CLASSIS

THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF CLASSICAL & CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

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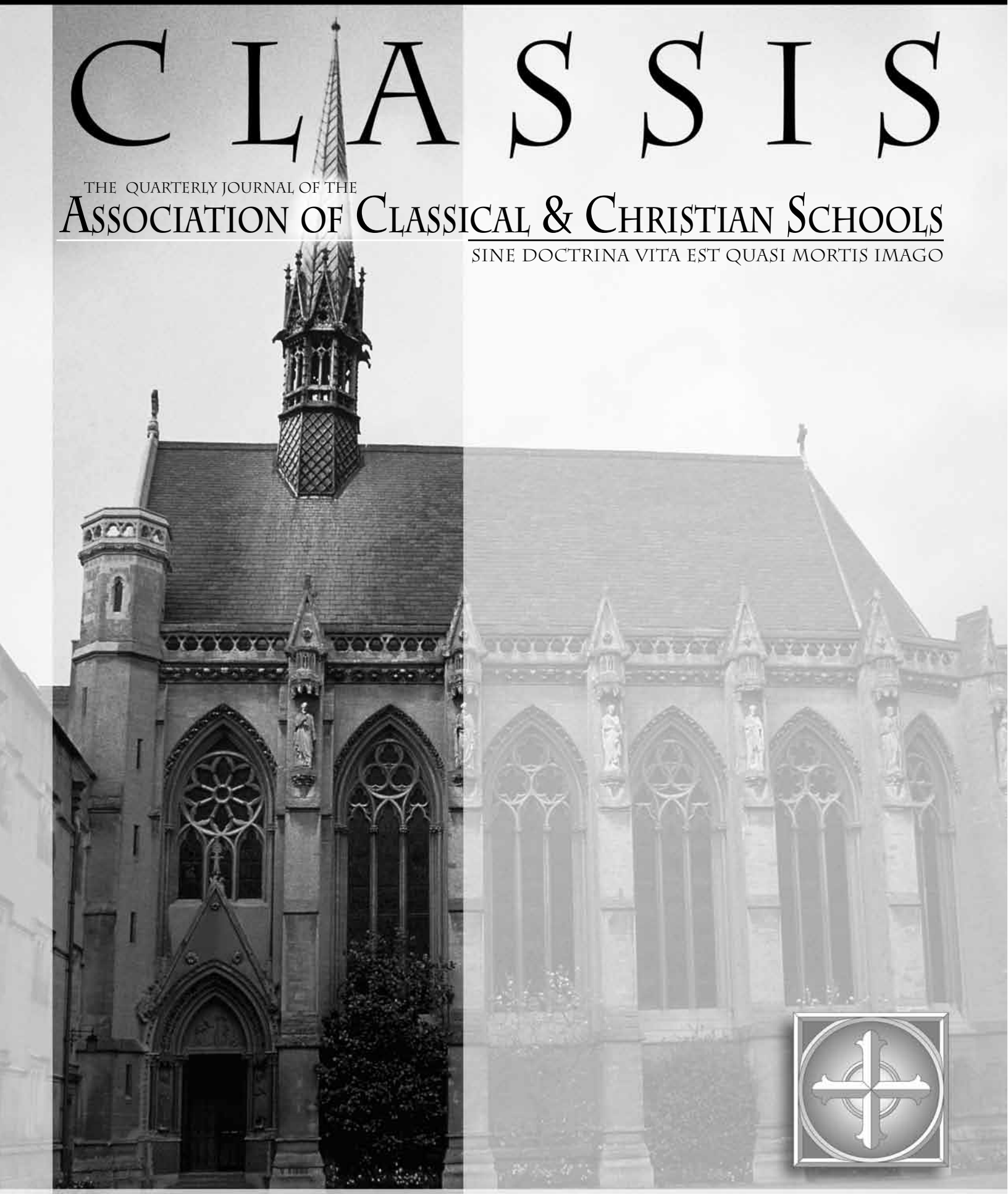

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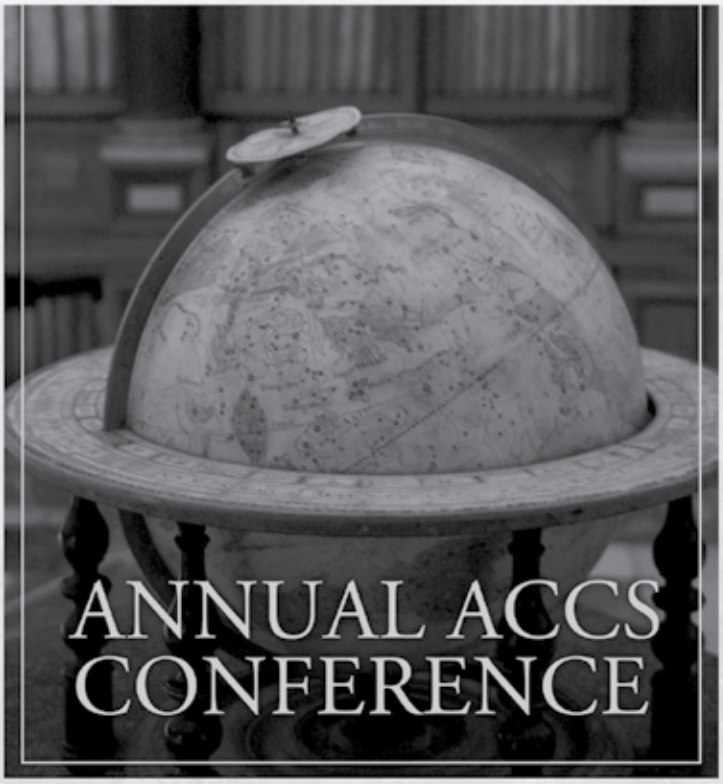
REPAIRING *the* RUINS



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FEATURED SPEAKERS

PETER LILLBACK

The Reverend Dr. Peter A. Lillback is president and professor of historical theology at Westminster Theological Seminary. Prior to his current appointment, he served the seminary as an adjunct faculty member for nearly 20 years. Released in 2006, Dr. Lillback's book *George Washington's Sacred Fire* represents the culmination of more than 20 years of original research and scholarship.

GEORGE GRANT

George Grant is a twenty-year veteran of Christian and Classical Education. And he has the scars to prove it. He is the pastor of Parish Presbyterian Church in Franklin, TN, but much to the consternation of his long-suffering wife, three children, and three grandchildren, he has also a founded a veritable alphabet soup of organizations: FCS, NCF, KMSC, SZRT, CS, CF, F7, CCSA, and probably a few more that we've forgotten about just now. Oh yes, and once upon a time he also wrote some books.

MATT WHITLING

For the past eighteen years, Matt has taught elementary and secondary classes at Logos School in Moscow, Idaho, and currently works as both secondary and elementary principal there. He also coaches boys' basketball. He is the author of the *Imitation in Writing* series. A member of Christ Church, he serves as a parish elder.

DOUGLAS WILSON

Douglas Wilson is the pastor of Christ Church in Moscow, Idaho. He is a founding board member of both Logos School and New Saint Andrews College and continues to serve as an ex-officio member of the ACCS board. He has authored numerous books on classical Christian education, the family, and the Reformed faith.

To find out more or register online, visit **www.accsedu.org > Conference.**

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Sine doctrina vita est quasi mortis imago

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ACCS

Classical Christian education for the world

CLASSIS is a quarterly journal of articles and book reviews designed to support and encourage schools around the world which are recovering classical Christian education. Hard copies are available to ACCS members and by subscription.

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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Sharpening

by Patch Blakey

The writer of Proverbs said, "As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend" (Proverbs 27:17).

I've watched as I've sharpened a pencil in my garage. As I turn the handle on the sharpener, layer after layer of wood is shaved off and the pencil grows noticeably shorter, but it also grows sharper. Once it is sharpened, it is much easier to use; it is more effective. If I were a pencil, I can only imagine it being an excruciating process. Thankfully, it's not that way for us as people, but it can still often be painful, challenging, and difficult to be "sharpened" by another.

I also have visions of ancient Greeks preparing for war, and grinding their blades to a sharpened edge with a whetting stone, or as the verse above states, with another piece of iron. Once the sharpening has been completed, the sword will be a much more useful and effective implement for the warrior in battle. Again, I can envision myself being ground down on a rapidly spinning grinding stone to be "sharpened," and the thought is too painful to bear for the instant it crosses my mind. But, the experience of being "sharpened" by another person is still often a discomforting prospect.

Yet the writer of Proverbs speaks of this sharpening process occurring between friends. It is a collegial exchange with mutual respect and regard in mind. Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:7). Jesus did this for His disciples then and for those ever since. We can conclude that there is a selflessness to sharpening others and also to being sharpened. In other words, it's not about us. We sharpen others and we are sharpened when we focus on the benefit and service to others as a result of that sharpening.

Jesus also told his disciples, "No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15). Friends do not keep beneficial information from one another — they share it freely. These friends want their friends to be included in what is happening, not excluded. And this is consistent with what the Apostle John wrote, "That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3).

