval mind, godly work was only within the precincts of the visible church; God's call to certain believers was a call *out of the world* and into the walled garden of the monastery, into the protection of the priesthood. All other vocations were considered dust. The reformers saw the vocation of the Christian as God's call *into the world*, without the sacred/secular distinction. All work, even the most mundane, is dignified by seeing it as the task God calls the worker to. Martin Luther wrote, “the works of monks and priests, however holy and arduous they be, do not differ one whit in the sight of God from work of the rustic laborer in the field or the woman going about her household task, but that all works are measured before God alone.” John Calvin taught that the individual believer has a vocation to serve God in the world, and thereby “appearing truly respectable and being considered highly important in the sight of God.”

The reformers distinguished between a primary and secondary call. The primary call is our Lord's call to all people to “Follow me.” It is the same call for all, in the Old Testament and the New, as God calls a people for his name. Secondary calling is what we are called to do as we follow him. God calls each believer into the world to build His kingdom by taking to hand a task designed for that individual (Colossians 3:23, Ephesians 2:10).

This article will continue in the next Messenger.

The whole series is posted on the WCA website, in the Archives section.

THE STEPHEN T.M. TAM TUITION ASSISTANCE AWARD

For the next three years a special tuition assistance award has been funded by a donor who wishes to honor her deceased brother, Stephen T. M. Tam.

The donor and her brother came to the United States from China as children, and their lives were changed by generous gifts that enabled them both to be educated in a Christian school.

This school year, the \$2,000 award has been granted to one of our new high school students on the basis of need, academic strength, and Christian character. Praise be to God!

COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN

7278 is the number!

All federal employees know what this means, and we encourage all of you to name WCA as beneficiary as you sign up now for your charitable contributions through CFC throughout 2001.

In the current year, our first as part of the CFC, WCA is receiving about \$8,000. This is part of why our students can enjoy a better facility this year. Thanks to many generous folks.

STRATEGIC PLANNING BEGINS

What do you get when you take a diverse group of individuals with different tastes, interests, perspectives, and priorities, and set them down at a table? Chaos. But when those people are bound by the kinship of Christ's blood and united in a common purpose for His glory? Synergy. Synergy is that powerful thing that happens when you combine simple elements to create something that is greater than the sum of its individual parts.

We are witnessing this synergy in the strategic planning committee that was formed to create a strategic plan for the school. This was last done in 1994. In the light of our recent and accelerating growth curve, it is time to revisit our spiritual, social, and academic mission. We also need to clearly delineate a vision that the WCA community should strive for in the future.

The school community has been blessed with a professional facilitator. Steve Lynott is using the talents God has blessed him with to take a diverse group of society members and move them towards that elusive goal of synergy. Individuals on the committee represent a larger constituency. The Board, administration, teachers, students, and parents are all represented.

The committee is in the early stages of creating a long-range plan. We are currently examining problems and identifying priorities. As this progresses into the new calendar year, input will be sought from the entire WCA community.

Within the committee there is a strong desire to create a plan that is sound, comprehensive, realistic, and serves the needs of the entire community. The "vision thing" can be elusive. Please pray for the individual members of the committee, and for the blessing of synergy as we address the future direction of WCA.

—Brian Vander Haak
For the Strategic Planning Committee

Where We Are - and Where We Are Heading

The annual Fall meeting of the school Society took place on the evening of October 2. Many reports on the activities of the past summer and those planned for the coming year were presented by the Board, its committees, and the Headmaster. The main goals of the Board for the coming year will focus on the areas of the Headmaster search, facility needs, the academic program, and a new Strategic plan.

The Education committee reported that it, along with Ron Whipple, has reviewed and revised its organization. In the future it will concentrate on setting the policies for qualifications of faculty and administrators, and policies regarding the main academic program, while leaving the actual task of staff recruitment and interviewing to the Headmaster.

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Fun and Learning – While Playing



“If we offend, it is with our goodwill./ That you should think we come not to offend/ But with goodwill. To show our simple skill,/ That is the true beginning of our end.”

That is how the prologue begins for the play to honor the King's wedding day in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night Dream*. That is how our own play within the play began as well, with goodwill and simple skill, as students in grades 4-12 embarked upon a 2-week Shakespeare Festival at the end of September. Our goal was simple yet monumental. Take 15 sets of classes, hand them scripts, designate scenes, and meet on the stage in the APR in two weeks to commend Shakespeare to the rest of our school community. The ingredients went a little further. Add the mesmerizing backdrop of a royal wedding, the story of mismatched romances, a host of other oddities, and a miscreant named Puck. Sprinkle it with fairy dust, and voila—Washington Christian Academy presents our version of this Shakespearean classic.

