"SINE DOCTRINA VITA EST QUASI MORTIS IMAGO"

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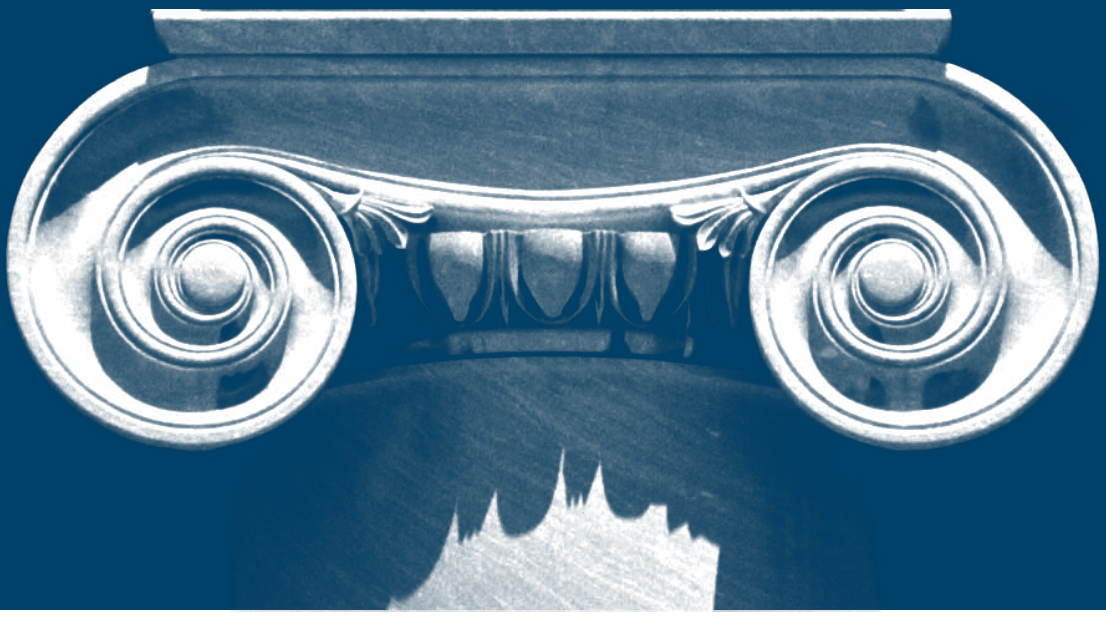

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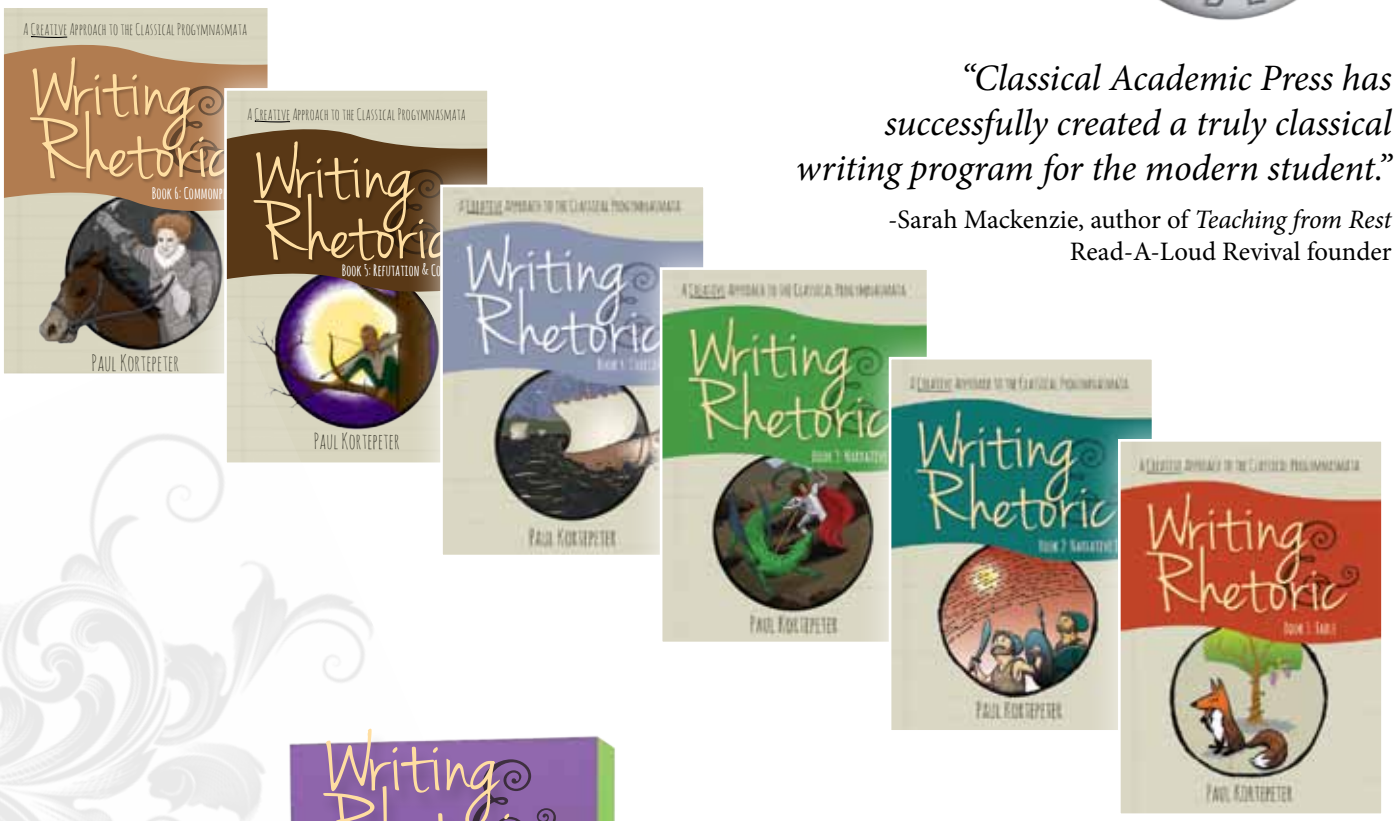

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ACCS

Classical Christian education:
A New "Old-Way"

MISSION STATEMENT

The primary mission of this association is to promote, establish, and equip schools committed to a classical approach to education in light of a Christian worldview grounded in the Old and New Testament Scriptures.

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AUTHORITY IN THE EDUCATION OF A HUMAN BEING

by Anthony Esolen, Providence College

The world of education is one where humans can flourish by acknowledging authority.

The egalitarian ideology of our time, writes the philosopher Philippe Beneton, in *Equality by Default*, cuts the human heart and soul out of the profession of the teacher. "Why give priority to classic literature," he asks, "when Pascal is no better or no worse than any other author, when his style of writing is just one technique among others?" The teacher becomes a technician—and often a not highly skilled technician at that, as witness our millions of young people who cannot calculate a 15 percent gratuity for a restaurant bill, or who cannot name the nation south of the Rio Grande. The great mission of education as "the formation of taste, of character, of will, of civic spirit" is set aside. "How can a school educate," he concludes, "when it refuses to distinguish between an educated person and an uneducated person? How can it shape a human being when it no longer knows *what a human being is*?" (emphasis mine).

