

The Messenger

Washington Christian Academy
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REFLECTIONS

Larry Danner, Headmaster

The following article is a condensation of the speech Mr. Danner delivered at the 2005 Friends of the School banquet.

Extraordinary Lives

I want to talk to you about an extraordinary cause and an extraordinary life. The extraordinary cause is the work of God at Washington Christian Academy. The extraordinary life is the one you can live.

Let me talk first about the extraordinary cause. One of the last things Jesus said to his followers was this: "Go into all the world and make disciples." Or, to put it another way, "Go into all the world and transform lives." To be a part of the transformation of a life is to be a part of an extraordinary cause.

Now, the prime opportunity for that transformation to take place is in childhood. Let me get you to do a little exercise with me. Think of all that happened in your life from the moment you entered a school building the first time in your life until the moment of your graduation. Most of us have lived all the rest of our days as a response to what happened to us during those years. The truth is that those are the most formative years of a human life and we get one shot to get it right. If you want an extraordinary cause, then invest in children, in the hope for what they will achieve and, more importantly, hope for who they will become.

Many of you have seen pictures of the land we want to buy and the buildings we want build, but the buildings and the land are not the cause. They are simply the means we need to carry out the cause. What is the cause? It is the children and the young people who will walk that campus. They are the cause. It is the hope that their lives represent that is the cause, and an extraordinary cause it is.

What about that extraordinary life? Let me remind you of a story that most of you know well. The weary band of disciples had left Jesus on the shore and they were alone in a boat in the middle of a lake in the middle of a storm in the middle of the night. They were working hard but accomplishing little, pulling on oars but going nowhere. They were tired and they were afraid. They looked up and out of the darkness, and into their futility, into their fatigue, into their fear came Jesus walking on the water. Peter was in the boat and after he had recovered from his initial surprise and shock, he said he wanted to go to Jesus on the water. Jesus told him to come. So Peter got out of the boat

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Information Technology at WCA

If you asked me what a school should do to improve its technology services, I probably would not place "moving the campus to two interim locations" at the top of that list. However, as we have seen in many other areas, the Lord has shown His smiling face behind what we saw as a frowning providence. The challenges associated with the move forced some changes to our technology plans that have resulted in improvements in the use of computers by both the teachers and students.

Wireless Networks

Our first challenge was being able to connect the computers to the school network. In our previous facility, we had the liberty to install cables, often running down walls or around floorboards. We did not want to disrupt the facilities of our host churches with this kind of wire-stringing, so we decided we had to go "wireless," and over the summer installed wireless networks in both of the host churches. This technology has worked extremely well for us and has brought with it other benefits. Our teachers are now able to access the network from their classrooms and from the teacher workrooms. Many teachers use multiple rooms; they are able to just carry their computer from one room to another.

Teacher and Students Laptops

In our interim sites, most of the classrooms are used by our host churches during the evenings and/or on weekends. Because these rooms are not locked, we

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An artist's rendering of WCA's future home.

A Teaching Devotion

Samuel Johnson, the 18th century English man of letters, observed that we more often need to be reminded than taught. An excellent devotion shared recently with our faculty reminded me of two important truths that we sometimes tend to forget in the midst of the busyness and cares of daily school life.

Designing courses, preparing lessons, grading papers, conducting field trips, leading devotions, mentoring students, monitoring halls and lunchrooms and recess, supervising arrival and dismissal, meeting with parents...these and a host of other responsibilities often define a teacher's "typical" day. And so, when Mrs. Carter—whose "typical day" is probably busier than what I described!—shared what a *privilege* it is to teach in a Christian school, her words quickly caught my attention. As she spoke, I realized again the truth of what she was sharing. It *is* an amazing privilege, as well as an awesome responsibility, to bring the reality of the living God and the truths of His Word to the hearts and minds of these "little ones" each day. To discuss the most important matters of the heart and mind *in luce aeternitatis*—in the light of eternity—with young people prepared by believing parents to receive them, to move each day among like-minded, gracious colleagues who know and love Christ and who are seeking to integrate their faith with their intellectual passions, all in an environment that encourages, indeed exists for, just such a purpose: that *is* a privilege!

The second truth that was brought home—again—was just as significant. As we handle these matters of eternal significance, we are strengthened by the knowledge that we are part of a long and noble tradition, sharing the calling of teachers who have gone before us. There is a sense in which Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, Kuyper, and Machen are as much our peers as they are our predecessors. We "partner with the past" as we hand on the truths of the faith, and there is great strength and inspiration to be drawn from that knowledge.

Yes, the teaching life is a demanding one, but a privileged one that carries with it, in the examples of those who have gone before us, rich resources upon which to draw. It is good to be reminded of these things that we may go about the daily routines in the name of Christ and for the glory of God.