For two weeks, the halls were transformed by playbills proclaiming the grand event to come. Girls glittered in their "fairy dust" and boys practiced their falsettos. Students scrambled to play the parts of rocks, trees, and walls—talking or otherwise. They memorized lines and rehearsed them in their classes and in their sleep. As Bottom and Flute planned to perform for the great royal wedding, so we were preparing ourselves for a kind of celebration too—one of spirited language, whiplash staging, and premeditated bedlam.

And in the end, after the last train of students bounded from the stage to clamorous applause, we would proclaim, as Puck, "If we shadows have offended/ Think but this and all is mended:/ That you have but slumbered here/ While these visions did appear."

—Idelette Riffert
English Teacher

YOU MAKE IT WORK

Some of you never got an opportunity to fill out the volunteering form, "You Make it Work," due to an oversight on our part. This is a required part of the admissions process. So please, stop by the office and quickly fill out the form so we can know what skills and interests you bring.

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One of the main tasks of the committee for this year will be to review the school-wide music and Fine Arts curriculum and recommend future directions for it.

The Facility Planning committee is working to renegotiate our building lease with the county, but renewal of the lease will not take place until the county finalizes its reworking of the regulations for leasing closed schools. The committee is also keeping its eyes open around the local community for opportunities to rent or purchase additional facility space in order to avert an impending space crunch that will occur as our middle school students advance to high school over the next few years.

The Search committee is continuing to work with our consultant from Paideia to find a new Headmaster. This is a crucial period, as this is the time of year when administrators often begin thinking seriously about moving on to a new school. The committee will be meeting in mid-November to begin reviewing candidates.

Paul DiPiazza, on behalf of the Finance committee, was pleased to report that we are on track for a balanced budget this year, and that the “red ink” that had been accumulating on our balance sheets in the past is almost all gone! Thanks to all of you who labor and sacrifice for our school, and Praise be to God!

Ron Whipple presented a summary report of operational issues, including the decision over the summer to implement long-needed facility improvements, such as the new hallway and APR flooring, the remodeling of the front entrance, and the acquisition of our first real school bus. A change has also been made in the organization of the administration. After a careful review this summer, Mr. Whipple and the rest of the administration decided to implement a structure that has lower-school and upper-school Principals, with Carol Parent and Jan Adams filling those roles, respectively. The administration hopes that this structure will provide for a better chain of command and clearer lines of authority and communication.

Robin Gropp, Director of Advancement, told the Society that contributions during the last school year were at an all-time high, in spite of the uneasiness that usually accompanies a change in leadership.

Finally, Steve Lynott reviewed the Board's goal to develop a new strategic plan for WCA over the next year. It has been more than 6 years since the last such plan and most of the goals of that plan have been met. The process for developing the new plan will involve all constituencies of the school, including Board, staff, and Society members, students, and parents.

—Howard Bushouse

The Giving Season

Don't forget to extend your gift giving this year to the whole community of covenant children at WCA. If you're a parent, you probably consider the school the second most significant institution in your family's life, after your church. WCA is a nonprofit organization, too, and looks to the people of God for support. First-class education is expensive, but it's worth every penny!

The goals in this chart are modest. We are asking the Lord to bring us a few individuals who can take us to higher levels in view of the facility needs of the very near future, and we ask each of you to pray for the funding needs of WCA, even as you consider your own part.

Appreciated stock makes a great end-of-year gift!

Academy Fund Goals

Donor Category	1999-2000 Actual	2000-2001 Goals
35 Special Friends	\$54,289 (9 donors)	\$70,000 (12 donors)
WCA 100	\$71,546 (40 donors)	\$80,000 (48 donors)
Academy Patrons	\$10,695 (18 donors)	\$15,000 (28 donors)
Gideon's Band	\$14,701 (108 donors)	\$20,000 (130 donors)
TOTAL	\$151,231 (175 donors)	\$185,000 (208 donors)

—Ron Whipple
Headmaster

Giant and Safeway: Register Once and Save No Receipts

Giant and Safeway continue their generous support of school technology programs. This year, they made the process even easier. Instead of collecting the saved receipts, just take your bonus card to the office at any store to register the school of your choice. You may also register your school online at www.giantfood.com or at www.proghqtrs.com/safeway. For Safeway, you can also call 1-800-352-4658. What an easy way to help our school!