The human being, Beneton argues, cannot flourish without authority. He does not have in mind the swaggering of the autocrat, that cartoon parody of authority that egalitarians draw, to frighten simpletons withal. For the exercise of authority is a labor of service and devotion: "The person who takes on a responsibility invests himself, he assumes a burden that obliges himself as a human being." We bow to the embodied ideal, and not to the mere person, when we show a special respect to those who risk their lives to protect us, or who wear themselves out in seeking the common good. The poet Charles Peguy, says Beneton, felt a profound gratitude for the teachers of his youth, just because "they put themselves in the service of something greater than themselves." Therefore they could naturally and justly invite their students into that sanctuary. They would no doubt have furrowed their brows to try to make the least sense of the educational patois of our day, which insists that school be "child-centered." It would be like asking a hymn to be "choir-centered," when the very purpose of a hymn is to bring the singers out of themselves, in devotion. So too the "child-centered" classroom, if indeed it focuses on the tastes and habits of the children who happen to be there, mistakes both the nature of the child and the purpose of education. It ignores what the child, as a human person, most needs, and that is to

Anthony Esolen is professor of English at Providence College in Providence, Rhode Island, and the author of Ten Ways to Destroy the Imagination of Your Child *and* Ironies of Faith. *He has translated Tasso's* La Gerusalemme liberata *and Dante's* The Divine Comedy. *This article originally appeared and is reprinted by permission from* Public Discourse: Ethics, Law, and the Common Good*, the online journal of the Witherspoon Institute in Princeton, NJ. See http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2011/11/4072/.*

give himself in love to what transcends his personality or his class or his age.

If we follow Beneton's reasoning, we must conclude that no genuinely human reform of education is possible unless we are willing to cast aside an essentially *inhuman* egalitarianism. The point is not to deny the words of Jefferson, that all men are created equal, and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights. That ontological equality, however, as it is expressed in the Declaration of Independence, is itself grounded in the hierarchical relationship of creature to Creator, so much so that even if a man should himself desire it, he could not *alienate* his rights by his own fiat. It is rather to see man as a being who, if he ceases to ask the questions that orient him toward the truly great—such as "How should a good man live?"—ceases to be fully human. The man who does not give honor is but half a man, not merely because he is selfish, but because he is missing one of the sweetest and most human things in life, the reverence that makes him greater than himself because he has learned to rejoice in what is greater than himself. But "where vital questions are concerned," writes Beneton, modern man "has nothing to learn," having denied in fact that there is anything to learn. He need not follow the lead of Socrates, because that would be to recognize and honor a real superiority in Socrates, which his egalitarianism forbids him to do. He need not study with love and care the art of Dante, because that would be to submit to the wisdom and genius of the Florentine, rather than seeing in him only a product of his age.

If we are not ontologically equal by virtue of our status as embodied spiritual beings—or however else one wishes to express a truth that even the deist Jefferson admitted—then our equality must be located somewhere else. But the quickest glance at human variety suffices to teach us that we are not equally tall or fast or musically talented or agile with a differential equation. What then? If equality cannot be predicated upon anything that is admitted to exist, then it must be a *negation of inequality*, an insistence that something real which would render us unequal *does not exist* or is of no importance. The vision must be one of essential homogeneity.

Where is that vision of homogeneity to be found? Wherever, Beneton suggests, we find the reduction of man to his constituent parts, or to his environment, or to whatever else will replace the mystery of the human person with a general and scientistic "law." We would then be equal—in our unmeaning. The carbon that makes up my flesh, the calcium that makes up my bones, the iron that gives my blood its energy-delivering properties, are no different from those in anyone else's body. The encounter with a particular being, the irreplaceable person, yields to indifference, as one lump of flesh is much like another. One family, like a molecule in the economic crystal that surrounds it, is no "better" than another such molecule. What has happened is that, instead of the object of knowledge determining the method of study, the method of study has determined and reduced the object of knowledge. "The great works thus lose their status of great works," says Beneton, and are reduced to cultural artifacts, to be explained by the technician, the neutral archaeologist, and not honored for their beauty or wisdom.

When we argue, then, about how to improve our wretched schools, we must be clear about what we intend to do. If the object is to produce an elite cadre of technicians (since not everyone, practically speaking, can master the calculus of variations) who unite their facility with the dead and the homogeneous to a complete obliviousness to the great human questions, then I fail to see why people should support schools at all. What would be the point of subjecting the overwhelming majority of young people, those who will not be the elite technicians, to a regimen of denial? How long, after all, can it possibly take, to teach that there are no permanent and objective values in the moral life, or

that one culture is as meaningless as another?

There is an alternative. It is what Charles Peguy called "living knowledge," as opposed to the "dead knowledge" that he believed had conquered the Sorbonne, in the years before the First World War. It is the handing on of culture, against which the mass phenomena of our time, and the facile reductions of scientistic academe, array themselves in enmity. When we read Aristotle with the honor he deserves, when we enter the sanctuary, we enter the sacred conversation of mankind on his pilgrim way. At the least, we celebrate the joys of simple work well done, of the laughter of children, of the peculiar beauty of man and woman; but we may also rejoice in the genius of Homer, the insight of Racine, the broad humanity of Shakespeare. We are exalted by such obedience, such humble listening. We are made great by the acknowledgment of authority.

Forty years ago, a few wise men at the college where I teach, motivated both by that acknowledgment of authority and by their belief in the ontological equality of all mankind, embarked on a brave reform. At the time when the elite colleges were scrapping their curricula, effectively burning the books of three thousand years of our Western heritage, our faculty dedicated themselves to something beyond themselves, deserving of their honor. What if the elites at Harvard no longer honored and studied Dante? The students at our college would do so—the children of ordinary people, not rich, and perhaps not destined for riches, either. What if the technicians of education no longer saw any use for the political wisdom of Aristotle and Plato? The faculty at our school, not exalted technicians with conveniently reductive equations, but rather human beings asking the human questions, would try to recover and hand on something of their wisdom. They welcomed those young people with equal heartiness into a world of glorious inequality. I cannot say we have always succeeded at the task. But it has at least been a human enterprise. And that is more than I can say for most of what goes on in the egalitarian prison house that goes by the name of "school."

ROCKBRIDGE: RHETORIC IS . . .

by Jerry Keehner, Rockbridge Academy

Christian rhetoric is the clear and persuasive communication of truth.

During the summer of 2011, I was preparing to teach rhetoric at Rockbridge Academy for the first time. Our curriculum guide provided much help, especially the "essay" that follows. That essay was what launched my search for a way to define "Rhetoric at Rockbridge." The search was further fueled by folks asking, "You teach *what*? At a *Christian* school? Why?" That search culminated in a series of lessons in which we carefully define various terms.

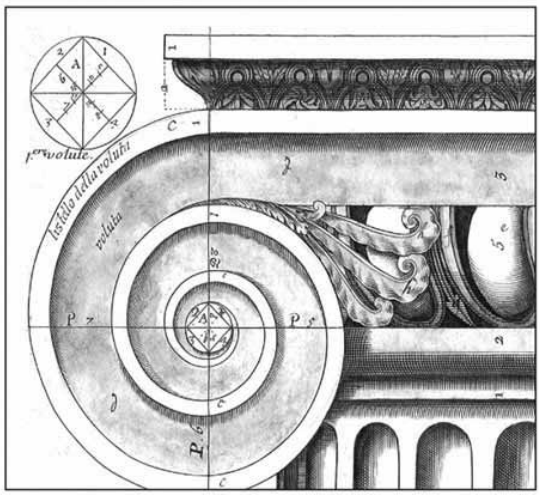
We begin this discussion during the first week of Rhetoric I when we explore "nominal rhetoric"—rhetoric as understood by the culture at large. Our culture sees rhetoric as adorned speech, focused on persuasion, whether or not one actually believes what one is saying. People in our culture recognize the existence of this type of communication and largely reject it. Especially in political seasons, we hear about speeches full of "empty rhetoric" or "mere rhetoric." The implication is that it is not necessarily true. At best, it is relatively true . . . depending on your perspective.

This is what we must dispel. As followers of Christ, our first responsibility is to truth. Rhetoric, therefore, must be concerned primarily with truth. Rhetoric, of course, uses words, so it is the purposeful *communication* of truth.

It is not, however, enough to say that *Christian* rhetoric is the communication of truth. Christian logic achieves that end. Christian rhetoric goes beyond mere communication or expression to search for good and beautiful ways to express that truth.