So, given all of the above, I hope you find the articles in this issue of *Classis* to be presented in the context of friends serving friends within a community of schools. I doubt that any will feel any sharp physical pains as they read the array of articles herein published. But my hope is that that you will be stimulated by your peers from other schools and encouraged perhaps in ways not previously considered. In addition, I am pleased to note that we have included selected excerpts from George Grant's popular ACCS conference talk, "Dumb and Dumber: The Desperate Need for Covenantal and Classical Education." Perhaps, as a result of considering these comments from others, you will find yourself a more effective classical Christian educator.

Patch Blakey *is the ACCS executive director.*

"Dumb and Dumber: The Desperate Need for Covenantal and Classical Education"

by George Grant, Parish Presbyterian Church

The following is adapted from a speech delivered June 19, 1999, in Austin, Texas, at the ACCS annual conference.

I was robbed. Maybe some of you were too. I was so poorly educated in the government schools that I didn't even know how dumb I was. I was so poorly educated in the government schools that I actually thought I was educated. I mean, after all, I was a fairly good student. I made it all the way through government schools through twelfth grade, scored well on my SATs and went off to college with a scholarship. I thought I was styling, as well as smart.

Hence, I made it all the way through college, despite all of my college shenanigans, with a fairly good grade point average. I was encouraged by my professor to go on to pursue a master's degree and went off to seminary after a master's program in political science and history. I also did well in seminary. I never made lower than a 95% on my Hebrew. I got straight A's all the way through seminary. Later on, I got two doctorates.

I was robbed. All along the way, I was robbed. I think some of you can sympathize with my shock and dismay as I began to read as an adult and realized that I didn't know anything. I had gone all the way through school and learned all of this stuff and had a string of letters after my name and I still couldn't answer basic questions like who was the first president of the United States? I always thought it was George Washington. Then I started to do the math. Let's see, 1776: First Continental Congress; 1774: George Washington becomes president; 1789—wait a minute, there is a gap there. Oh yes, the Articles of Confederation. I almost forgot those inept, foolish articles, that big mistake that had to be rectified as soon as possible by the Constitution. But the Articles of Confederation didn't come into existence until 1783 and were not fully ratified until 1787, so we've still got a gap.

I am not really sure, despite the inordinate amount of time we American Christians seem to spend on American history. We think, somehow or another, we are going to find "light in the glory" and despite that, I realized here I am, I've studied this stuff all my academic career, focused on the period of the founders, the American Revolution, and I don't even know what the Articles of Confederation are. I have never read them, I don't know what form of government existed prior to the Articles of Confederation, and I don't know who the first president of the United States was, but I do know that when I read that incredible passage in Henry Cabot Lodge's two-volume biography of George Washington[1], where George Washington comes in as the commander-in-chief of the Continental Army and he bends his knee and hands his sword to the president of the United States and resigns his commission, I do know that is one of the most powerful scenes I have ever read in American history and I don't know who he resigned to. I have been robbed. This is relatively recent history and I don't know p-diddly about it. How can I expect to know the full width and breadth and depth of my incredible legacy? How can I know the stories of Alfred the Great and William Wallace? (Aye!) How can I know the great stories that surround the conversion of Charles Martel and the marvels of Boniface facing down the idolaters of the Teutonic forest and chopping down the trees of the sacred groves? How can I be sure that I know anything if I don't even know who the first president of the United States was?

I began to do some quick research, digging, studying, and it was hard. I had to go to volume after volume. I found, through interlibrary loan, all kinds of books about the Articles of Confederation and the Continental Congress, and still never found a list, until I dug up this little volume called the "Poems of Religion and Society,"[2] written by John Quincy Adams, and realized that there was this long tradition of instructing students in their glorious inheritance so that they might be able, in the words of I Corinthians, chapter 10, ". . . to take heed less they stumble and fall."

Now I discovered the stories of men like Peyton Randolph, our first president of the United States, who was born in 1723 and died in 1775. You can visit his house if you go to Williamsburg. He was an amazing man. As a youngster he was quite a prodigy. In fact, by the time he was 15 years old he was an internationally acclaimed scholar in Senecan studies. He began a

George Grant *is a twenty-year veteran of Christian and classical Education. He is the pastor of Parish Presbyterian Church in Franklin, TN, and an ex-officio member of the ACCS board.*

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self-guided study of the classics at the age of 13, by the age of 16 was sent off to London to study in the Inner Temple, came back just a year later, having completed his studies, and was sent back, still a minor but now the King's attorney for Virginia. As soon as he was old enough, at the age of 18½, he became the attorney general for the House of Burgesses in Virginia. Later, on his 21st birthday, (the soonest that he could possibly join that esteemed body), he became a member of the House of Burgesses. He was a remarkable professor of rhetoric and law at William and Mary College.

It was there that he first began to train his young rhetorical disciple, Patrick Henry. He taught him how to use words and construct ideas and began to urge him toward a glorious career in stirring the hearts of men and nations. In 1774, when the First Continental Congress met, Peyton Randolph, this remarkable man, was unanimously elected by the delegates as the first president of these United States gathered in Congress. He was a man of great personal gifts, and besides his prodigious intellectual gifts, he was like Samuel Adams and Patrick Henry in that he was a coalition builder, an essential quality of true political leadership.

He carried on a vast correspondence, averaging somewhere in the neighborhood of twenty personal letters every day. He read about five or six books a week. In order to carry out this busy schedule, he taught himself how to write with both hands, so that he wouldn't waste any time. And while that was not an unusual feat—many of the founding fathers wrote letters with both hands—he had this unusual ability to write two different letters to two different people in two different languages on two *different* subjects simultaneously. John Quincy Adams said that that was amazing because John Quincy Adams could only write two different letters to two different people in two different languages on the *same* subject.

Peyton Randolph was succeeded by Henry Middleton of South Carolina, who was born in 1717 and died in 1784. He was followed by John Hancock who was born in 1737 and died in 1793. They served in the Continental Congress under a charter that was called the Charter of Liberty, the first constitution of the United States. It was during John Hancock's term that the great resolution was made on June 7, 1776, by Richard Henry Lee that "these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States ."[3] That "covenant lawsuit," of course, was framed as the Declaration of Independence.

During the administration of John Hancock, a new constitution was constructed, a loose letter that bound together thirteen of the twenty-one American colonies. Five Canadian colonies chose not to join the Americans in their rebellion. There were other colonies–for instance, the Republic of Vermont–which chose to go their own way. They were going to fight for independence, but they had Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys to fight for freedom for the Republic of Vermont under President Thomas Crittenden. They would not later join the United States as the fourteenth state until 1791.

We often think about the battle of Ticonderoga and the taking of that great fortress on Lake Champlain as a part of the American War of Independence. But, of course, it was not under the command of the Continental Congress; it was under the command of the Congress of Vermont and President Thomas Crittenden. Ethan Allen was not fighting for the Americans; he was fighting with the Green Mountain Boys for Vermont.

But it was during that time that thirteen of the colonies—excluding the Republic of West Florida with its capital at Red Stick (Baton Rouge) flying the Bonnie Blue flag as their symbol of independence or the Watauga territories which incorporated as the State of Franklin— excluding those, the thirteen colonies banded together and wrote a new Constitution called the "Solemn League and Covenant," designed to expressly mimic the great Solemn League and Covenant of the Scottish Covenanters, a full century prior. It was during the first year of the ratification of the Solemn League and Covenant that Henry Laurens became the fourth president of the United States: Peyton Randolph, Henry Middleton, John Hancock, and then Henry Laurens.

Laurens was from South Carolina, the only president in the United States ever to be held by a foreign power as a prisoner of war. He was a remarkable man. He was raised in South Carolina for a life of commerce. If you go to Columbia, South Carolina, and visit the state capital you'll see in the grand classical tradition, the colonnade across the front of the building, and the colonnade across the back of the building, and wide steps going down to the street level on each side with the statue at the center of the colonnade on both sides. On one side stands a statue of George Washington, and on

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the other side a statue of the man that George Washington called the father of our country, Henry Laurens. After he served his term as president from 1777–1778, Laurens volunteered to serve his nation in the most dangerous assignment available. He was to sail across the Atlantic, which was then a lake owned by the British, to serve as the first ambassador to the Dutch Republic from the fledgling nation. He boarded a little packet and made his way across the Atlantic, but midway he was intercepted by a man-of-war and he was captured. He was taken to the Tower of London. Three different times he was within moments of execution. Once, his head was on the block and the ax was literally in the air. The story of his startling spiritual renewal while he sat in the Tower of London and his account of thinking through the lives of others who had sat there like he—Sir Walter Raleigh and others—is one of the most fascinating documents in American history.

Ultimately, after the battle of Yorktown as the two sides began to untangle the snarl that would ultimately lead to a glorious peace between Britain and the new country, the United States, it was Henry Laurens who was exchanged in the prisoner exchange for Lord Cornwallis. When he arrived in the New York harbor, throngs greeted him. He was hailed as the hero of the revolution. And it was there on the docks that George Washington proclaimed him "the father of our country."

John Jay succeeded Henry Laurens, a great Supreme Court justice, author of the Federalist Papers, and a remarkable rhetorician for the revolution. John Jay of New York was born in 1745 and died in 1829. He was followed by Samuel Huntington, born in 1732, died in 1796; he was from Connecticut. He was followed by Thomas McKean of Delaware, born in 1734 and died in 1817. He was followed by John Hanson, who was the mastermind of the Articles of Confederation and it was under his tutelage that, ultimately, the Articles of Confederation were ratified by the thirteen states. He was born in 1715 and died in 1793.