WANTED

WCA MOM, PART-TIME

Former WCA parent John Bernbaum needs a half-time administrative assistant in his work as president of the Russian-American Christian University in Moscow. The position is based in Silver Spring. Hours are flexible. Call John at 301-681-1456.

Agenda!

One of the communication tools WCA has provided to students again this year is the WCA Student Agenda. Each student from Grade One through 12 has been issued an agenda.

Teachers in the Lower School have agreed to three primary rules of use for these agendas. The first is that we will refer to the book as our “agenda”—last year, during our first year of using this tool, we found that teachers and parents sometimes referred to the book using various names and this caused some confusion. Secondly, we will require students to carry the agenda with them to every class and to daily record their homework in it. Parents will want to check their child’s agenda each night for assignments. Finally, we will use the plastic pouch in the front of the agenda as a communication facilitator to carry messages back and forth between teacher and parent. Teachers will check that pouch daily for messages and parents should do the same.

With consistent daily use of the student agenda, we hope to teach responsibility and organizational skills to our students and improve home/school communications.

—Carol Parent
Lower School Principal

From Here and There

Kindergarteners visited Rock Hill Orchard, and Meadowside Nature Center, and had a Harvest Festival. Kindergarteners (Indians) and First graders (Pilgrims) had a wonderful Thanksgiving Feast together.

First graders had a great field trip to the Baltimore Zoo, which was an introduction to their unit on animals. The very first animal they saw was a kookaburra, one of the Olympic mascots. The children recently studied the Olympics, and they were very excited to recognize this famous bird.

Second graders went to the National Arboretum.

Third graders made lentil soup as they learned about Esau. They also memorized the names of Jacob’s 12 sons and one daughter.

Fourth graders invited the second graders to share their expertise of insects with them. They read reports and used puppets and rubber insects to share their knowledge.

Fifth graders had a field trip to the Baltimore Aquarium.

The high school students had a great two-day retreat at Rehoboth Beach. Their topic was *holiness*. They also were hosts and served at the Reformation Day Service at Wallace Church, according to our tradition.

The names of the **upper school honor roll students** are listed in the Upper School Update. Be sure to check it out, and thank God with us for all these hard working students.

PTF

The Parent Teacher Fellowship exists at WCA to support parents and teachers in the task of educating our children and nurturing the school community. Presently, it is headed by Connie Mehring and performs many functions.

It operates the system of homeroom parents, who help teachers in the classrooms, organize field trips and class parties, etc. PTF also organizes school-wide fellowship events, like the beginning-of-school-year tea party for parents, the volunteer appreciation party, the traditional Christmas Bazaar, etc.

While PTF is not a fundraiser organization, as WCA relies on volunteer gift support from donors who are committed to the mission of WCA, PTF nevertheless contributes significantly to the improvements we see around us. From the Sally Foster profit, WCA purchased the convertible tables/benches for the APR last year, and new blinds for the classrooms this year. With “Boxtops for Education” and Giant/Safeway receipts, our school bought computer and playground equipment. The soda machines, single-handedly operated by our tireless Maureen Rosetta, brighten the lives of our children and benefit our art program (last year they helped to pay for the kiln). The profit from the annual Promise Tree Auction benefits our tuition assistance program, thus yielding eternal dividends.

PTF contributes significantly to the caring community atmosphere that makes WCA so special.

—Claire McGoff
Parent

Sports

Washington Christian Academy is blessed to have a sports program that has existed for the past five years. Jay VanDyken, our Athletic Director, and WCA’s dedicated coaching staff are working hard to transform WCA’s sports program into something to be proud of. A young sports program such as ours takes time and patience to gracefully mature. At times, it may appear that we are a seasoned program, and, yes, we have a lot to be thankful for in this year 2000, but our program is still maturing and requires patience and your heartfelt support. Come to our games and cheer our athletes on. The schedule of games is on our bulletin board, as well as on the WCA web site.

On December 2, at 7 p.m., WCA will celebrate 2000-2001 fall sports and the athletes and coaches that have participated in soccer, volleyball, and cross-country. Another example of God’s plentiful blessings on our school. Join us in this celebration!