While there might be many different ways in which goodness and beauty could be expressed in service of truth, one consistent requirement remains: truth must always be expressed clearly. Too often today, as in fifth-century B.C. Greece, practitioners of "mere rhetoric" seem to specialize in communication that obfuscates. Let us call that brand of communication what it is: sophistry. It is not rhetoric—Christian rhetoric—and those who practice such sophistry do not share our commitment to truth, beauty, and goodness.

Jerry Keehner teaches rhetoric and upper school theology at Rockbridge Academy, an ACCS-accredited school in Millersville, Maryland. Students from Rockbridge Academy won First Prize in the Chrysostom Oratory Contest in 2009, 2010, 2014, and 2015 and second prize in 2012.



ROCKBRIDGE ACADEMY

That commitment is the key. Like it or not, Christian rhetors bear a moral responsibility. We have the responsibility to take every thought captive to obey Christ, He who is the way, the truth, and the life (2 Cor. 10:5, John 14:6). *Truth* can be a slippery concept in twenty-first-century America. It need not be. In John 18:37, Jesus told Pilate that "everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice." That listening is more than mere hearing. It is giving heed, obeying. Thus, we have the responsibility to obey Christ's voice. Where do we hear that voice today? We hear it primarily through His Word. Jesus confirms that in His high-priestly prayer, saying, "Sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth" (John 17:17). Thus, Christian rhetoric as practiced at Rockbridge Academy has what some might call a narrow focus: *it must cohere with the Word of God*. I would suggest that such a narrow focus is ultimately a good thing, for it requires us, at every step, to align our thoughts, as much as we are able, to God's Word.

What, then, is rhetoric at Rockbridge? What is Christian rhetoric? As we work through various definitions during that first week of Rhetoric I, we consider many options. Definitions provided by Aristotle, Quintilian, and Augustine, as well as quite a few contemporary thinkers, are assessed. Each has strengths. Many are from a decidedly non-Christian worldview, though, and could be misinterpreted and/or misappropriated. Finally, in my search, I opted for simplicity. ***Christian rhetoric is the clear and persuasive communication of truth***.

FROM THE ROCKBRIDGE ACADEMY CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR RHETORIC:

CLASSICAL METHODOLOGY:

There is a common misconception about rhetoric that must be exposed and dismissed if this course is to fulfill its goals. The misconception is that rhetoric is the art of adorning the content of speech and writing. Aristotle defined rhetoric as seeing the available means of persuasion in any given instance. If this course properly teaches by that definition, the false idea that rhetoric is primarily concerned with flowery speech and fluffy writing will fall away.

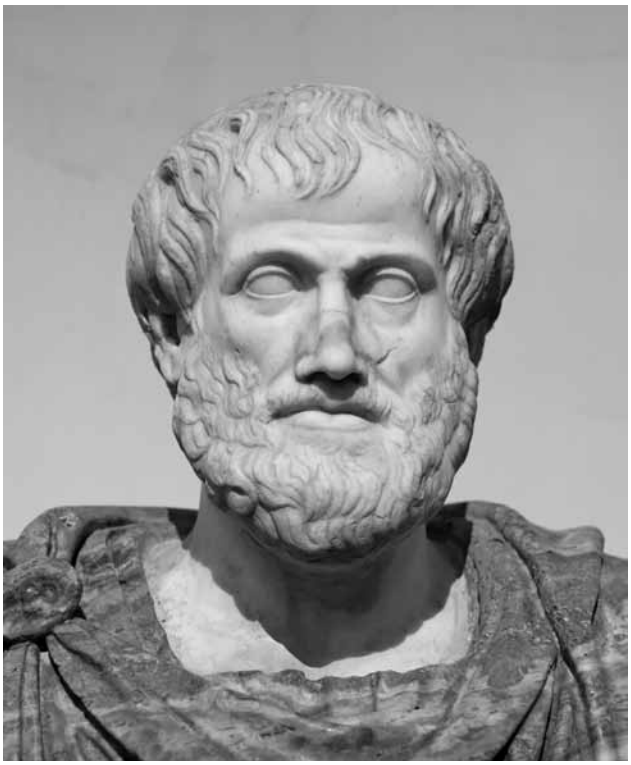
It is true that rhetoric studies the eloquence of speech and the beauty of words on a page, but those concerns are secondary to the goal of rhetoric. Aristotle does not say that rhetoric is victoriously persuading with "eloquence" in any given instance; it is "seeing" the available means that is the goal. Hence, rhetoric aims first to improve the thought of the rhetorician himself, the "seeing" itself. Logic demands clear thought, and rhetoric compliments logic in this pursuit of truth. That is why Aristotle follows the above definition of rhetoric with the statement that rhetoric is the antistrophos (or counterpoint) to dialectic. Just as dialectic seeks by the law of non-contradiction, to know what a "thing" is and what "it" is not, rhetoric deepens our understanding of this "thing." Logic defines it, rhetoric describes it. A syllogism allows us to recognize a concept, but a poem brings us the character of that concept. We deepen our understanding of the logical

assertion, "wisdom makes a man blessed," when we read that he shall be like a tree, planted by rivers of waters, and its leaves never wither. Rhetoric deepens understanding, and we are called to seek understanding.

As rhetoric begins the philosophic endeavor to gain understanding of truth, it is clear that this understanding must be verbalized through speech and the written word. This is where the eloquence of speech and the beauty of writing enter rhetoric. When understanding is verbalized, the proper words must be appointed to name understanding. Because the Creator and His works are true, beautiful, and good, the words we use to speak of the Creator and creation must properly name truth, beauty, and goodness. In doing so, we become like Adam, who took dominion in the act of naming. This is a philosophic endeavor that requires dialectic to find "what is," and rhetoric to deepen our understanding of "what is" by speaking of it in the best possible words. Poetry is the highest use of language, and that is why St. Augustine the philosopher and Dante the poet are close companions in the pursuit of truth.

Rhetoric is concerned with precision, eloquence, and beauty because those qualities are attributes of truth. There is no real separation between content and style. What we think and how we think determines what we say, and the things we say are testimony to our thoughts. Rhetoric is not the art of adorning truth, it is the art of speaking truth. The goal of rhetoric is, therefore, to find the right words to speak the truth. Psalm 130 speaks of the Psalmist's "distress," yet he spoke of it beautifully—he uttered a cry from depths of woe. Those beautiful words grant both the Psalmist and the reader a deeper connection with the sensation of drowning despair when hope is hidden. Precise words—the right words—are rays of light in the midst of darkness.

These principles are the best "methodology" for teaching rhetoric. Rhetoric cannot be taught as a list of linguistic tricks and fancy speech that persuade. That is sophism. Rhetoric is the culmination of a study—the point where students find the proper terms to speak of the liberal arts they studied in their passage through the Trivium. Tropes and schemes, appeals and topics are advanced ways of speech and writing because we are called to be "advanced thinkers" that can see the available means of persuasion in any given instance. Rhetoric is advanced speech. And advanced speech is advanced thought: full of grace, eloquence, humility, and nothing less than the worship of the Divine Word with our words.



Aristotle

MATHEMATICS IN THE CLASSICAL SCHOOL

by Joseph Friedly, Evangelical Christian Academy

What does mathematics look like in the classical school? Is there any real difference for us as classical educators or does our instruction in math remain relatively the same as the traditional school? There is a real difference and that difference is this: in the classical school, the teacher will honor both the nature of mathematics and the teaching of math by applying Milton's *Seven Laws of Teaching* to every lesson.

So, what does that look like? In an effort to begin to answer this question, I will describe what it looks like in my classroom. However, I want to state up front that to be "classical" does not mean that it necessarily looks the same. As stated above, to be "classical" in the mathematics classroom, one only needs to honor mathematics by understanding its nature and by honoring the teaching of mathematics by applying Milton's *Seven Laws of Teaching* to your daily lessons.

