



MESSIAH COLLEGE
STATE OF THE COLLEGE – 2007
“Fulfilling Our Promise”
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August 28, 2007

Welcome to Community Day—a day when we pause to reflect on what God has accomplished through our shared endeavors as a community—a day when we anticipate what God will yet accomplish through our mutual efforts during the upcoming academic year. Thank you for your faithful work on behalf of our students. Your commitment to giving your best is evident in every facet of our educational program and throughout our beautiful campus. Never doubt that you make a significant difference each and every day! In the words of activist author Marian Wright Edelman, “We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we can not foresee.” You are making consequential differences in the life of the College and our students.

The video we have just viewed serves to remind us that we have much to celebrate, and the momentum that we have built together can propel us forward as we anticipate and plan for the future. The printed insert “Sampling of Success Stories” also offers an impressive array of accomplishments that we need to celebrate and communicate to prospective students and others in our extended community.

One accomplishment we did not include on the printed insert was Messiah’s ranking by *U.S. News and World Report* as the fourth “Best Baccalaureate Colleges” in the Northern region. We are all aware of the debate surrounding the value of the rankings but recently my opinion of them has improved, given that Messiah was finally ranked higher than a certain college in the nearby Lancaster county!

I’ve titled this State of the College address “Fulfilling our Promise” in order to reflect the two distinct meanings of promise that will be central to our progress during the coming year. As we approach an important milestone in our history—the commemoration of our Centennial year in 2009-2010—we need to consider these two perspectives on the word promise.

My daughter, Brooke, even at the tender age of 3, displayed an inkling of understanding about one of the meanings of “promise.” My husband, Kelly, and I were forever chasing Brooke out of the sandbox and chastising her for eating sand. On our first family vacation to the beach, Kelly and I caught Brooke, who had carefully turned her back to us, eating fistfuls of sand. I walked over to her and sternly posed the question, “Brooke—have you been eating sand?” With sand covering her face and sifting from every crevice of her mouth, she answered, “No way Mommy, no way—not me—I promise. I promise, Mommy.” Somehow, my preschooler had already learned that the word “promise” meant something significant—she knew that the word suggested a guarantee or a pledge. Of course, Kelly and I had some essential work to do to teach her that a promise should always be rooted in truth and integrity, not in a desire to keep herself out of trouble!

The word promise does connote a contract, a covenant, a guarantee, or a pledge. At Messiah College, we are called to remain ever faithful to the promise embedded in our statement of mission and identity. We have a responsibility to live up to the commitments we make to our