—Bill Zimmerman
Principal

Upcoming Events

ALUMNI NIGHT: Tuesday, January 3

Basketball Game, 5-7pm, at Silver Spring International Middle School. All alumni (WCA, SSCA, WCS) are invited to play. If interested, contact Mr. Tarry at ptarry@washingtonchristian.org.

Alumni Pizza Party, 7:15pm, at the DiPiazza's, 9203 Crosby Road. \$7 per person. RSVP to alumni@washingtonchristian.org.

Please help us maintain an accurate Alumni database. Please send the address of any alumni, including WCS and SSCA, to alumni@washingtonchristian.org.

SOCIETY MEETING: January 30, 7:30pm, at Global Mission Church. Membership information can be found on the website.

SPRING PLAY: March 17 and 18

PROMISE TREE AUCTION: Saturday, March 25. Hundreds of services, class creations, and other goods are auctioned. Contact Jean Visy if you would like to contribute a service or item.

SNOW BALL: a special Prom night for parents and other adults, organized by our Junior & Senior Classes.

—Jean Visy
for PTF



Jesse Showalter and David Foxworthy, 8th graders, are reading to and questioning lower school students about the voyage of the Mayflower in the "Life in the day of a Pilgrim" intergrades activity.

To engage 8th graders in their study of the time of the pilgrims, Ms. Ritsema, their history teacher, assigned them to teach some aspect of the period to younger grades. They researched their area of interest, and created 12 interactive centers for 1st-5th graders, focusing on various topics from period games and crafts, to weaponry demonstrations, drama, reading, trivia, etc. This enhanced the younger children's appreciation for the historic time of the Pilgrims, fitting into their Core Knowledge section of American History, and gave them positive role models in upper grades. The 8th graders, on the other hand, gained better knowledge of the material, and also benefited from the teaching experience and the interaction with the younger students.

EXTRAORDINARY LIVES —Continued from page 1

and walked on the water. Now, it is true that after a bit, he took his eyes off of Jesus, panicked, and began to sink, and Jesus had to save him. But for a little while, he walked on the water.

Until you are willing to attempt the extraordinary, your life can be nothing but ordinary. Unless you are willing to get out of the boat, you will never know what it is like to walk on the water.

There are a lot of things that keep us in the boat. Our friends are in the boat. No one else is getting out of the boat. The boat is familiar. It feels safe in the boat. It's risky getting out of the boat. Those waves look pretty big. Skepticism keeps us in the boat. This thing can't be done. Men don't walk on water. Besides, we might end up looking like a fool if we get out of the boat. We never have to look very far to find reasons to stay in the boat.

You don't have to work very hard or take any risks to live an ordinary life. But if you want your life to make a difference, then somewhere, sometime, someplace, you have to get out of the boat.

An ordinary life never becomes an extraordinary life until it becomes a part of an extraordinary cause. For in that cause is our opportunity to make a difference. It is an extraordinary thing to think that we can play a role in changing and transforming the life of a fellow human being.

I want you to take a second and look around. Do you know what you are looking at? You are looking at the divinely appointed means for turning the hope we have for our children into a reality. Understand the power of the life that has been given to you. You and I are God's divinely appointed means for transforming the lives of a generation.

The only question is, will we take advantage of the opportunity before us or will we stay in the boat? I am inviting you to be a part of something extraordinary. What have you got to lose but an ordinary life? In the end, your life will not be measured by what you have gained, but by what you have given. Get out of the boat. Dare to do something extraordinary.

I know that the thing we are attempting to do seems huge. But it comes down to a choice. We can look at the land, the buildings, all of the work, all of the obstacles, all of the millions it will cost, and say "This can't be done." Or, we can look at our children, and say, "This must be done."

A season of prayer for WCA

This fall, the Board of Directors is calling the WCA community to a season of prayer for the school. We have seen God work amazing miracles in the previous 18 months, as all of the permits (water, sewer, traffic, and more) needed for us to go ahead with the purchase of the Batchellors Forest Road property have been obtained from Montgomery County. God has truly blessed the entire process.

The school community now stands at a time of great opportunity! In order to complete the purchase of the land and begin construction of the buildings, the Board is working on obtaining financing for the project. Linked with this is a Capital Campaign that is already underway and will be expanded during the fall.

The Board asks you to join us in praying for the financing plans, Capital Campaign, work with the architects and construction company, and most of all for God to bring us many more students to enjoy the reverent, adventurous, academically serious education that is distinctive to WCA. A recent evening of corporate prayer was a time of great blessing, and more of these are planned. Also, if you would like to receive regular prayer request updates by email, please contact us at prayer@washingtonchristian.org.



Among others, Kristen Kenlaw, Elizabeth Kenyon, Evan Kuester, and Zack Labutta are inducted into the National Honor Society.