Here is what a typical day looks like in my classroom. First, I greet students by presenting them with a real and intriguing problem. This problem must be both. But, it must also do one other thing: it must review that which we have already learned and must build a bridge to the idea that I wish to teach. Before students begin, I will ask a few questions of the class to make sure they understand the problem. As students begin working on this new problem individually, I walk around and assess how each are approaching the problem. I will then ask questions of individuals as needed: both to understand their thinking and to provide some insight or direction. After awhile, I will allow students to begin to share ideas and to work together. Then, we will jump back and forth from talking as a large group and going back to work in groups. As we do this, I am constantly asking questions to guide thinking. If I am not needed, I will simply let students run with their ideas. Once we have come to a solution, we will evaluate various methods and then review those that are most advantageous. Finally, we will apply what we have learned in a manner that requires students to articulate the new concept in a slightly different scenario.

So, let us now look at how this honors Milton's *Seven Laws* in math instruction.

Law #1—A teacher must be one who knows the lesson or truth to be taught.

The math teacher must begin by posing a problem that appropriately bridges the gap between what is currently known and the truth that the teacher desires to teach. In order to do this well, the math teacher must thoroughly know their field. Many problems will work, but some will be better than others. And, once the problem is posed, the teacher must first be able to

Joseph Friedly is the elementary principal and math teacher at Evangelical Christian Academy in Colorado Springs, CO. ECA is a Christian school that has converted to a classical Christian school and is a candidate for ACCS school accreditation.

assess students as they work, recognizing the merits of various approaches. The teacher must also know their content thoroughly enough to be able to guide students of differing strengths and weaknesses by asking appropriate questions. If the teacher is not confident in their own knowledge and the varied solutions to the problem, students will lose their confidence in their teacher and become frustrated.

Law #2 —A learner is one who attends with interest to the lesson given.

The math teacher must begin by posing *real and thought-provoking* questions. If the learner must attend *with interest*, the teacher must provide rich ideas that capture the mind of a student. There is no need to dress up math problems with trappings unnecessary to the problem (in the hopes that a student will like math because it references their favorite basketball player). This fails to honor the student and assumes, too, that math is uninteresting and needs to be dressed up. The problem simply needs to be a real problem (note: I did not say it necessarily needs to be practical, although this may help). The problem needs to be genuine and one in which the teacher might delight in, too.

Law #3—The language used as a medium between teacher and learner must be common to both.

When a teacher poses a problem that is built upon prior knowledge which leads to new, the language used to discuss the problem is naturally limited to that which is common to both. Math text books are notoriously terrible in accomplishing this. These usually begin by using difficult or intimidating language before introducing the new idea. If the idea is introduced in the problem, both teacher and student can use familiar language to talk about the new idea before attaching the appropriate terminology to the idea. The idea must come first, then the technical language. This is why it is so important for the teacher to be able to either come up with or choose the appropriate problem to begin each day with. The typical textbook is not written with the seven laws in mind, nor is it written from a basic posture of a students ability to think mathematically. So, this is where the teacher must step in to provide the appropriate problem that bridges the gap between what is known and that which is unknown. Teaching in this way communicates to the student that the teacher believes in their ability to think, rather than assuming that every detail needs to be provided for the student.

Law #4—The lesson to be learned must be explicable in terms of the truth already known by the learner—the unknown must be explained by the known.

When the teacher provides the class with an appropriate problem to work on, one that bridges the gap between what is known and what the teacher desires to teach, the unknown is naturally explained by the known. For example, in this class the teacher would begin by asking: "What do we know?" This directs the student's attention to the problem and causes them to recognize that which they already know. In explaining what they know, the students both review what they know and set a foundation for exploring the unknown. The teacher brings students to this point by asking questions like: "What do we need to know?" "What is the question asking?" and "What is the unknown?" Using this approach requires students to articulate the new problem using that which is already known. As the class makes progress, students build upon their previous knowledge.

Law #5—Teaching is arousing and using the pupil's mind to form in it a desired conception or thought.

Teaching in this way requires the *student's mind* to form the desired thought. First, the teacher poses a real and intriguing question. Then, the teacher proceeds by assessing student needs and giving direction as needed. If students can come to the appropriate solution without the help of the teacher, then so be it. But, when they cannot, it is the teacher's job to begin to ask questions that will guide the students' thinking. The teacher will begin with questions that are less revealing and move on to those that are more revealing. Doing this ensures that the teacher always allows the student's mind to do as much work as possible. As the teacher leads the class, he must constantly affirm the work of the students and give them confidence that he will never leave them to themselves. This will give the students the confidence they need to give themselves to the work of mathematical thinking.

Law #6—Learning is thinking into one's own understanding a new idea or truth.

Once a few members of the class have come to a solution (or the class as a whole has come to a solution), the teacher proceeds by having the class discuss and evaluate their own work. This is when students think into their own understanding the new idea or truth. As this discussion occurs, it is the teacher's job to make sure that the class is not neglecting any steps as they look back over their work. It is also the teacher's job to help the students to appropriately articulate what they have learned. In doing so, the teacher assures that each student has thought into their own understanding the new idea.

Law #7—The test and proof of teaching done—the finishing and fastening process—must be a reviewing, rethinking, re-knowing, and reproducing of the knowledge taught.

Finally, the teacher tests and proves that which was taught by having students apply what they have learned. They may do this by applying what they have learned to a new problem and articulating both their steps and their rationale. They may do this by simply writing up the lesson learned in such a way as to explain it to a friend who was absent. When students are required to articulate what they have learned the teacher can verify that the lesson has been learned to the appropriate degree.

Again, this may take various forms. But, this is a general overview of how we might seek to cultivate the minds (and hearts) of our students in the math classroom by applying Milton's *Seven Laws* to each day's lesson.

In contrast to applying the *Seven Laws*, the typical math classroom today begins with negative assumptions regarding the student: namely, the student is incapable of thinking for themselves or that students are incapable of finding math interesting and worthy of study. Because of this, the typical math classroom is filled with the teacher and textbook providing answers to questions that the students are not asking. This is no way to learn: no learning is ever done well without genuine questions bubbling up from within the student. When math is approached this way, the student's mind remains in neutral and the students learn that they can simply wait the teacher out to provide what they need. In the classical classroom, however, the teacher elicits questions from the students. There is no waiting by the students. Their minds are set to action by the presentation of a real problem and the engaging questions of a teacher. By engaging their minds and providing an environment in which thinking is encouraged and required, students know that no information will be provided without their effort and that they are free to try, knowing that the teacher will never leave them in their pursuit of understanding. When this partnership happens, real learning takes place. The student not only gains knowledge each day, but they also grow in their own ability to think and confidence in their ability to problem solve.

CREATING A CULTURE OF FACULTY DEVELOPMENT (OR NINE KEY PRINCIPLES TO EFFECTIVE FACULTY DEVELOPMENT)

by Bryan Lynch, Veritas School

A transcription from Bryan's workshop at the 2015 Leader's Day pre-conference in Dallas, Texas.

This presentation has grown out of my experience both as a classroom teacher and as a school administrator. I was also a founding board member of Veritas School in Newberg, Oregon. I'm hopeful that you will find this helpful as you develop your faculty development plans. This is what we do out in Oregon; it's relatively isolated out there in the Northwest. There's probably plenty of things that you are doing that we should be doing.