John Hanson was a remarkable man in many ways. He was essentially next-door-neighbors with George Washington. He lived in Mulberry Grove, Maryland–if you can throw a silver dollar across the Potomac from the shores of Mt. Vernon you can almost hit the shores of Mulberry Grove. So they were friends all their lives. John Hanson was actually the heir of Swedish royalty and was a remarkable scholar in his own right. Like so many of these other founding fathers, he had a prodigious memory, he had a mastery over the classics that could hardly be rivaled by the scholars of Oxford or Cambridge, and it was under his tutelage that the decentralized vision of the Anti-federalists came to fruition in the Articles of Confederation.

Elias Boudinot of New Jersey succeeded John Hanson as the next president of the United States, serving from 1782–1783. Boudinot was born in 1741 and died in 1821. He was followed by Thomas Mifflin of Pennsylvania, who was born in 1744 and died in 1800. He was remarkable in that he was George Washington's first aide-de-camp, when George Washington become commander-in-chief of the Continental Armies, but later served as president of the United States when his former boss came to him, knelt before him, and yielded up his sword of command, turning back home to Mt. Vernon as a modern day Cincinnatus to till the soil.

Thomas Mifflin received that sword and his words were, "Having defended the standard of liberty in this new world; having taught a lesson useful to those who inflict, and to those who feel oppression, you retire from the great theatre of action, with the blessings of your fellow citizens; but the glory of your virtues will not terminate with your military command, it will continue to animate remotest ages . . . We join you in commending the interests of our dearest country to the protection of almighty God, beseeching him to dispose the hearts and minds of its citizens to improve the opportunity afforded them of becoming a happy and respectable nation: And for you we address to him our earnest prayers, that a life so beloved may be fostered with all his care; that your days may be happy as they have been illustrious; and that he will finally give you that reward which this world cannot give."[4]

Richard Henry Lee, the man who initiated the resolution that ultimately brought about the Declaration of Independence was born in 1732 and died in 1794. He served as president of the United States next. Richard Henry Lee, of the great Virginia Lee family, was the heir of a glorious tradition and was the ancestor of a still more glorious one. He was assigned the task of pulling together the team that would actually write the Declaration of Independence, but his wife took ill some days after the assignment was given. And so, he went to his young protégé, the man who he had been discipling for a number of years,

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who distressed his heart terribly with his heterodox beliefs, young Tommy Jefferson. John Hancock served a second term from 1785–1786. He was followed by his fellow delegate from Massachusetts, Nathaniel Gorham, who served from 1786–1787.

Nathaniel Gorham was followed by Arthur St. Clair of Pennsylvania, the only president of the United States to be born on foreign soil—a foreign citizen. He was born in Thurso, Caithness County, Scotland, just a few years prior to the calamity of the rising of '45. He was born in 1734. The rising of '45 was of course the great rising of Bonnie Prince Charlie, the heir of the Stewart crown, come to claim the throne for his father. He arrived on a little island, just off the Hebrides coast on July 24, 1745, with no army and no money and no hope, but as a very charismatic, dynamic, visionary 24-year-old man. He marched across Scotland toward Edinburgh, raising an army of wild, blue-faced Highlanders ready to claim their freedom. He got within 50 miles of London. King George was so frightened by the specter of Scots in the capital that he put on his little silk slippers and he began to make plans to sneak out of London. It was not until his robust brother, the Duke of Cumberland, at 345 pounds the slayer of many horses, determined to turn back the tide and through treachery and betrayal, the likes of which undid William Wallace and almost undid Robert the Bruce, Bonnie Prince Charlie was turned back. At the battle of Culloden in the winter of 1746 some 6,000 Scots fell on the field of battle after which came the great Scottish ban—where the tartans were banned, the clans were banned, the names were banned, the old songs were banned, bagpipes were banned. And over the course of the next eight years, more than three-fourths of the adult population between ages 18 and 45 left Scotland.

Then, of course, they came to America, right as the Great Awakening was catching flame, at the moment when so many young converts needed trained, catechized, equipped, stalwart Scots to pastor and lead their congregations. In the good providence of God suddenly there was a huge throng of Scots to lead churches and to lead universities. This is how we got Witherspoon, who spent 18 months in a British jail for standing with Bonnie Prince Charlie before he was shipped off to sign the Declaration of Independence and lead Princeton University Though most of his family and friends abandoned their devastated homeland in the years following the Battle of Culloden—after which nearly a third of the land was depopulated through emigration to America—he stayed behind to learn the ways of the hated Hanoverian English in the Royal Navy. His plan was to learn of the enemy's military might in order to fight another day. Arthur St. Clair lost four uncles on the battlefield of Culloden. He was a strident Antifederalist and had worse things to say about the Constitution than Patrick Henry ever thought about saying. He ultimately rejected his citizenship because he believed the Constitution, which finally was passed in his latter days, would be the undoing of the great experiment in liberty .

Cyrus Griffin succeeded him as president of the United States. He served from 1788–1789 and saw through the final phases of ratification of that new Constitution and thus was the last president of the United States prior to George Washington, the first president under our current Constitution.

Question: Why don't we know this stuff? Why aren't we regaling our children with the stories of courage and valor? Let's give the contemporary historians the benefit of the doubt. Let's say that the Articles of Confederation were weak and they were incapable of providing the kind of foundation for freedom and liberty that would carry us into two new centuries of exploits. Let's give them that. What I want to know is how did these guys with such a weak Constitution and such a flabby form of government stand nose-to-nose with the greatest military power that the world had ever seen *and prevail?* How did less than three million people, scattered along the Atlantic coast and frontier outcroppings on the east side of the Appalachians, how did that scraggly little crew produce such prodigious men? How is it possible that a Patrick Henry and a Samuel Adams and a Thomas Jefferson and a George Washington and a Peyton Randolph and an Arthur St. Clair, a Thomas Mifflin—how could all of them be living at the same time? Be contemporaries? I'll take *one*. We get Bill and Hillary. They had a slew of men .

Why do we do what we do? By this time you are looking at your outline and thinking, when is he going to get to the stuff? Why do we do what we do? We do it because this is important material and this is the only way that we are going to get it. Why do we do what we do in classical education? We do what we do because this is the sort of material

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that stirs young minds. You will not believe what it does to a sixth grader, to be standing at the checkout counter at the grocery store and just kind of lean over slightly and say to the checkout girl, "Hey, by the way, do you know who the first president of the United States was?" It's like secret knowledge. We'll slay them all.

This is also our theological obligation. Therefore, this is our theological legacy. The English author and lecturer, John H. Y. Briggs, has pointedly argued that a historical awareness is essential for the health and well-being of any society and enables us to know who we are, why we are here, what we should do, and where we are going. Why? He says, "Just as a loss of memory in an individual is a psychiatric defect calling for medical treatment, so to any community which has no social memory is suffering an illness ."[5] Lord Acton, the greatest historian from the previous century made the same point saying, "History must be our deliverer not only from the undue influence from other times, but from the undue influence of our own, from the tyranny of environment and from the pressures of the air that we breathe ."[6]

Psalm 88:12 says it well, "righteousness cannot be done in a land of forgetfulness." Why do we do what we do? Why do we struggle, week after week, year after year? Why do we wrestle with putting together the right kind of board structures, why do we put up with a lack of resources, and the mockery of public officials, and zoning requirements that force us into tiny little warehouses always held suspect by our neighbors? We do not do it because we have been robbed. We do not do it because the government schools are bad. We do not do it because the other alternatives in our town are elitist, or are too expensive, or on the opposite side of town, or have the wrong kind of sports program.

G.K. Chesterton once quipped that "most modern social inquiry is bound to be dullardly predictable, in both form and function." He said this, "It begins as a rule with an analysis, with statistics, tables of population, decrease of crime among Congregationalists, growth of hysteria among policemen, and similar ascertained facts; it ends with a chapter that is generally called 'The Remedy.' It is almost wholly due to this careful, solid, and scientific method, that 'The Remedy' is never found. For this scheme of medical question and answer is a blunder, the first great blunder of sociology. It is always called stating the disease before we find the cure. But it is the whole definition and dignity of the Christian man that in social matters we must actually find the cure before we find the disease."[7]

We do what we do because God has called us to it. We don't need to rehearse the litany of horrors in the public schools, do we? We can trot out the statistics: 90 million adults are functionally illiterate in this country; 35 million are alliterate—they can only read a few basics with difficulty, but they choose not to. SAT score comparisons have an unbroken decline despite three major adjustments from 1963 to the present [1999], average verbal scores have fallen 50 points; 40 percent of all high school seniors cannot draw inferences from written material; only a fifth can write a persuasive essay; less than a third can solve an arithmetic problem; most can't find the Pacific Ocean.