WCA has joined the ranks of 16,000 other schools nationwide in becoming a chapter in the National Honor Society. In a special and festive assembly, we inducted 11 of our juniors and seniors. The Society was founded in 1921 by the National Association of Secondary School principals "to create an enthusiasm for scholarship, to stimulate a desire to render service, to promote worthy leadership, and to encourage the development of character in the nation's high school students." These qualities are consonant with our mission to raise students who will "occupy their places worthily in society, church, and state." We nurture these qualities for the glory of God and for the advancement of His Kingdom.



Our winning Varsity Girls Soccer team in action.

Photo by FJPearce

WCA Sports News

Congratulations to our Varsity Teams! The Varsity Boys soccer team won first place in the League as well as becoming Tournament Champions for the first time in the school's history. AJ Rosetta was voted by the coaches of all the league teams as Player of the Year.

The Varsity Girls Volleyball team was also League and Tournament Champions. Allison Campbell was honored as Player of the Year.

Our Varsity Girls Soccer team won 1st place in the League, and second place in the Tournament.

Check our website for upcoming dates for our basketball games. Come out and support our teams!

TECHNOLOGY

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couldn't install permanent computers for the teachers or set up one designated room as a computer lab. To face this challenge, we purchased 46 Dell laptop computers, one for each teacher and twenty to be used by students. Now, teachers are able to use them at school and take them home in the evening to do more work! And with our wireless network, they can (and do) take them from class to class. Several teachers have commented to me that they are using the computers more now than they have ever before.

The student laptops are used in conjunction with classroom activities. Teachers reserve the number of laptops they need for their particular class. We have a laptop cart that travels from room to room, bringing the computer lab to the students instead of having to take the students to the computer lab. This added flexibility has enabled an increased use of computers for classroom instruction. In addition to the subjects that use them each class period (Keyboarding, Computers, and Computer Graphics), they've been used in Geography, Theology, Literature, History, and Science.

Our computer screen projector has also gotten more of a workout this year. It has been relatively simple for teachers to set up the projector, connect their laptop, and use the Internet (or other programs) to enhance their lessons.

New School Website

If you haven't looked recently, go to www.washingtonchristian.org and you will see the results of another recent technology project: our new school website. We began by identifying a professional website designer and worked with her to create the structure of the site and give it a new look. We were able to incorporate much of the work done for us last year by Crane Marketing. After a few design revisions and much discussion about the structure and organization of the site, we officially came "online" October 15th. We are committed to keep the information relevant and timely. Keep checking back and you will see our content expanding and improving in the months (and years) ahead. You could even make the WCA website your default home page!

We're thankful to our gracious God to see these new capabilities in place and already improving the quality of our school's programs and community presence. However, we're really only just getting started. In our interim locations, we will be able to continue this progress, making improvements in our use of technology in the classrooms, in our administrative procedures, and in our communications with parents and the entire WCA community. We're also looking ahead to our new facilities working with the architects to ensure that our new buildings are designed and built to provide the highest levels of technology services. But, that should be the subject of another article...

*—David Hawes
Teacher, Webmaster*



Each 5th grader prepared a diorama based on their research of the lives of Native Americans. Abigail Kulberg displays her "village."



Friends of WCA

One of the highlights of our school year is the annual fall gathering in the fall for dinner together and the opportunity to focus on the mission of Christian education. As time for the banquet approached, excitement began to mount as a waiting list developed for the first time in this event's history.

The beautiful fall evening of October 14th found the Chevy Chase Woman's Club bursting at the seams with many friends of WCA. Several founders of the school were present, as well as many past Board members, and parents from the 60's, 70's, and 80's. There were also former students from the 60's. An especially poignant moment was the invocation offered by Irene Monsma, one of the people God used to start Washington Christian School. Hearing her prayer for God's blessing to continue was a vivid reminder of the faithful work of so many that we now have an opportunity to build upon.

David Calkins of Urban BBQ prepared the sumptuous dinner, served by our students. Elizabeth Bushouse provided background piano music, and Jim and Esther Steele uplifted us with their saxophone-piano duets. After dinner, Board president Andy Warren shared with obvious passion what God has done in the development of the Batchellors Forest Road property as a permanent home for WCA. Andy recounted how our professional consultants were amazed at

the numerous obstacles that were overcome in such a short period of time. Against the odds, the neighborhood citizen association explicitly supported us before the Planning Board, the sewer category was changed in our favor, our transportation plan was approved, and the alignment of the Intercounty Connector was finalized at the right moment, all of which made the final approval of our plan before the Planning Board possible. The President of the Board announced that, by God's providential provision, we have achieved Record Plat approval, the final step before getting our building permits.