In a recent ISM (Independent School Management) publication, there was an item on the cost of faculty culture that is not focused on growth. Some of you may have seen this so I want to quote a bit of it. "Management teams that do not successfully build a quality faculty culture will eventually experience enrollment decline. An unhealthy faculty culture leads to turnover, typically of the best teachers." (That's the part that scares me the most, right?) Human resource experts largely agree that employee turnover affects the bottom line in significant ways: recruiting, lowered productivity, overworked remaining staff, increased training costs. Excellent teachers want to work with other excellent teachers. They want to work in schools where other teachers want to get better and where the whole faculty wants to get better. If we don't do that, then we risk losing them—they only stay around so long. So that's one of the whys. Why do we care about developing faculty culture? Well, it's to keep our best teachers; the best teachers are what makes our schools grow and what makes our schools worth being at. It's student retention and it's also quality of teachers. That allows us to fulfill our mission. Without those excellent teachers, we don't get to do what we want to do.

I won't talk a lot about Christ-centeredness as I go through this, but that's assumed. The second assumption is that teachers are chiefly what we have to offer. Our schools are our teachers—who they are. What they do in and out of the classroom is really what we have. Some of you have marvelous facilities, I know. Curriculum, programs, all of those things are wonderful and good and necessary of course. But nothing tops the value of your classroom teachers. So, that needs to be a tremendous focus. Therefore, it seems to me, that the main task of

Bryan Lynch *was a founding board member of Veritas School, an ACCS-accredited school in Newberg, Oregon, and has been headmaster at Veritas since 2002. He teaches rhetoric and humane letters to eleventh grade students.*

school leaders is the development of teachers. If teachers are who we have to offer and what we have to offer, then it should be one of our main tasks to develop teachers and to grow them. I'm assuming that as we go.

We, of course, keep the lights on. Administrators keep the bills paid and those things are important. Otherwise, your school closes, right? But the focus on the mission and on teacher growth, getting faculty to buy into that—that they need to grow as a whole faculty—to me, that's the main key.

Like many schools, our location has caused us to be sure we focus on teacher growth internally. We are out there in the Northwest. We can't send everyone to ACCS or SCL, or other wonderful training. We are bringing people in all the time. So, we've spent a lot of time developing internally and consistently turning our attention to faculty development. It's something that we think is very, very important and we spend a lot of time working on it.

So, if it's true that the administrators' job is to develop teachers, it's true of teachers, too. Their main responsibility is to grow as teachers. Some people may think that teachers are mainly employed to teach subjects to children. While that's a big part of their day, actually, we chiefly pay them to grow as people and as teachers. We pay them to learn and to grow. Yes, they have to be in the classroom to do the things they do. And they think that's their full-time job. Teach third grade. Really, their full-time job is to grow as people and as teachers. So, I'm assuming that as we go through this.

The last assumption is that we develop our school-wide faculty development plan each year based on our mission, the board's strategic plan, administrative goals, etc. The teachers have individual plans as well.

Let's look at some principles that underpin how we think about faculty development—those "five ways to improve your school." I'm a sucker for those things on the internet. "The nine key essential . . . well, what is that?" I click on it. Invariably, eight things are "we are already doing that, but maybe there's that one thing." Maybe we should retitle this "Nine Key Principles to Effective Faculty Development." That's the new title.

Principle 1: Effective faculty development is *mission focused*. Maybe we should assume this, but I think this needs to be up front. Everything we do in developing our faculty as a whole must be deliberately supportive of the mission. It's got to be mission-focused. Whatever your particular mission statement is, we all have similar kinds of things. Ours is "cultivating wisdom, virtue, and godliness." With everything we do we ask, does this really meet that?—such as our portrait of a graduate, our characteristics of teaching excellence. Everything that we do in our teacher training and in our broader faculty growth plan has to fit the mission. We can't do everything that is worthwhile. There are lots and lots of things out there that we could be doing, lots of programs, and plans, and things that might be good in some ways. But what is it that best fits the mission? Everything must be evaluated by the mission. I keep repeating that, but I think that is the number one thing we have to keep in mind.

We need to communicate this frequently to the faculty, explaining why what we are doing is supporting this mission. *Leaders are reminders*, I read somewhere the other day. That's not new. It struck me again that's really our chief job, to remind people—in our organization, parents, teachers, students—why we are doing what we are doing. So when we are doing faculty development, it's important to continually remind people that this is how this fits the mission so they understand it, and they can make that part of their own thinking as well, and also pass it on to parents and students.

We get to focus on the big picture of the mission, both what to do and what to avoid. Again, there are plenty of things that we could do that we just don't have time for. That might be a distraction. We think about balancing philosophical and practical, the old and the new. We want to avoid reverse chronological

snobbery and just not focus on old things. We look at contemporary educational research as well—carefully, very carefully. We talked about that just because it's new, it's bad, or good. It doesn't work like that. So we want a broad range of things. Again the main thing is does it fit the mission? Can this new piece of research that just came out, can it help us support this mission? Then we will look at it. If not, we'll ignore it and we will view the things that we know work.

For example, during our Thursday morning readings, we are going through an edition of Quintilian which is on speech and writing. I think it's books 1, 2, and 10—just a small edition of Quintilian. We are reading through that together as a faculty and discussing it. We're just reading it out loud; it's not like homework. Twenty minutes in the morning, read and discuss. That's our Thursday morning meeting.

Our monthly meetings, our after-school meetings, have been taken up with a book called the *Seven Strategies of Assessment for Learning* by Jan Chappuis. That's a contemporary book that we have been going through. We are also starting to relook at *The Seven Laws of Teaching*. It's been a few years since we've read through *Seven Laws of Teaching* and so we are picking that up starting this spring and that will go on until next year. We have an ancient source, we have a nineteenth-century source, and we have a twenty-first century source. But as long as they fit our mission, then we are OK with it. We are really, really pretty careful about what we adopt. So, we are *mission focused* in faculty development.

Secondly, effective faculty development should be *student learning and student growth centered*. The whole point of this is that it should have a clear impact on students, academics, but also school culture. That doesn't have to mean that it is an immediate or obvious impact. But we really want to focus on the students. Again, maybe some of that's obvious but sometimes we can go off on programs or curriculum or focus on teachers. We really want to make sure that we are thinking about students. The measure of success of faculty development, I think, is the students. What's the impact on their understanding and growth? For us, it's their growth in wisdom, virtue, and godliness. We have to constantly think about that. We use a version of the ISM student experience profile, the student survey. We use a version of that we developed and we do this every year with our students. This year we took a couple of items off of that to include in our faculty development plan for next year. Through that survey, we saw that our score for predictability and supportiveness was a bit down. The survey question was: "Teachers have worked every day helping me become a more wise, virtuous, and godly person." Our score for being supported and predictable were down, which is really an indicator of teacher interaction with students everyday, and a real indicator of student retention as well. If students aren't feeling supported, and if they don't know what their teacher is going to be like today, eventually, they trickle away. That score needs some shoring up so we have been looking at ways that we can boost that score. The point is that it's student growth. Now, I didn't say student *centered*. What I mean is student *learning*, not "if the student wants it, that's what we do." Students are what we are about, but they do not get to determine what we do.

Thirdly, effective faculty development is consistent in *measuring teacher and student actions*. Part of what we want to measure is what the teachers do. We know what actions teachers do in the classroom that are effective and lead to more learning. We know the kinds of things that students should do. There's a long list of things. If your teachers do these things in the classroom and they have students do these things, students will learn. As part of our training, we want to try to measure that as part of our ongoing growth and development.

We have to be careful to not just look at summative or standardized testing. That's like an autopsy. At the end of the year you get the standardized testing scores and you see what the health of the patient was after they are

dead. They are gone already. I know you can use those numbers for next year and there's lots of good reasons for using standardized testing, but besides that, we are really interested in measuring student actions as we go—measuring student health and teacher health on an ongoing basis so we can keep them healthy and not have to worry about just doing the autopsy at the end.