Do we really need to rehearse all of this? We really don't because we know that we have been robbed. And it wasn't just that we were robbed of sixteen presidents. We were robbed of the hunger, the joy, the passion for learning. We were somehow robbed of the notion that commencement, not graduation, is what comes at the end of a particular stage of learning. We were robbed of the sense of calling, of destiny, because we were robbed of our legacy, our inheritance. And so when we look at the contemporary models of educational reform we need not be tempted to level forth with jeremiads and say, "Oh, the government schools are terrible!" We don't need to do that. Well might we plead the case for an outpouring of jeremiads from our pulpits, from our schools, from our conferences in this day. What with the inhuman humanism and the patronizing pietism launching a tandem assault on all that is near and dear, such a prophetic stance seems all too appropriate. Expose the evils. Unmask the ignorance. Demonstrate the inconsistencies. Broadcast the hypocrisies. Mourn the barbarities. Set forth with zeal the clear consequences of God's wrath upon a nation that chooses to rob its children of their chief joy, the joy of their inheritance. We are in no position to carry it out. The church is in no position to carry it out because we are victims of the robbery ourselves. Besides that, our churches have been trivialized and crippled by "praisealleujah" poppycock and hermeneutical hot-dogging, church growth skullduggery, intellectual hodgepodgery, braggadocio balderdash and hermeneutical and eschatological bosh. Our idea of a great worship service

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is some sort of an ecclesiastical whoopee cushion. Seduce us into a real-good, feel-good moment. Our obsession with brainless bric-a-brac and business meeting bilge has made our ineffectiveness and unproductiveness a foregone conclusion. Jeremiads, no way.

So how shall we then live? What can we then do? I believe that, instead of attempting that which we are ill-equipped to do, instead of unleashing upon an unsuspecting pagan culture our righteous indignation, instead of venting our grievous jeremiads upon deafened ears, perhaps we ought to consider the possibility of taking the ultimate course of the "nehemiad." In contradistinction to the jeremiad, the nehemiad does not rip into those who flaunt ungodliness; its concern is our own repentance, our own reformation. Unlike the jeremiads, the nehemiad does not have a negative indictable tone, instead its concern is restorative. Again, as opposed to the jeremiad, the nehemiad is not inescapably tied to a critical spirit; its concern is constructive. The jeremiad is modeled by the prophet Jeremiah when he cried out, "This is what the LORD says about this people: 'They greatly love to wander; they do not restrain their feet. So the LORD does not accept them; he will now remember their wickedness and punish them for their sins.' " The nehemiad, on the other hand, is modeled by the cupbearer to Artaxerxes, Nehemiah, when he cried out, "O Lord, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love Him and obey His command, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying this day before you day and night . . . . I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against you. We have acted very wickedly towards you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees, and laws you gave to your servant Moses . . . . O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man" (Nehemiah 1:5–11).

Undoubtedly, our corrupt culture, our feminine church, is in dire need of the work of zealous, jeremiad-spouting churches. But comprehending that our piffle-spewing pulpits are unfit for the present task, the place of the nehemiad is all the more prominent. The walls are down. The rubble is nigh unto impassible. All is in shambles. So let the nehemiads begin. Let us repair the ruins. Let the nehemiads take a priority place in our liturgies. Let the nehemiads mark our heretofore "paucitous" preaching. Let the nehemiad proceed from our life and our work so that in our time, our vocabulary may once again be expanded to one day include the jeremiad as well. Only know when the haughty church comes to grips with its theological, cultural, and intellectual impoverishment does the humiliation that that brings open the door for humility.

That is a position of vulnerability that churchmen are none too anxious to embrace, which explains why humility is an evangelical commodity in desperately short supply, and why the nehemiad is an alien concept. We have a tremendous amount of work to do, raising up the next generation of leaders to have a vision that is far surpassing our own. We were robbed! I desperately want to ensure that my grandchildren are not. We were robbed. We have gone from dumb to dumber. I want to desperately ensure that my great-grandchildren are not. We have had to reinvent classical education, starting from scratch. I want to ensure that my great-grandchildren don't have to reinvent the wheel too.

As a result, we do what we do, not because things are so bad out there, but because in here we caught a glimpse, a tiny glimpse of what could be, of what should be, of what would be, if only we would be faithful. We can't expect to see out of a single curriculum cycle, a Patrick Henry, or a Peyton Randolph rise. We may be training the parents, or the grandparents, of the Patrick Henrys and the Peyton Randolphs of the future. We can't expect our 12-year-old to be like Peyton Randolph next year and take up a self-guided study of the classics. But oh, wouldn't it be fine, that one day in our decrepitude as we sit in that aged La-Z-Boy, to have our grandbaby crawl up in our lap, snuggle a fat little cheek up to ours and say, "Tell me again, granddaddy, about Virgil. Tell me again, grandaddy, that story of Arthur St. Clair. Tell me again, granddaddy, I want to know."

Why do we do what we do? We don't do it because it is a good alternative. We don't do it because the government schools have failed. We don't do it because we have been robbed. We don't do it because it's nifty, interesting, provocative, academically accessible. We do what we do because it is right, because it is necessary, because this is our inheritance, because

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God has called us to something more and we who have starved like shriveled Biafrans since infancy, know that our prodigy must have more, must have better.

Psalm 78 says it only too well. There, a psalmist focusing on the dilemmas of a nation at risk says:

> Listen, oh my people, listen to my instruction; incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable. I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. We will not conceal them from our children. Tell the generations to come the praises of the Lord, and the strength of His wondrous works which He has done. For He has established a testimony in our midst and appointed a new law in the land which he commanded to our fathers, that they should teach them to their children. That generations to come might know, even the children yet to be born, that they may turn and arise and tell them to their children, that they should put their confidence in God, and not forget the works of God but keep His commandments. (from Psalm 78:1-7).

Oh, that we would undertake this task for the right reasons. We don't do classical education because of the disease; we do classical education because of the cure, the cure of souls. It is time to issue forth, all across this land, with thunderous nehemiads. Rebuild the walls, brothers and sisters, and your grandchildren will have a glorious inheritance. And they'll know who the first president of the United States was. God bless you.

Notes:

1. Henry Cabot Lodge, *George Washington*, Volume I (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1917), 339.

2. John Quincy Adams, *Poems of Religion and Society* (Auburn and Buffalo: Miller, Orton, & Mulligan, 1854)

3. Lee Resolution showing congressional vote, July 2, 1776; Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774-1783; Records of the Continental and Confederation Congresses and the Constitutional Convention, 1774-1789, Record Group 360; National Archives.

4. National Archives, Washington, D.C., Papers of the Continental Congress, item 19, and is printed in Worthington C. Ford et al, eds., Journals of the Continental Congress, vol. 25:838-38. A docket on the manuscript reads: "A report of a Committee Decr 23d 1783 Answer of Congress to Genl Washington."

5. Source unknown. (Might be in Eerdmans Handbook to the History of Christianity (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977).

6. John Emerich Edward Acton, *Lectures on Modern History* (London, 1907), 33.

7. G.K. Chesterton *What's Wrong with The World*. Chapter 1: The Medical Mistake. (Rockville, Maryland, Serenity Publishers, 2009), 11.

NovoClassical Education: An Invitation

by Nolan Nicholas, NovoClassical

The great defect of the modern movement of "classical education" is that it is wasted in its confinement to the classics.

Recognition and praise for the great benefits of the classical model of education is the only proper beginning for an essay such as this. I have only the highest esteem for the classical Trivium which organizes the learning process into stages of grammar, logic, and rhetoric. And I am both personally and culturally thankful for the recent renaissance of the classical model of education that has reintroduced the Trivium as the philosophical core to education. It has been invaluable to many, such as myself, in training our minds in how to learn and reason. Truly, the invaluable nature of the Trivium cannot be ignored in a modern society where the mass populace shows such susceptibility to the influence of advertisement and propaganda and the majority of the educated "intelligentsia" often cannot construct or even follow a basic logical argument. Notwithstanding my profound respect and appreciation for the classical education model, I believe the great defect of the modern movement of "classical education" is that it is wasted in its confinement to the classics.

It has been famously said that "the advantage of a classical education is that it enables you to despise the wealth that it prevents you from achieving." Though I do not believe that this is universally accurate, this sentiment well represents the general marginalization which characterizes classical education in modern society. I advance that a great deal of this marginalization is not intrinsic to the classical education model but is self-imposed through confining the scope of classical education to focus on "classical" subjects and neglecting a Trivium-based approach to more "modern" branches of knowledge, especially the "hard" sciences. It is an unfortunate reality that though the classical education produced by the modern movement has greatly improved foundational education in the humanities, it has had little notion how to handle the "sciences." This marginalization is in no one's best interest; it limits the scope of impact which classical education can exercise on society and reduces the number and breadth of students who may be interested in attending. We lose some of the best minds of the next generation because the current form of "classical education" is not equipped to train them in the sciences.

Though the model of classical education does well to recognize and employ the achievements of the past for training the mind, this sets a subtle snare lest we become limited to it. The Trivium is not a thing of the past and we must not make it one. That is, we wish to instill an education that will equip students to build upon the classical foundation and not simply rearrange furniture in a house long since built.

But this divide is not in the least intrinsic to the basic idea of classical education; it is rather an artifact of our own culture. We now divide the humanities from the sciences but at the height of the Trivium's original use the sciences were understood to be natural philosophy. Over time natural philosophy has been forgotten and the humanities divorced from the sciences. This must be remedied, natural philosophy must be remarried to the humanities; classical education must remind the culture of what it has forgotten and restore natural philosophy in its properly understood place.