We were then blessed with an address by our headmaster, Larry Danner. He challenged each of us by stating, "An ordinary life can never become an extraordinary life until it becomes a part of an extraordinary cause. For in that cause is our opportunity to make a difference." Mr. Danner then said that an opportunity would be given soon for each person to join in our "Building the Promise" capital campaign.

One parent who was attending for the first time said, "It is unbelievable that an event like this would have a waiting list. I think many in the Washington area are hearing about what God is doing at WCA and they want to be a part of it!"

—Connie Mehring
Banquet co-chair





Unfinished expressive charcoal self portrait by senior Sarah Huntzinger.

From *Here* and *There*

Kindergarteners visited **Phillips Farm**. They saw, even fed, several animals, took a hayride, and picked pumpkins.

1st graders will attend the **Nativity Tour at the National Gallery of Art**. Docent Susan Scola, art teacher at the Fourth Presbyterian School, will lead the children through the events leading up to the birth of Christ using paintings and sculptures in the Gallery. This will supplement their study on Egypt and prepare them for the coming Advent.

1st and 2nd graders enjoyed a joint field trip to the **Baltimore Zoo** to enhance the 2nd graders' study on animal classifications and the 1st graders' upcoming study on Lewis and Clark.

To complement their studies of Greek architectures, 2nd graders are **building Greek temples** with Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian columns, using paper towel rolls that the whole school community is collecting for them.

3rd graders are **collecting pennies** to learn the concept of 100,000,000, and to treasure hunt for pennies to help our school create **a real treasure: a brand new school**. To date, they have over 34,000 pennies, and they are **inviting everyone to participate** in the gathering.

3rd graders had a joint **Roman Festival** with the 3rd graders of Fourth School to start off their study on Ancient Rome, the government in power when Christ was born. They dressed in self-made togas, sandals, laurel-wreath crowns, and, grouped in "legions," they built arches, had tournaments, played Roman games, and performed Roman myths: *Cupid and Psyche*, *Androcles and the Lion*, and *Damon and Pythias*. They finished with a Roman feast, reclining on their pillows.

4th and 5th graders learned music through playing **musical baseball**; the **MS Band** is preparing for some

spring performances. Watch the website postings!

5th graders visited the **Accokeek Colonial Farm** to better appreciate how we shape the land and how the land shapes our lives.

WCA is participating in the **Operation Christmas Child** project of the Samaritan's Purse organization. Our students will fill shoe boxes with gifts for a boy or a girl, ages 2-4, 5-9, or 10-14, enclose a note and/or photo, and \$5 for shipping. We will be packing the boxes into larger boxes, and taking them to the distribution center. They will be shipped to needy children in some 90 countries. For many of the recipients, this will be the only Christmas gift they will receive.

The Student Government is organizing many **service projects** to brighten the lives of those in our wider community, just before the Christmas break. Some of the plans include assisting teachers in Westwood Elementary school, cooking and cleaning for Inwood House residents, preparing care packages for the Rockville Pregnancy Center, making sandwiches at Rainbow Women's Shelter, making crafts with patients at Children's Hospital, serving at Martha's Table, etc.

The **Sally Foster fundraiser** helped our athletic department with \$4,500 to offset the cost of uniforms and gym rentals.

The LS held their **first annual Donuts for Dad!** event. Dads brought their student to school, and before leaving to work they enjoyed some time together with students, teachers, and each other. Starbucks provided coffee, and we supplied lemonade, juice, and 150 donuts.

Parents, teachers, and staff are invited to WCA's **Friday Coffees** (and donuts) to enjoy the fellowship of our school community. It is held on the first Friday of each month at the side entrance of GMC, 7:30-8:00am, and every Friday in the LS library, 8:00-8:30am.

Moms-in-Touch or, more precisely, **Parents-in-Prayer** meets on Fridays to pray for our students, teachers, and school community. All are welcome to join them at 8am in GMC Room 124, or at 8:30am in the LS library. You may send prayer requests to US coordinator Charlotte Fitzgerald, or LS coordinator Rita Schuh.

We are most thankful for God's newest provision of **another bus** to help with our students' transportation.

To Ponder

"When God's people refuse to confront the culture and choose to compromise with it, the uniform result is that God's people become worldly, not that the world becomes godly."

—Rev. Brent Bradley
Tabletalk, March 20001, page 26

Coram Deo

What is your only comfort in life, and in death?

That I, with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ; who, with his precious blood, has fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation, and therefore, by his Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me sincerely willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto him.

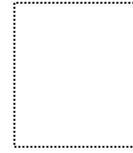
Heidelberg Catechism, First Question and Answer

The Messenger

Washington Christian Academy

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WASHINGTON

reverent, adventurous

CHRISTIAN

academically serious

ACADEMY

in the historic Reformed tradition