For example, I do frequent walk throughs through the classrooms of ten, fifteen, twenty minutes, maybe shorter. Frequently. On my evaluation form, I'm looking for things that we know lead to greater student learning. Things like lesson planning ahead of time, that is student learning focused, not just content focused. What will the student do with the learning? I'm looking to see that there is modeling of strong and weak work, that there is regular descriptive feedback, those kinds of thing. I'm looking for those kinds of teacher actions and student actions on an ongoing basis. We are trying to measure, and again, I've done charts and we've looked at the numbers and done statistical analysis. That's been sort of helpful, but mainly it's having us understand, as a faculty, what we are looking for.

Related to that has been developing a common vocabulary or a common understanding of good practice. We use terms like "backward planning" and "learning targets" and "checking for understanding." I know that those terms sometimes import problematic ideas within so you have to be careful what you use in your school. But we use those as a kind of shorthand—we are not necessarily buying the philosophy. Try to work in the common vocabulary of all your teachers. What is it that's good teaching practice? Then, when we are talking together we have a common understanding. Are you checking for understanding? Are you using formative assessment? You don't have to say, "Are you checking for how they are doing . . . ?" You don't have to use a long phrase—you can just use short hand. The walk-through reports are connected; they have those kinds of terms on it. We use this and it gives immediate (or we try to give immediate) feedback so teachers can use it. Part of the effectiveness of feedback is getting it quickly so teachers can act on it. I just started using Google Docs—I know I'm way, way behind the curve on it! I had previously used a paper form, then I used something that was on my phone. But trying to type in the comments on the phone was just too cumbersome. So I'm using Google Docs, which allows me, of course, to share quickly. I fill out the form, I do the feedback on Google Docs, I share it with them immediately. They can look at it during their prep period if they want to or after I leave the classroom. We can go back and forth with comments and questions. I just started doing this but I think that's going to be very, very helpful. I would prefer to have a 15 to 20 minute observation, then later have the teacher come in so we can talk for a half hour about what I saw, but that's just impossible to do. There's not enough time in the day to do that. I try to do 20 walk throughs each quarter. Maybe some of you could do many more than that; I'd love to do more than that, but even 20 can sometimes be difficult. Using this form, using Google Docs, we are able to have somewhat of an interactive conversation about what I saw. They get feedback that they can immediately act on, and ask questions or make clarifications if they need to.

Fourthly, effective faculty development is focused on *people and practices*, not on programming. Implementation is the key. Do teachers actually use what's being emphasized this past year? If you think back the last couple years in your faculty development plan, are they actually using it? Is it improving the classroom? Is it having an impact on student learning and student action? It's not just a program. I don't know too many people that are tempted by that but sometimes we buy into something and we are just going to do it regardless. Does it fit our people, our students, our context right now? Maybe this isn't a good fit. Keep in mind that it's people, not programs. Programs are great but we want to focus on our people. Staying flexible is important,

being willing to shift the training as needed.

This year, based on our discussions with the secondary teachers (I'm also the head of the secondary and I lead those meetings), we began viewing the Paul Tripp DVD series, *Our Christian Schools: Culture of Grace*? We had done some Tripp stuff a couple of years ago, but it's been awhile since we've done that. I think the content is related to that predictability and supportiveness score. How can we be more gracious? How can we bump that score up? This wasn't on the original plan, but as we discussed it over the last several months, we picked that up late this spring and we will continue that into next year. Staying flexible wasn't on the program initially but the people at our point in time needed that.

Fifthly, effective faculty development is committed to *teacher buy-in*. This is important; we need to make sure that we make it useful in their classrooms. As you know, of all the things teachers resent in their school, they most resent loss of time. It's always a time battle. They are willing to give up time, but you better make sure that whatever meetings you are doing is not a waste of time. If there is only one point I could make here, it's don't waste their time. Make sure it's worthwhile. Useful doesn't have to be pragmatic—I don't mean that. Increased philosophical understanding is very, very useful in the long run. I don't mean that you have to apply it Monday morning, but they need to see the usefulness of it. Make sure it helps them to grow and understand mission better. This goes back to leaders being reminders. We are doing this because it will help you grow in understanding the mission. Very few teachers in my school aren't interested in understanding classical education better. I think they all want to know it better. What is this all about? How do we do it? Make sure that whatever we are doing is committed to that; we are not wasting their time. Make sure it helps them to grow professionally and they see themselves and each other growing professionally.

That's really important—they are in this community of teachers that are also all growing. Think about using teachers as leaders as well, as presenters for leading faculty development. At our curriculum day in January, for example, we had two of our leaders give a presentation on formative assessment strategies—one elementary teacher and one secondary teacher. They are very, very good at weaving in formative assessment in their classrooms. I asked them to do the presentation. It was great. They did a wonderful job and other teachers, who already respected these two teachers, could see that they really were experts and it created conversation amongst the staff that maybe wouldn't have been there before. Two of our other teachers led us in an introduction to a curriculum mapping program that we adopted recently. It was their idea. It wasn't me, the administrator, saying, "We are going to do curriculum mapping now. Here it is; do it." The two teachers came to me and said, "We think this would be great for all of us to know in a much easier way what everybody's doing about everything." That's the idea behind curriculum mapping. So they came to me and said, "We want to do this." "Great, would you please lead the presentation?" They organized it, they did all the background work, they led the presentation. This spring they led us all in implementing that as well. So, getting teachers as part of the process can help with the teacher buy-in.

Sixthly, I think that effective faculty development should be *prioritized by the top administration*. We need to show that faculty development is a priority through the allocation of limited resources. That's what our job really is—it's resource allocation. That's the job description of the administrator. We have limited resources, time, money, and energy. You can't put your whole heart into everything all the time. As leaders, we have to make sure that resources are allocated properly. We prioritize. We set the priorities and teachers need to see that this is a priority as well, in the budget and in the time allotted.

It is important to make sure that all regular meetings have some significant time devoted to faculty growth, to faculty development. Sometimes, there are emergency meetings when you just have to deal with an issue. But some significant time has to be devoted to faculty growth in every monthly meeting. Now, if things can be dealt with in email, do it that way. There will be announcements; you have to do that sometimes. I don't know what significant means—for you it's going to be different. Every school is different—for us it's more than half the time of the meeting. We have an hour or an hour and 15 minute meeting, three times a week. More than half of that time is spent talking about some part of our faculty growth plan. I wish it were more. Teachers come in at 3:15 p.m. and they are pretty tired and the last thing they want to do is to start into some type of philosophical discussion. But it doesn't take very long until they are energized again because they really want to grow as teachers. They want to understand what they are doing better so that's a much better situation. Do all of your meetings have some significant time devoted to growth?

Training should be clearly encouraged, even frequently led by the top administration. It shouldn't be something that teachers do while the administrators are in the office. I know that everybody's school structures are different, so not all of the head administrators are also the academic people. I'm not saying that every head of school must lead all the faculty development. I'm not proposing that at all, but they should at least be there and be visibly supportive. The teachers should understand that this is not just the academic thing while the business thing is over there. Rather, all administrators support what we are doing. It would be good for administrators once in awhile to lead as well as they are able to do that. For sure, it should be a priority and be seen as a priority.

Effective faculty development is *committed to encouraging teachers who are dedicated to personal and professional growth and learning*. Don't be afraid to commit disproportionately to your best teachers. This was hard for me to get used to at first coming from my background where everything was equal. If this department got something, then this department wanted it. Everybody was fighting over it, getting their resources. Don't be afraid (maybe don't advertise it) if you have really, really excellent teachers to send them on extra things, or give them extra training, or have them take a class, or give them extra books, or whatever it happens to be. That's OK. Everyone has opportunity, but your really best teachers, they need more opportunity in some ways to grow. They want that; they need it. They will be willing to do more things.

I think it's a good model for other teachers as well. They see other teachers really taking off in their own growth, prioritizing learning, and always getting better. Those who maybe need a little more encouragement to do that will see that and hopefully become more like that. It's not like it's a budget priority or a goal of mine to give more money to certain teachers, but I'm not afraid to do that if it comes up. I haven't sent anybody to Italy yet to work on their Latin, but some schools have done that. I know a teacher who would like to do that; maybe that will happen some day.