If you are reading this, then I am going to presume that I do not need to convince you of the relevance of the Trivium to the learning process of "modern" subjects such as physics and computer science just as it is to "classic" studies of Latin and astronomy. Indeed, I would like to suggest that not only is the Trivium suitable to the teaching of modern subjects, but that modern subjects provide material that is in some ways superior for training students in the methods of the Trivium. Let us take for instance the discipline of computer programming—indisputably a modern subject—which provides a uniquely suited grist for teaching the principles of Trivium education. In computer

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programming, grammar, logic, and rhetoric are not only implicit but measurably enforced and almost quantifiable in a way that is not true of traditional human language. That is, one can say any bit of nonsensical, illogical idiocy that one likes in English and no logic police appear from thin air to inform the culprit that they have just violated logical dictums. Thus much of the populace remains blissfully unaware of much of the implicit contradiction which they prattle off every day. However, if one tries to input a logical fallacy into a computer program the computer rapidly makes the fool aware of their stupidity with a long list of error messages. And rhetoric can be almost quantifiably measured in modern programming with analysis of the elegance, cleverness, and efficiency of the code.

But this begs the question of why classical education has had such difficulty with modern disciplines and natural philosophy. In my observation this arises because attempts to fit scientific disciplines into the framework of classical education seek to do so by developing them along the lines of their historical development. As described by Susan Bauer, "The sciences are studied in a four-year pattern that roughly corresponds to the periods of scientific discovery." But this misunderstands the essence of natural philosophy. History is historic—science is not. Of course science has a history, but the workings of the universe are not governed by human history. The same laws governed the universe when Aristotle misinterpreted them as when Newton suggested his corrections, and the same laws still apply today.

The sciences should not be and must not be taught according to their path of historical development. To set about on this path denies the very concept of a science. Brilliant though Newton's Opticks is, it is not suitable as a textbook to teach physics as we understand it today and I have to think that Newton himself would not be honored but horrified to discover that we sought to use it as such. For today we have available to us observations that Newton did not and that cannot be reconciled to the theories that Newton proposed. Source documents can serve a vital role in scientific education, but it is to introduce the students to clear examples of the thought process of natural philosophy to see how we may deduce laws about the natural order, rather than introducing the source materials themselves as codifications of natural law. Therefore, to teach students a science according to its historical development is to teach them lies which they must later unlearn and create bad habits which hinder deep understanding of the subject (a condition which I have observed all too often). Furthermore, to teach science subjects according to their order of historical development (typically starting with biology and ending with physics) robs beginning students of the foundational idea that the behavior of the universe is governed by observable and understandable physical law and instead starts them off with the idea that natural philosophy amounts to stamp collecting.

Proceeding from the idea that something ought to be done to reunite natural philosophy into a modern classical education, the next question is how? I propose that we remedy these deficiencies by using the classical principles of the Trivium to construct a classical education which incorporates modern technical insights "from the ground up." For the sake of convenience I shall designate this paradigm as "NovoClassical" education.

The first task is to identify what modern knowledge is most suited to educating students at all levels of the Trivium and equipping students to tackle the scope of human knowledge with broad impact throughout society. To that end I give a preliminary suggestion that three "subjects" ought to be incorporated throughout the NovoClassical curriculum which are currently isolated or completely absent from present teaching:

1. Physical sciences/natural philosophy (*e.g.*, physics and chemistry)
2. Information and computational sciences (*e.g.*, programming)
3. Game theory and strategic analysis (of utmost relevance to economics and law)

Though most will probably react with skepticism to this suggestion (after all who teaches physics to a second grader?), I believe that these topics are both of great use in general to the student and tractable for teaching throughout the Trivium cycle.

I have already mentioned computer programming which can easily be implemented quite as soon as the young students have learned basic skills of reading and writing. On the topic of game theory and strategic analysis, I shall, in the interest of length, restrict myself to only a very few, brief remarks. Game theory, in short, studies what happens when agents (such as people) interact and how interactions are "won" or "lost" for the "players"

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involved. This discipline provides conceptual tools to identify (and quantify) strategies for particular situations to create maximum benefit both for oneself and a group. The general practicality of these concepts is clearly seen in the most cursory of cultural observations; we need tools to more clearly and unambiguously identify strategies for common success rather than the knee-jerk habits of greedy competition, or socialist cooperation, which we often adopt as unthinking defaults even when they are self-destructive. This modern discipline presents a natural bridge connecting the humanities to scientific modes of inquiry and will form an essential foundation for a deep and useful understanding of such diverse disciplines of law, civil government, and economics.

Herein I will describe some of what I mean in using the subject of physics as the example. Though this may sound rather daunting to many educators, I believe here as much as anywhere else, learning through the Trivium style and development is essential, and if properly conducted can well lead to high school seniors graduating with more insight into the fundamental principles governing the physical universe than is managed by most college graduates even in technical disciplines.

In the Trivium the first item for education is identifying the grammar of the subject; previously, many efforts have lost their way by attempting to extract the grammar from historic statements in the field. But science is not historic and a proper understanding of the field will start when it is realized that the grammar of physics comes in two parts:

1. Empirical observations
2. Explanatory theories

All children learn physics in everyday life. They play baseball and ride bicycles; they make constant empirical observations without consciously trying. But everyday systems are often complicated and the physics may be subtle. Students must be presented with judiciously chosen systems with which to interact and from which they can learn basic grammars of physical effects. Observations of these systems are paired with simple explanations of their behavior to create a simple grammar which can be memorized by any elementary student and in later years will provide a basis for logical analyses of physical behavior. As an example of what I mean, take the simple game of pool—with only slight modifications students observe ideal examples of the conservation of momentum and energy. With this empirical example and the teacher providing an explanation, any first grader can be taught the grammar of these conservation laws and far surpass the understanding of most high school seniors. Indeed, the beauty of physics is that most of the really important ideas in physics can be captured in very simple systems that any grade school child can profitably interact with and observe.

With the grammar foundation of grade school, logic students can then analyze and solve problems (which can be done without calculus) and rhetoric students can then learn the synthesis of explanatory theories and empirical investigations. And even should the student stop there for a career in law or as a greengrocer, they will have a much deeper understanding of what natural philosophy is and isn't. And I believe that this topic is of key importance to living in the modern era when the masses of people are so convinced of what "science" has or hasn't "proved" without any understanding of what that really means.

As I close, you may ask what the point of this has been. Why did I take the time to set pen to paper? This is about a vision for legacy. I have been thinking about this topic for some time now and jotting notes on how to put together a NovoClassical education. However, my children are beginning to grow up and I am faced with the realization that if I do not find others with whom to share this vision then all of this will likely collect dust on my shelves in unworn notebooks until my children have children.

So, dear reader, if I have piqued your interest with anything that I have said, if you find that you might be interested in being part of constructing or implementing NovoClassical educational materials and tools in any way, then I invite you to contact me. I would desire to see a new generation of classically educated students go into the world to make a much broader impact throughout society. But that will only happen if there are others who would join me in the effort. And if you have been intrigued by any of the vision that I have sought to share, then I invite you to be one such with me.

Contact information: NovoClassical@gmail.com. Visit us at http://novoclassical.wordpress.com/ to learn about our curriculum materials and projects in development.

The Moral Obligation to Be Concrete

by Thomas Banks, Petra Academy

"The law is unconcerned with trivial things." [*De minimis non curat lex.*] It is a comfort to reflect that this saying was at one point in history common enough wisdom to pass for a cliché rather than a paradox. The people among whom the proverb raises no eyebrows is a people that need not fear oppression. Of course, it says nothing for the people themselves, and down the centuries has likely consoled as many thieves as honest citizens; the humble and the iniquitous have this much in common: at most times each supposes that his day-to-day business is nothing to concern the policeman around the corner.

Every responsible teacher wants his students to graduate with an ability to recognize the unstated dogmas by which the world lives, to know them thoroughly, and to winnow the wheat from the chaff.

So it is that good laws are capable of impassivity. It is otherwise with competent teachers of the humanities. In the teaching of literature, history, philosophy or theology, things trivial–the apparently pointless tangent and the seemingly immaterial digression deserve their place, and that not despicable. If the fall of a sparrow is not beneath the notice of our Lord, then neither should our attention find no time for it. A good means of practicing this in the classroom is not to condense every sentence of every book we teach into a miniature expression of the author's view of life. Instruction in history or literature naturally brings us all, teachers and students alike, into contact with all manner of monstrously bloated ideologies; in our reading we meet rationalism, modernism, and all the other baggy propositions that our inner self-serious professional feels compelled to treat soberly and discreetly. He plots carefully his lecture on worldview analysis dealing in *ideas*–important ones, blast it; fundamental things, things we live by and die for, if necessary–taking very seriously what Thomas Hardy, in a moment of more than usually animated pessimism, called "this hobble of being alive."[1] Now, of course, worldview analysis–hideous though the phrase be–is a matter of great importance, for worldviews are the invisible goads of conduct. But we should remember that conduct is the visible thing, maddeningly inconsistent as it often is, and its interpretation at times a Delphic piece of obscurity. It is dangerous to overvalue any idea, especially the notion that a familiarity with *ideas,* that is, with worldviews, is the sum and center of a Christian liberal education.