—Yvonne Hollis
Parent



Thanksgiving and Christmas

These two great holidays are closely connected, as on Thanksgiving we give thanks for the many blessings of God for us and for our country (look up the Thanksgiving Declaration by Lincoln at the WCA website), and the greatest blessings of all is the Lord Jesus, whose first coming to earth we celebrate at Christmas.

“Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and being built up in Him and established in your faith, as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.” (*Colossians 2:6-7*)

Who In The World Can Answer My Question?

One of the greatest challenges for any organization is to maintain good communication. The dynamics of having 230 families that include over 310 Moms and Dads and 360 students, along with 60 faculty and staff, all working together in a vibrant, active community, present major challenges on how to keep everyone well informed—at least that is the goal. Various means, such as the teachers’ newsletters, the principal’s newsletters, *The Messenger*, telephone answer bank, e-mail, website, etc. are just some of the ways currently in place. Oh, yes, we cannot forget the “word-of-mouth” means to transfer information. We are always looking for better creative ways to accomplish the goal of good communication and are open to any of your suggestions. But often we are met with the inquiry of, who do we go to find out about this or that? Let me share some general principles to go by to facilitate your inquiry.

Go to the person in charge of area for which you have a question. For example:

- ▶ Anything dealing with your students’ classroom or subject see that specific teacher.
- ▶ Matters dealing with Lower School issues would go to Mrs. Parent (LS Principal) and those for the Upper School would go to Mrs. Adams (US Principal).
- ▶ Financial inquiries could go to Mrs. Arnoult, Business Manager.
- ▶ Fund raising or advancement issues could go to Mrs. Gropp, Advancement Director.
- ▶ Food Service questions would go first to the respective Principal and then probably referred to that Director.
- ▶ Athletic issues should go to the respective coaches or to Mr. Jay Van Dyken, the Athletic Director.
- ▶ General organization or legal issues would be directed to the Headmaster.

And finally, if you really cannot figure out where to go with your question, call the office and they should be able to route you to the right person. Please don’t hold your inquiry back. We may have to go looking to find the answer, but we will get there. We enjoy working together with you.

—Ron Whipple

MANY THANKS FOR MANY HANDS

On the day of the Reunion Coffee and Anniversary Banquet, I was immersed all day in the warm community that is WCA. This love we pour out for the children of God’s covenant is rich, almost dazzling when concentrated into a single day. Looking around me, I felt that anyone could tell whose disciples these were.

It’s this kind of love that makes our educational endeavor so much more than just a school. The spirit of caring was contagious, and it seemed to spread from the volunteers to every guest who attended, many of whom had not been to a WCA event in decades.

I join the rest of the Administration and the Board in thanking the dozens of volunteers, parents, friends of the school, and students, who made our celebrations happen, and who always make good things happen at WCA.

I will mention only a few who led the efforts; each of these was helped by many more:

- ▶ Alison Beatty, Nell Van Dyken, Cobie Jansen, Irene Ritsema, Betty de Haas, and Nancy Keegan served on the Founders Committee.
- ▶ Howard and Pat Bushouse chaired the banquet committee.
- ▶ Jane Butcher made the tent beautiful.
- ▶ Priscilla Parker decorated the tables for the Reunion Coffee.
- ▶ Tom Hirsch was chef for the banquet, and Helen Dana catered the coffee.
- ▶ Maureen Rosetta (and others) organized student waiters and clean up crews.
- ▶ Marilyn Hoobler organized the slide presentation for the coffee.
- ▶ Marge Dick created the visual display of staff members.
- ▶ Ron Boss, Myrtle Van Laar, Nancy Keegan, Bill George, Jim Olthoff, Jan Adams narrated the slide presentation.
- ▶ Hannah Adams, Katiana Adrien, Susanna Brockman, Avi De Silva, Ben Kitchens, Ched Nunez, and Courtney O’Dell performed a scene from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* under Brian Vander Haak’s direction and with help from Barbara Drew.
- ▶ Myrtle Van Laar marked the event for us with a plaque explaining the meaning of our school logo.

—Robin Gropp

TO PONDER . . .

Lord, send us anywhere, only accompany us. Place any burden upon us, only sustain us. Sever any ties except that which binds us to Thy heart. Bless this food to the nourishment of our bodies, and our souls to the service of Christ.

—The grace used by General Robert E. Lee

Coram Deo