Publicly reinforce professional growth achievements through newsletters or just in your meetings. One of the things that we do in our monthly meetings is discuss each teachers personal, professional plan—not every teacher, every time—but they will share what they are doing in their personal growth. Are your familiar with the MFE, the ISM MFE set-up, meaningful faculty evaluations? We have another name for it now but it's just personal goal setting. So we talk about those things in meetings as well.

Unfortunately, I think we have to prepare, then, to remove those who are not committed to ongoing growth. That's the unfortunate reality. We want to push those who are just getting along. We want to give opportunities to those who are really growing. But for

those who won't grow, or can't, for whatever reason, we have to be prepared to counsel them out of the profession. They should be serving God somewhere else; this is not the place for them apparently. That may take awhile. I'm not saying go home and cut the bottom ten percent of your work force. I've heard that kind of thing. I'm not suggesting that at all. But the assumption is that none of us have arrived. No school here has arrived. None of you administrators or teachers are final. I think that there are probably very few classical in our midst who call ourselves classical, Christian schools, who look back on what classical schools were doing 300 years ago. We are a long, long way from that, most of us. I can't speak for your school, but my school is not really classical—although we use that term. We are closer than most other people, but we certainly haven't arrived.

As you know, complacency is toxic. The people that are complacent—or they think they have arrived but are just not able to do it—you just have to counsel them out. Yes, we want to commit to and support those that are growing, but on the other hand we might have to eventually ask someone else to find something else to do. That is a reality.

We want to be committed to *focused, sustained, and consistent faculty development*. It takes patience. We want to provide opportunities for application, and reflection, collaboration over time, and for the long haul. This is not going to happen quickly. In fact, most really good things in faculty growth are not going to happen really quickly—they take time. Again, that's sort of the flip side to what I just talked about, the teacher who wasn't growing. We can be patient, but up to a point. Choose wisely and keep at it; be patient.

I did a recent survey of our teachers on our professional development plan. The most common comment was their desire for more time to work together, to discuss, and to collaborate. They just want more time to do that. I'm not sure how to do it. They also want to teach all day and then they want to collaborate. I know schools are doing things like taking an early release every week, or having quarterly curriculum days. Those kinds of things are excellent. We'll be looking at ways that we can build this time into an already busy schedule. Is there also time to collaborate? How do we build that in? We want to make sure that we are doing this in a sustained and consistent way, providing opportunities and keeping in mind that it might take years of practice and reinforcement from you, the leaders, to make these ideas permanent in a faculty.

When I first started talking about student action objectives, student action-centered objectives written as "the students will be able to . . ." kind of structure, it took awhile to get some of our teachers over that, to change their mindset. As teachers, we tend to be activity oriented, or content oriented. My goal for the day is to . . . do this thing with the French Revolution. Well, that's not really the goal. The goal is that the students would know the French Revolution. So it's shifting that thinking. Sometimes that takes time; that takes patience. It takes repetition and reinforcement. Think about compound interest over time. Over time it builds and grows, so sticking with it will grow and will pay.

Connected with that is avoiding too much change or variety. Introduce and implement carefully to avoid fatigue or even cynicism. I don't suspect that you have much cynicism in your school but maybe you have some skepticism about the new thing. Where I used to teach there was plenty of cynicism. The new superintendent would come in, or the new principal would come in, and they would have their new plan. They would last three years and be gone. The grizzled old veterans would say, "Just wait, kid, he'll be gone in three years and we'll be on to something else." It was true. They were right. Just do what you do and it will blow over. They were a very, very cynical lot. I don't experience that in my school and I'm sure you don't either. But you can wear people out with all the new ideas. You'll come to this conference, and you'll spend three days here, and you'll have a ton

of new ideas, and you'll go back home. And your people will say, "Ah, he must have been to the conference. Look at all the new stuff." So, we need to be careful.

On that same survey, one teacher—it was only one—but one teacher did say, "The least helpful part of our faculty development is that we have too many balls in the air at once. We've got too many things going." We had our accreditation visit last year, so there was that. They were very nervous; I wasn't nervous, but they were, of course, nervous about that. And there's teacher certification, now that we have been accredited and are required to do that. And then I've got seven strategies, and then I've got four assessments. We've got too many balls in the air and that's my fault, it's true. We get to drop the accreditation ball this year. I think we are going to be OK. It's something to be aware of. You can fatigue teachers; you can wear them out. They do, in fact, have to teach all day long and then you've got your thing that you want them to do to. Find a way to weave that in seamlessly into what they are doing in the classroom so it's not an extra thing—it should support what they are doing in the classroom, not add to it. You don't want to just pile on more stuff.

Lastly, we want to make sure that our faculty development is *concerned with developing overall "situational awareness,"* or self-consciousness, or mainly a professional judgment. The ultimate goal is their growth in professional judgment. We use a lot of scenarios and situations, particularly in our secondary staff discussions. We've done it in the elementary as well. The point of that is not that they'll know what to do when they face that situation—they are never going to face that exact situation. The point is for us to step back, look at a situation, and diagnose before we start prescribing the solution. It's really easy for teachers to say there's a solution, I know how to fix it, and away we go. We have to do that as teachers hundreds of times a day. Situation, read it, go. So we try to step back, spend some time looking at a scenario, talk about it for 35 minutes, and diagnose all the possible things that might be going on before we start talking about a solution.

That's just one way of trying to reach that main point of growing their professional judgment so they don't need you as administrators. That would be the goal, right? You don't have to be in the classroom. Of course, that will never arrive. Teachers always need feedback. They always need administrators to care and talk with them. Even if they are 100%, they still want that. So you are always going to be necessary. We want to try to move them more and more toward developing their own professional judgment so they can do those things or be leaders in the school as well.

Editor's note:

This concludes the first section of Bryan's workshop. ACCS-member schools may access the Mp3 recording of the entire workshop at http://accsedu.org/school-resources/2015-1997-conference-audio-recordings-.

GOVERNANCE DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

by Leonard Stob, The Liberian Circle

Mission-directed governance provides the option to educate deliberately with vision, unity, and accountability.

How is your school doing as it deals with changes in politics, religion, family, community, economics, technology, and other causes of instability? Are there troubling changes in loyalty to the school? How can school leaders guide the school in these disquieting circumstances?

To navigate the changes, school leaders customarily follow one of two approaches. Each tactic has a governance model that supports its direction and style. A governance model is the organizational framework that defines the roles, limits, and responsibilities of the board, the school head, and the ownership group (such as church, association, or individual). The governance model determines how school leaders will pilot the ministry through the challenges of change by describing the decision-making process, who participates, and level of accountability. The mission statement determines the school's purpose and goal.

The most familiar governance system is the traditional model. The decision-making process customarily involves many people who serve on committees that report and make recommendations to the school board. This system makes decisions slowly, cautiously trying to minimize mistakes, criticism, and risk.

Boards under the traditional model wait for random issues to arise, identify specific problems and complaints, and then react. They are unsure about what they are trying to advance beyond "excellent Christian education." The result is a culture that is suspicious of any change.

Under the traditional model of governance, the school board cannot provide leadership that advances a purposeful, comprehensive vision of what "ought

Having retired from 40 years of innovative leadership in Christian schools, Leonard Stob, MEd, continues his passion for advancing Christ's kingdom through distinctive Christian education that nurtures whole-life discipleship. He is recognized for designing the mission-directed governance model that allows boards to lead with vision, unity, and accountability. He is also the vision bearer for The Liberian Circle. This article first appeared in Christian School Education *magazine and is reprinted by permission.*

to be." It cannot address strategic issues until they are critically urgent. The board rarely initiates action. Even the board agenda is determined by committees and by sidetracking topics raised by individual board members during "round table." The school board's role is reduced to being a passive final filter that approves or disapproves recommendations. The school head is a manager, carrying out the assignments of committees and the board. There is no predictable, criteria-based accountability.