Every responsible teacher wants his students to graduate with an ability to recognize the unstated dogmas by which the world lives, to know them thoroughly, and to winnow the wheat from the chaff. The properly trained student should be instructed accurately in the Creed which gives life, and should be able to distinguish it from those other creeds which fortuitously happen still to be living. The danger is that we should teach the student too well and too impatiently to learn all this as formula and formula alone. The learning which finds no place to taste and savor, as well as judge and classify, leaves half its work undone, and the learner unfinished. A knowledge of worldviews *is* necessary for the daily matter of living. For instance, the revelation that your chiropractor is a Neo-Albigensian, hateful of the body in all its sordidness and indifferent to its chastisement, is a *datum* useful to consider before you let him have at your defenseless upper vertebrae. Or consider the bit in Boswell where Dr. Johnson dined with the man who saw no evil in theft: " . . . if he does really think that there is no distinction between virtue and vice, why, Sir, when he leaves our houses let us count our spoons."[2] It may have been bad manners, but it was only practical policy. So we have it that the knowledge and experience of worldviews are handy things, like keys or buttons.

A rote knowledge of creeds can be acquired easily enough—but what of experience? It is regrettable that zoos have not evolved as we might wish. We cannot visit our local wildlife shelter and find pantheism in its own purlieu or Marxism milling about its native environment. Until such a field trip does become available, I fear that we shall have to hunt the beasts

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down where we have always hunted them, in books; but at the risk of advertising the obvious, books are not slot machines and should not be studied primarily as repositories of *isms*. Isms, like murder, will out. We do not read books rightly when we read them intending only to gather and classify specimens of dead philosophies. We read stories and poetry, briefly, as the pleasurable means of illuminating creation for ourselves. When we learn to read for our own delight we come to fear and detest the lecturer who begins, "Ladies and gentlemen, notice in the poet Yeats' 'Song of Wandering Angus' how the bucolic imagery bears out the author's arcadian mysticism. Underscore those last two words, for they are important. If you take nothing else away from the poem, remember the arcadian mysticism."

Our professor in this case, where he does not patronize us with milk and deny us meat, feeds us hot steam in place of both. Here is one of the finest poems by the greatest poet of the last century, and he has commended to us the husk while the true kernel becomes the portion of the birds.

Anyone guilty of the thoughtless presumption which stamps an author with a label (Huxley = modernism; Zola = naturalism) and says "there, I've finished my work" ought to consider what his own reaction would be if an atheist or an agnostic student in a literary surveys course did the same to one of our own. Suppose an unbelieving acquaintance told you that he understood Dante thoroughly, knowing that he was a Roman Catholic, and had Bunyan boxed up nicely; he was a Baptist, wasn't he–or a Quaker, or something?

Good habits in reading are among the best things we can leave with our students. I hope that the boys and girls I teach will learn from me not to read impatiently, forever racking their brains to discern the creative purpose of the god of Deism (long since comatose, by last reports) or if Emerson declared everything sacred and therefore nothing sacred—or was it the other way around? If nothing else, I hope that they advance into adulthood without having picked up any habits of questionable sanity, among the first of which is the impulse to practice worldview taxonomy on novels or plays that they might otherwise have very much enjoyed.

Notes:

1. Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (New York: Penquin Classics, 1999).

2. James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (New York: Penquin Classics, 2008).

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Five Ways to Ruin Your Classical Christian Education

by Brian Daigle, Sequitur Classical Tutorials

Classical Christian education is gaining steam. More schools are cropping up. Record numbers are attending annual conferences. Colleges and universities are paying more attention to the liberal arts. Students are now becoming teachers. And it seems as if every month there is some kind of new journal or new book out on the topic. These kinds of things, I'm sure, are welcomed news to those who have been in the grind from the earliest stages of this movement. And for the ones who are just starting to explore this massive train with all its goodness and splendor, it is music to our ears just as well. Competition is good, and the right kind always benefits both parties. By nature, the kind of work we do as classical Christian educators should welcome both critique and praise. We should be continually engaging in dialogue with both our friends and our foes. This is healthy. Essentially, it is the fruit of Christian love. And, of course, it is classical. We want to affirm the true, the good, and the beautiful while simultaneously checking ourselves to make sure we have not twisted the true, perverted the good, or smeared the beautiful. When we do any of these three, we ruin the education we offer. As this movement of classical Christian education gains strength, we must keep one thing in mind. As sinful men, we have the propensity to ruin things, good things. And our educational ideals are not immune to being ruined.

But what about our students? How are they handling this movement? Though most of the articles of this sort are aimed at educators, this one is written for students. The good thing about having good teachers is that usually your teachers experienced the chaos long before you experience the order. Most of you who currently occupy the seat in a classical Christian school will never know a day when a classical Christian education didn't exist. In fact, if you dig far back into the recesses of your mind, you will probably not remember a moment when you did not hear the term or hear good and wonderful things about it. This is the education you have always received. This is the education you are receiving. This is the education you know. This is the education we hope you pass onto your children and your children's children. And this is good. It is the nature of redemption. Still, this does not mean you cannot, following in man's propensity, have a great disposition to ruin it—to leave it flattened on the side of the road as you head off to college and into the wild, blue yonder. What you are receiving is a gift, and like any gift, it can be squandered for lesser goods. So, be on guard. What will be said for the remainder of this article is by no means an exhaustive list of things for which you should be on guard. But it's a good start. And it would be a better finish if you considered this advice in light of your own education. There are five ways to ruin your classical Christian education.

The first way to ruin your education is to think and act as if you deserve what you are getting. If the Bible is right, and it is, then every man, woman, and child on earth deserves nothing less than death and hell. There is, of course, one exception: the God-man, Jesus Christ. And contrary to what you might believe, or what you may have heard from a grumbling upper-classman, your school is neither death nor hell. Thus, the goodness you are receiving there is better than what you deserve, and any "badness" you may receive is not worse than what you deserve. In this way, we must understand sin rightly. In our sin, we have earned nothing other than the death Jesus suffered on our behalf. Do you deserve the clothes you are wearing? Do you deserve the country into which you were born? Do you deserve to taste the sweetness of a peach or feel the furriness of earth? No. You deserve none of it. To think you deserve any of this reality, of which you and I currently partake, is to believe that you somehow merit what you have—that somebody owes it to you. No person, including the persons of the Trinity, owes you anything. Just as well, no person owes me anything. A deserving mentality, as it is often and rightly called, is that kind of thinking—and acting—which places yourself at the center of the universe, as if the earth and its inhabitants are here to serve you.

The opposite of a deserving mentality is one of privilege, of a humble acceptance of a gift which you neither deserve nor can repay. It is this privilege mentality of which we as modern, American Christians are in dire need. This is a privilege. All of it. Your eyesight. Your hair color. The pillow upon which you lay your head. Go ahead, name anything. It is a privilege. Have you taken a breath

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within the past ten seconds? Good. That was a privilege. And this privilege has been offered to you as a gift of grace. This school? Yep, it too is a privilege to us all. One of the greatest traps in which I have seen students fall is to think they are the rightful recipients, in and of themselves, of their teacher's service and their parent's faithfulness. I can always recognize these students because, before too long, they begin demanding things of both their teachers and parents which are neither reasonable nor things they are in a position to demand. Likewise, they begin to leave thankfulness to the birds, as if it were their neglected homework assignment. As Christians we are called to be a people marked with thanksgiving, which means we are to be a people who recognize the difference between a gift and a hard-earned reward. Try and think, rather lie, to yourself that you deserve this small school in your city, or that it is here to simply serve you, and you will waste your education.

The second way to ruin your education is to think and act as if studying here makes you somehow morally superior. The world is big. It is very big. And for us to begin to think that the only morally superior ones in the universe are the ones in our little circles is wholly wrong. God moves in mysterious ways. Common grace is more pervasive than the Gnostics would have you believe. The direction and speed at which His Holy Spirit blows cannot be confined to an educational formula or academic curricula. It cannot be contained within the acres of your school or even the commercial bounds of your city. If we try to rope it in, bind it, and make it obey us it will only leave us frustrated and bitter. I thank God that we have seen the fruit of His hands here at Covenant Classical School in Fort Worth, Texas. I also thank God that the fruit of His hands can also be seen in a thousand other contexts. God does not sprinkle magic fairy dust over every classically educated graduate and make him into some kind of hero. God does not raise us out of the muddy woods and make us appear stronger and taller to everyone, like Athena with Odysseus. As teachers, we hope to equip you with a love and understanding of all things useful for a life of righteous obedience. But in this, you should be boasting only in the vast reality of your weakness. Try and think, rather lie, to yourself that this small school in your city is the only place one can come and be filled with Gospel truth and love, and you will waste your education.

The third way to ruin your education is to think and act as if this is just another fancy education. While you will not gain more superiority by simply enrolling in a classical Christian school, there is something quite unique and appropriate about what is going on here. What is classical education? What is Christian education? What is classical Christian education? Why do we as a faculty uphold the tenets of our school? Is this just another kind of fancy education where we can wear uniforms and have some pompous crest? Is this just another way we can segregate ourselves from the rest of the "filthy people" in our town? Is this just another opportunity for bragging rights among our friends and families at church? This is not just another fancy education, and the answers to the questions just posed are ones you should hope to nail down before you graduate. . . .

