



History and mission: Planning for the future of Mount Vernon Christian School

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On March 15, 1946, a small group of men called a meeting for the purpose of establishing Christian Education in the Skagit Valley of western Washington. It was decided to draw up a constitution, which was presented and adopted at a meeting on March 29. This was the beginning of the Mount Vernon Christian School Association.

The first annual society meeting was held on October 4, 1946, to discuss possible building sites for the school. It wasn't until October 29, 1947 that the school board was authorized to purchase the property on which the present school is located. The contract for the purchase of 3 ¾ acres of land and buildings was signed on December 23, 1947 for the price of \$6,200. A garage and chicken house on the property were sold for \$226. The barn remained, and was later used as the "gym".

In July of 1950 the society approved a building, which would consist of two classrooms to accommodate grades one through eight. On September 10, 1951 the doors of Mount Vernon Christian School opened for the first time with enrollment of approximately fifty-five students.

Since enrollment continued to increase, a decision was made in 1960 to remodel, adding a third room and an office. The high standard of education, the annual Christmas pageants, and the Choraliers, our school's choir, broadened and strengthened this influence.

Many families were living a considerable distance from Mount Vernon, and bringing the children to school was a real problem. That problem was addressed with the approval and purchase of two school buses that began operating in 1964. Another addition to the building in 1966 brought the number of classrooms to six.

In July of 1971 approval was given to tear down the old barn to make way for a multi-purpose building for assemblies, recreation and indoor sports. The annual Harvest Dinner, which had been held at the First Christian Reformed Church across Blackburn Road, could now be held in the new building. This dinner has become well known in the community and often the waiting lines are long.

In 1977 a kindergarten was added with 10 students. Four more classrooms were built in 1979 and additional land was purchased to expand the playground in the early 1980's.

For some time many students had been attending Lynden Christian High School in Lynden, Washington which was 45 miles away. Some students boarded with families in Lynden during the week only coming home on weekends. During the early 60's a school bus was purchased to make the daily trip.

The dream of having our own Christian High School became a reality in 1983 with ten students attending. The high school was housed in a modular building with additional modules added as enrollment increased. The first seniors graduated in 1987.

A pre-school was added in 1989 with thirteen students attending. Additional property was purchased in the late 80's and early 90's. In 1991 new administrative offices and additional classrooms were built and more modules were installed. In 1997, enrollment peaked at 407 students pre-school through 12th grade.

In 1993 the Discovery Program NILD (National Institute for Learning Differences) was added to the curriculum. This program, which works one-on-one with students, has made the difference between failure and success for many of them.

In 2006 the mission and vision for the future continued to expand and develop. The dream of finally building a high school structure became reality after the completion of our feasibility study. With an initial gift of \$2,000,000 by a generous donor, the Mount Vernon Christian School Association unanimously approved a motion to build a new building. In the fall of 2008 we opened a new 43,000 square foot facility, which can immediately serve 200 high school students with expansion plans in place to serve 300. This facility includes a paved parking area and bus loop, a classroom wing, student commons, gymnasium, central library and computer lab.

There is much excitement at MVCS, and the parents and friends are confident that the school's future is bright indeed.

Through all these fifty-plus years we have seen, and are so thankful for, God's faithfulness. He was in this venture from its humble beginning and has been with us to guide and encourage us during times of struggle and also to show the way in times of growth. He has brought excellent teachers to teach and love our students. We continue to seek His guidance in all our future plans. The mission and vision for Christian Education in the Pacific Northwest is alive and well. TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

THE MISSION
OF
MOUNT VERNON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Mount Vernon Christian School, committed to education
based on the infallible Word of God,
seeks to serve God by preparing students
to respond in loving service to God and their neighbors.
As an extension of the Christian home,
we assist parents in nurturing their children
in the knowledge of the Lord and of His creation,
thereby equipping students to embrace Biblical values
while being Christ's agents of renewal in the world.

Mount Vernon Christian School Van Lunen Fellowship Project Overview

History

Mount Vernon Christian was begun in 1952 by a group of Dutch immigrants committed to the vision providing of Christian day schooling in the Skagit Valley of northwest Washington. It all started with a two room school house and over the years there have been many expansion projects. Up until the early 1980's the school only went up through the 8th grade. The Board of Directors expanded the schools vision to include a high school and the first class was enrolled in 1983. The first graduating class walked across the stage in 1987. After 25 years of dreaming and planning a new High School building opened in the fall of 2008. The 43,000 square foot facility contains space for 200 students and includes academic classrooms, a student commons and performance area as well as a 12,000 square foot gymnasium.

Strategic Plan

The Board of Directors has consistently maintained a commitment to the long range mission and vision for Christian Education in the Skagit Valley. The Strategic Planning Committee that has been meeting to look to the future. The committee has come up with three focal points for the future. Those focal points are:

1. People
 - a. Students – focus on education program
 - b. Staff – continued commitment to provide the highest quality staff possible and provide appropriate financial compensation.
2. Program
 - a. Continue to provide a high quality program with intentional focus on developing a strong Christian world view in every student.
 - b. Continue to explore how our educational program may have to change in order to meet the needs of students in the 21st century.
3. Plant (physical facilities)
 - a. Care for our current facilities
 - b. Continue to develop and complete our current facility
 - c. Begin the planning phase for the next facility expansion.

Van Lunen Fellowship / MVCS Board Action Steps

Adequate financial resources and enrollment have been a continued focus and concern of the Board and the Mount Vernon Christian School Association from the very beginning of the school. It has been a roller coaster for many years. In some years we have seen increases in students and then we lose enrollment. Adequate finances have always been an issue. These two perennial difficulties have caused the Board to take some bold steps in order to address these two issues.

The Board of Directors also feels that we need to create additional revenue streams beyond tuition and Bargain galore Thrift Store. Currently 95% of the schools finances come through tuition dollars and the Board feels that we need to bring that down. We have been too tuition dependent for too long. To that end we have begun an Annual Giving Campaign called the Legacy Campaign. This has been my major focus as a Van Lunen Fellow this past year. Considering that prior to our recent Capital Campaign and this year's Legacy Campaign we have raised very little additional money our \$128,700 raised this year is very good.

The Board also believes that we need to change our management model for the school in order to create a higher degree of efficiency, greater community awareness and increased participation in the functioning of the school by the community. Therefore, we have created a new position entitled, Superintendent / Director of Mission Advancement. Along with that position the Board has provided the empowerment for this person to become an effective manager. We envision this to be a three year reorganization process.

A minor focus this past year has been to begin a process of reconnecting with former parents of students and our graduates. This has been area that has been neglected for several years now and the results of neglect are being realized. This year we held several special events for parents and alumni with varying degrees of success. We are now on Facebook and we are exploring ways to use this tool more effectively. We are looking into the greater use of email and other digital methods of communication in order to staff connected to our community.

Appendices:

1. ADMINISTRATIVE FLOW CHART: MOUNT VERNON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
2. Mount Vernon Christian School: ANNUAL LEGACY CAMPAIGN