This process of decision-making is known to breed political pressures from powerful individuals and groups. School boards eventually admit that if they are to address strategic issues they must detach themselves from involvement in day-to-day problems and entanglements of political influences.

When the board concedes that the school is not meeting expectations, it often adopts a second governance approach, namely, to run the school like a business. Schools often adopt a governance-by-policy model similar to that proposed by John Carver.

This alternative model promises to make the school more professional, proficient, and consumer sensitive. The board operates by policies, hires the school head as chief executive officer, and holds him or her accountable for the success of the school. Boards may hire a school head with a background in business rather than with educational training.

School boards that adopt the governance-by-policy model are often pleasantly surprised by the initial energy, smoother decision-making process, and relief from political pressures. The board finds it can concentrate on improving the school's image by promoting academic superiority and financial stability. However, these advantages arise because the board has become autonomous, effectually owning the school, and self-perpetuating by appointing its own members; it therefore is liberated from outside controls.

There are some unexpected consequences when a Christian school adopts this model. First, as promised, the board's focus is on business goals, on processes and on reaching business benchmarks such as financial growth and increased consumer satisfaction. The school's philosophy and mission then become primarily marketing slogans rather than tools designed for internal structuring and planning. The board sees its principal responsibility as to provide facilities, equipment, and financial support. The board has little to do with education, except to demand good academic test scores. The board leaves the faculty on their own to develop a "Christian" perspective in the classroom.

Second, because the school board is autonomous, it is not directly accountable to any ownership group such as a church or parents. Without accountability, the board can modify any aspect of the school it chooses, including revising or ignoring the mission and founding beliefs. The potential is organizational drift with the school floating from its central positions and beliefs. What prevents these schools from following the path of well-known colleges that began as Christian learning centers only to become prestigious academic institutions known for challenging the Christian faith and worldview?

There is a third governance model that handles change by blending the best of both models and repairing their major weaknesses. The mission-directed governance model is adaptable to a diversity of world cultures, size of schools, ownership models, and educational philosophies. The goal is that the board, administration, and faculty together pursue purposeful Christian education with vision, unity, and accountability.

The mission-directed governance model ties school accountability to the local ownership group. When the church and community are assured that the school's founding positions are secure, they then support the school's leadership to strategically and boldly adopt and implement mission-enhancing initiatives.

The school board can lead by initiating goals and

priorities that promote student growth in knowledge of and relationship to Jesus as Savior and Lord and student training to advance Christ's kingdom in the students' personal life, family, church, and community. Only under mission-directed governance does the board oversee Christian education as a purposeful, holistic, integrated endeavor and hold the school head accountable for producing student learning that is consistent with the mission.

With a well-articulated mission statement, the school leadership can intentionally align curriculum, programs, and policies to accomplish that mission. To assess the school's present status and to establish plans and priorities for improvement, the board needs to gather information that measures the important aspects of Christian education. For example, it is important to measure student academic results, but it is also important to measure growth in Christian discipleship. Measured evidence should also demonstrate the extent school programs and personnel are producing targeted results.

These plans enable school leaders to build a realistic budget that includes financial and personnel resources required for the plans to succeed. This same data provides yardsticks for evaluating the school head.

While having different roles and responsibilities, the school board and the school head are a team working together to achieve the same goals. This is not an adversarial relationship. The board hires the school head as chief executive officer to accomplish its expectations by operating within policies and ethical principles. The school head is to provide vision, leadership, and supervision of the faculty and staff and oversee results. This allows the school head to involve the faculty and staff in evaluating and creatively improving the curriculum and programs to stimulate more effective and meaningful student learning.

In these dramatic times of change, it is necessary to purposefully advance Christ's kingdom through Christian education. School leaders must lead with resolve to accomplish what God is calling them to do. Mission-directed governance provides the option to educate deliberately with vision, unity, and accountability.

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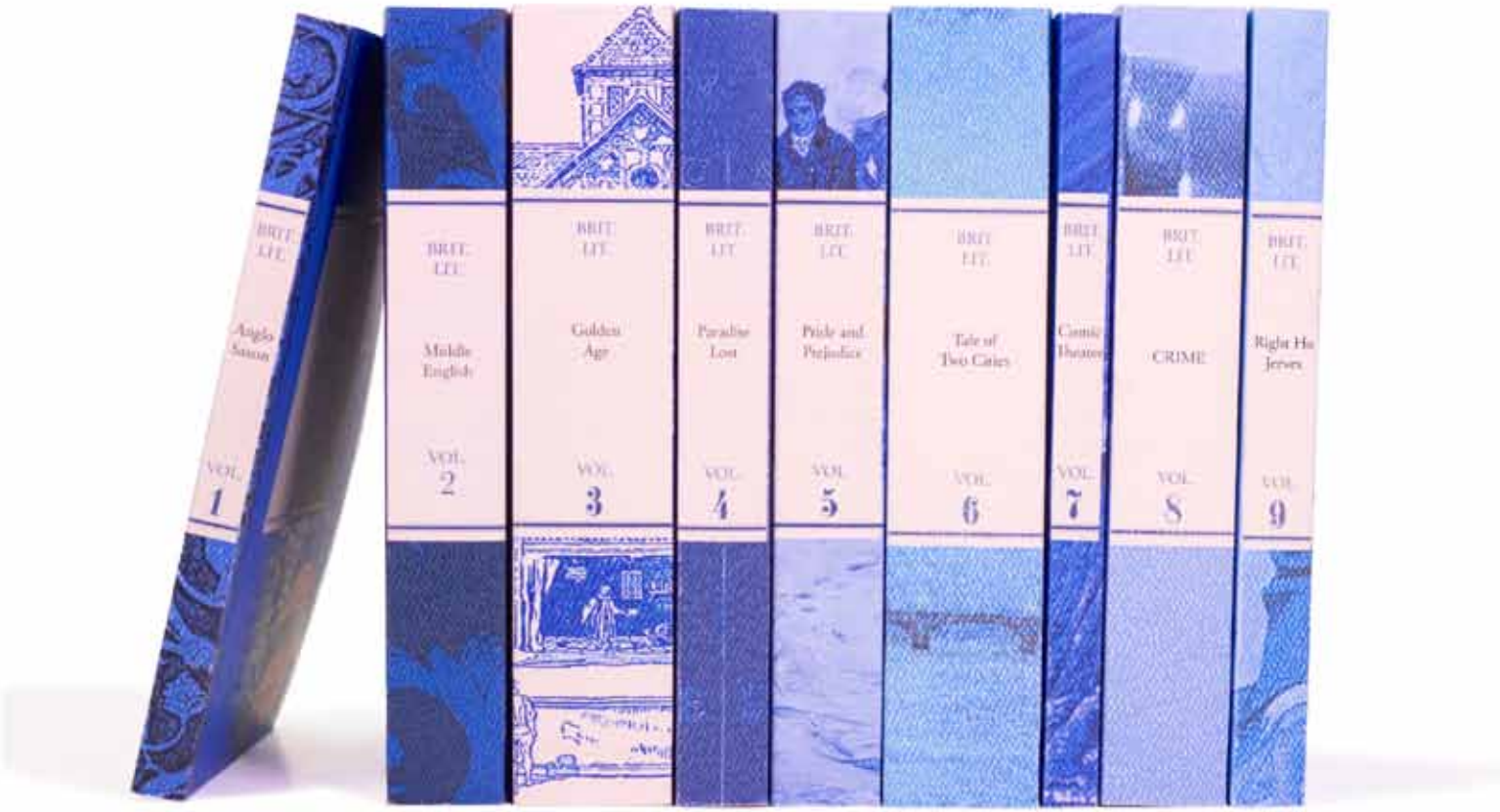

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