. . . you are privileged to be receiving an education that seeks to develop your entire person in light of a distinctly Christian worldview and a biblical obedience. We want to reach your head. We want to reach your heart. We want to reach your fingertips with truth, goodness, and beauty . . .

Dear student, you are privileged to be receiving an education that seeks to develop your entire person in light of a distinctly Christian worldview and a biblical obedience. We want to reach your head. We want to reach your heart. We want to reach your fingertips with truth, goodness, and beauty as the Triune God has so come to define these. We want to give you an environment where you are able to wrestle with the ideas of the world, the claims of Christ, and the messiness of life. We want to do all of this within a distinctly Western tradition and potently Christian doctrine. We want you to learn the connotative

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and denotative meaning of words. We want you to ask, and figure out, "How in the heck does a person have any foundation for saying something is right and something else is wrong?"

We want you to learn to write good stories, the kind that makes the reader stay up all night to finish, the kind that leaves the reader really wrestling with the axiomatic questions in life. We want you to learn the wonder of putting a drawing into proper lines of perspective, and how the artistic truths discovered in the Italian Renaissance really can help to create a more beautiful society. We want you to appreciate good writing, and work at communication and arguing for the truth. . . . We want you to love, to think, to serve, and live as God has called you. Try and think, rather lie, to yourself that this small school in your city is just another fancy education along the buffet line of modern attempts at fortifying our posterity, and you will waste your education.

The fourth way to ruin your education is to think and act as if graduation is the culmination of your studies. . . . So, what's going to happen to you? What are you going to do the first year out of school? Where do you want to continue your studies? Why? Why are you attracted to that college, or this way of life, over another? We as teachers hope to equip you, not to make you a piece of equipment for the assembly line of the free market in the West. If you decide to go to college, we hope to equip you to pursue your liberal arts education at the next level. If you decide to go into the military, we hope to equip you to be a faithful and learned soldier for the free world. Historically, someone who completes the kind of training today's student will receive at a typical K–12 classical Christian school is just beginning. Seven years of grammar school, two years of logic school and four years of rhetoric school would not make someone a man of letters. This would only be the beginning, a launch pad to a much deeper and rigorous study of the *studia humanitatis*. Ask your teachers about it. I'm sure they could point you to some good literature of days gone by on the subject.

Classical Christian education is not designed to give you all that you will need in the realm of education. If you formally pursue your studies beyond these walls, we are equipping you with a foundation so that the next level of humanities, and humanity, will be one with a sure and certain basis for development. Consider what this means for deciding where you will go after graduation. Consider a school with a less prestigious name. Consider a less pragmatic future. Consider the purpose of the world, your life, and a deeper reality than just an American form of survivalism. The Joneses really don't have much to offer. I know. I've been in their home. Begin really asking what the Lord's priorities are when it comes to the formation of your mental faculties and heart's affections. Begin building your personal library now. And continue that construction project into your college years. Then, don't stop until the Lord calls you away from this life. Afterward, pass it onto your children, and your children's children. Try and think, rather lie, to yourself that this small school in your city is the culmination of your studies, and you will waste your education.

The fifth way to ruin your education is to think and act as if this is salvation. As has been said, we are not the church. My colleague, Thomas Warmath, gave a talk last year that has stuck with me. He mentioned that our school, and all of education for that matter, is set up in order to serve the local church. He was right. He is right. Christ did not come to save Covenant Classical School. He did not come to save classical education or institute classical Christian education as the way in which people must come to Him. I am neither a pastor nor a priest, and my lectern is not a pulpit. I cannot save you, and I will not administer the sacraments to you in this capacity. Being in a Christian school is not the key to salvation. . . . Throw yourself into your local church and absorb all that the older men and women have to offer you. Sit at the feet of your fathers. Listen to your mothers. Hear the word preached. Taste the Eucharist upon your tongue. Sing until you sweat. And watch your friends and peers get water poured over their heads—or fully submersed if that's your pastor's style. If done rightly, your school will teach you of the same God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The God of Augustine. The God of Shakespeare, Chesterton, and Lewis. But we, as a school, will not and cannot subsume the local church. We cannot replace her. The Bride of Christ bows to and serves no one and nothing other than her Groom. We, on the other hand, serve her. Thus, when you go off to college, or wherever you go when you leave your current fold, you cannot substitute your absorption into and service to

Five Ways . . .

the local church with a college ministry or Monday morning quiet time. . . . But our maturing love for God and our neighbor is inseparable from the work and worth of the local church. Try and think, rather lie, to yourself that this small school in your city is the axis of salvation, and you will waste your education.

As educators, we believe in what we are doing, and that what we are doing by partnering with your parents is to set before you the best literature, authors, and courses for the development of your whole person at this stage of your life. . . . Still, it's important that you not waste your education in this time, and that we all guard against the slippery slopes to which our hearts are prone. You are only here for a short time, and that short time is the most foundational in the grand scope of your life. In this surge of classical Christian schools, faith is necessary. And an understanding that God both gives and takes away is imperative, but blessed be the name of the Lord. And may you become a better refinery of Egyptian gold than any of us.

Top Five Tips for Administrators

by Travis Ketner, Student at Texas A&M-San Antonio

School administration is a challenging and rewarding profession. Equal parts educator and manager, a successful school administrator performs a vital role in the lives of his students and faculty. The administration of a classical and Christian school is made more complex because of the demanding curriculum and the duty of the school to impart biblical values and a Christian example to students.

The following "Top Five Tips" were taken from an interview by Travis Ketner with Mr. Brad Ryden, head of school at Geneva School of Boerne, Texas.

1. Delineate spheres of influence between school administration and the board of directors. An ideal solution is for the board of directors to handle "big picture" ideas such as policies and vision while the full time headmaster or head of school works to implement these policies using his specialized knowledge and background. Mr. Ryden described his relationship with the board of directors for Geneva School as based on "trust and understanding" (1 Peter 4:8). Communication between the board of directors and school administration fosters respect and provides the administration with the latitude to make the day-to-day decisions necessary for Geneva School to run smoothly (Mt. 7:12).

The goal of a successful administrator is to remember that he is responsible for communicating "up" to the board of directors all of the needs of the school and concerns of his faculty and staff. At the same time, the administrator is also responsible for communicating "down" to the faculty and staff the vision of the board of directors and the policies that the board wishes to see enacted. It can be difficult for the administrator, caught between these two groups; but honesty, humility, and communication are three useful tools for navigating this responsibility.

2. Members of the board of directors have no living constituents. Geneva School sets their goals in terms of a five-year plan. Each summer, the school administration and the board of directors participate in a weekend retreat during which they collaborate on specific goals for the next year. The board of directors, in charge of policy and vision, has the final word on the direction of the school, but all decisions are made with input from Mr. Ryden. It is during this retreat that monthly agendas are written for the entire school year. This provides Mr. Ryden with a set of short-term goals for each month that fit smoothly within a well-crafted, long-term plan. Mr. Ryden prefers that his board of directors think even more long term than five years, but of future generations. "I tell them, you have no living constituents," he says. This motivation and coordination between the board of directors and the administration provides for a truly long-term plan for Geneva School (Proverbs 15:22).

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Top Five Tips . . .

3. The teaching faculty is where "the rubber meets the road." It is important to recognize that maintaining a low teacher-student ratio is integral to student success. Mr. Ryden says that "the teaching faculty is where the rubber meets the road" and he works diligently to keep tuition low while providing small classes and highly trained instructors. One way to accomplish this is through staffing assignments. For example, instead of hiring multiple college counselors, Geneva School has one and requires administrators to "wear many hats."

Additionally, Mr. Ryden teaches seventh grade logic. This means that he gets a firsthand view of the needs of his teachers and can quickly respond to their needs. This also keeps Mr. Ryden's teaching skills sharp and serves to ameliorate any philosophical divisions between the teaching staff and school administration.

4. Work to empower teachers. A teacher who feels empowered about his or her job is more likely to be able to solve problems on their own without the need of school administration. This saves work and spreads the leadership responsibilities around to different parts of the school. This is "distributed leadership," not a division of labor, and can assist the school administrator in handling the various complex tasks of school leadership.

One of the unique challenges in administering a classical school is the dearth of teachers experienced in classical education. To counteract this need, Geneva School developed their own "in house" professional development program. Called "Geneva Institute Faculty Training" (GIFT), this program is designed to improve teaching ability and educate new faculty on the skills they need to teach within the classical tradition.

5. Live out your theology. This is more than a tip, it is a requirement. Everything that is done at a classical and Christian school should be focused on the glory of God, our Creator, and His Son. The mission of Geneva School is "*to provide a classical education from a biblical worldview, to equip students for a lifetime of learning, service and leadership to the glory of God*." This mission permeates the entire school.

Geneva School is a classical and Christian school and the faculty and administration strive to live out these principles every day. Each morning, the staff begins the day with a devotional, and accountability and responsibility are taught to students from a biblical perspective. Mr. Ryden says it is important, especially when dealing with teenagers, not to be a hypocrite. He says that nothing "turns off" a teenager faster than the feeling that an adult is hypocritical about his or her Christianity.

The task of being a successful school administrator is challenging, but it can also be rewarding. Running a classical and Christian school brings with it a unique set of challenges not seen in other traditional private schools or secular public education. However, a dedicated administrator, like Brad Ryden, who seeks to serve his subordinates and wants to see them succeed, can have an enormous positive impact on the lives of young people.

On Chess and Classical Christian Education

Jonathan Kenigson, Paideia Academy

Classical and Christian education is a three-stage process spanning the entirety of a kindergarten through twelfth grade education with the purpose of nurturing and forming biblically minded and well-educated students (utilizing the great books of the Western world as a curriculum). The first stage of the classical progression—the grammar stage—begins in kindergarten and terminates roughly in fifth grade. Students in this stage are especially apt to memorize and are encouraged to commit many facts and premises of literature, history, grammar, poetry, arithmetic, science, and Bible to memory. The logic stage roughly spans grades six through nine and (as students of this age seem by nature particularly apt to argument) has an emphasis upon linking the facts so committed in the grammar stage to practical utility through the use of formal argument. Finally, the poetic stage, roughly spanning the balance of high school, is a time in which most students feel a natural yearning for self-invention and self-expression, and are encouraged to draft and defend properly factual (grammar level) and properly reasoned (logic level) arguments in aesthetically appealing forms.

As is maintained above, classical and Christian education beyond the grammar level is founded upon the notion that clear, precise, and rigorous thought is a more important attribute of student achievement than the memorization or regurgitation of facts. And perhaps no intellectual activity demands, for that matter,

Chess and Classical Christian Education . . .

the alacrity or logical prowess that the game of chess demands. Keen foresight with a reasoned inhibition to threat; poise, patience, and prudence in the attack; and a deep exercise of every neuron of intellectual ability are all required to be a good, or even a fairly good, player of chess. It is little wonder that classical Christian schools gravitate toward chess as an extra-curricular activity, as it would be a shame to eschew such a tool and art in the formation of children who otherwise engage the balance of the Western mind and soul.

Each game of chess, no matter how executed or how contrived, possesses three main stages of development. The opening (comprising the first 5–6 moves of each game) is the time in which forces are massed and initial positions taken. The midgame (usually comprising the next 20–30 or so moves) is the time in which strategies used in support of the opening lead to strategic conclusions and positions of defense and offense form. Finally, the endgame, comprising perhaps the last 10–25 moves of each game, is a time of intense creativity on the part of both players, as they dodge and desist the final, deathly conclusion—checkmate and victory for the foe. It can be maintained that the three stages of the chess game correspond, at least roughly, to the three core stages of a classical Christian education (grammar, logic, and rhetoric), and that the modes and themes of these stages largely mirror the modes and themes of the classical model.

Like the content in the grammar stage, openings and their variations must be exhaustively memorized to produce a quick repertoire of effective countermeasures against the early aggressions of the other player. And it is no wonder that grammar-level students delight so much in constructing the great historical openings of the game: the Ruy Lopez, Queen's Gambit, Sicilian openings, Four Knights opening, Vienna, Catalan, etc. Such students can, with sufficient care, be made to appreciate the benefits of having a ready knowledge of openings. Masters as well learn chess openings from their masters in a classical manner, first beginning with the openings and progressing to the more reasoned tread of the midgame, in which the advantages stored and garnered before effloresce, in the hope of each player, into a distinct numerical or positional advantage. The midgame, like the logic stage of classical Christian education, stresses effective strategy. The midgame requires an unceasing attention to detail and a boundless enthusiasm to "think ahead" and reason through the complex and far-reaching consequences of long-term goals. It is no wonder that logic-school students excel so masterfully at the midgame, with its mechanical, plodding, and possibly underwhelming evolution of positions and expectations. Finally, as in the poetic stage of classical Christian education, the endgame stresses elegance instead of raw force, and masters have been known to delay inevitable checkmates just to ensure that the end of the game is "beautiful"—that is, completed in the most concise possible way, with the least "out-of-the-way" maneuvering and the fewest pieces possible. As in rhetoric, chess is a game of persuasion—both of oneself and the other player—that the conclusion is, in fact, not inevitable. To mind come a million ideas of how the game could have changed, how it could have been cleaner, and (for the defeated) what might have changed the denouement.

And perhaps no intellectual activity demands, for that matter, the alacrity or logical prowess that the game of chess demands.

Chess should be an integral portion of a balanced classical Christian curriculum, not for the least reason that the game parallels classical Christian education in all of its stages, and uniquely reinforces these stages. At Paideia Academy, the chess program is alive and well, and we invite you to explore this unique and difficult program at your convenience.

Jonathan Kenigson *teaches upper school mathematics, logic and sponsors the chess club at Paideia Academy in Knoxville, TN. This articles was originally published as part of the* Contemplatios *series at Paideia Learn more at www.paideiaknoxville.org/home.*

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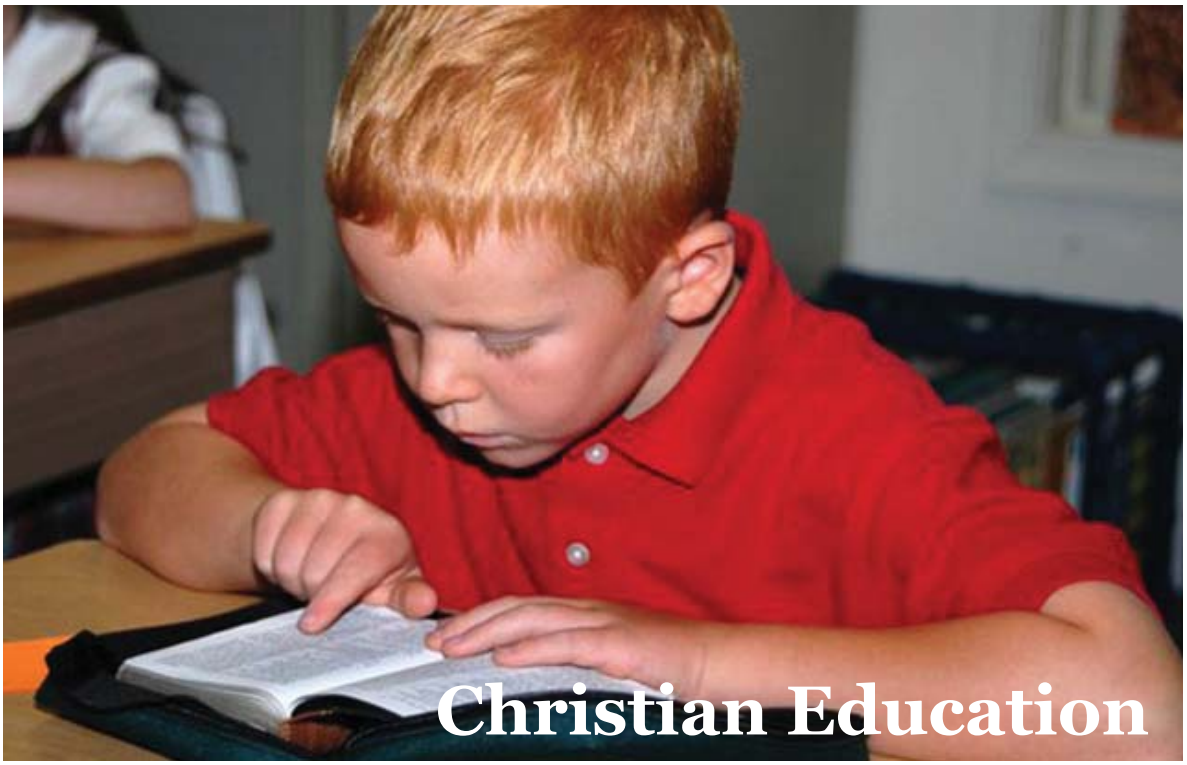

We address "Christian" first because we are first, and foremost, Christian schools. Our understanding of all things, including all things pertaining to education, is shaped by Christian truth. Thus, to acquire a sufficient understanding of classical education, one must first be able to view it from a Christian perspective.

The ACCS Confession of Faith defines the scope and elements of Christian truth individuals or organizations must affirm to be considered for membership in the ACCS. We see no need to add a second definition here as the Confession is sufficient. However, we do want to emphasize certain principles inherent in the Confession of Faith as they relate to education:

Sovereignty

God is sovereign. He possesses absolute authority over all things. He has created all things, sustains all things, and governs all things.

Antithesis

To provide a God-centered and truly Christian education, it is necessary to break completely free from the educational philosophies that surround us. We must build from the ground up, with the Scriptures as the foundation, both our educational philosophies and the framework in which we understand and present all subject matter.

Worldview

The Christian worldview is the "lens" through which we see, understand, and teach all things. It is antithetical to all other worldviews and thus requires that we present all ideas and concepts as part of a larger whole defined by Christian truth.

Neutrality

Because God is sovereign over all of His creation, there is no aspect of creation that does not reflect His glory and truth; hence, there is no place, subject, or issue that is neutral and that does not point to the Creator of all.

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