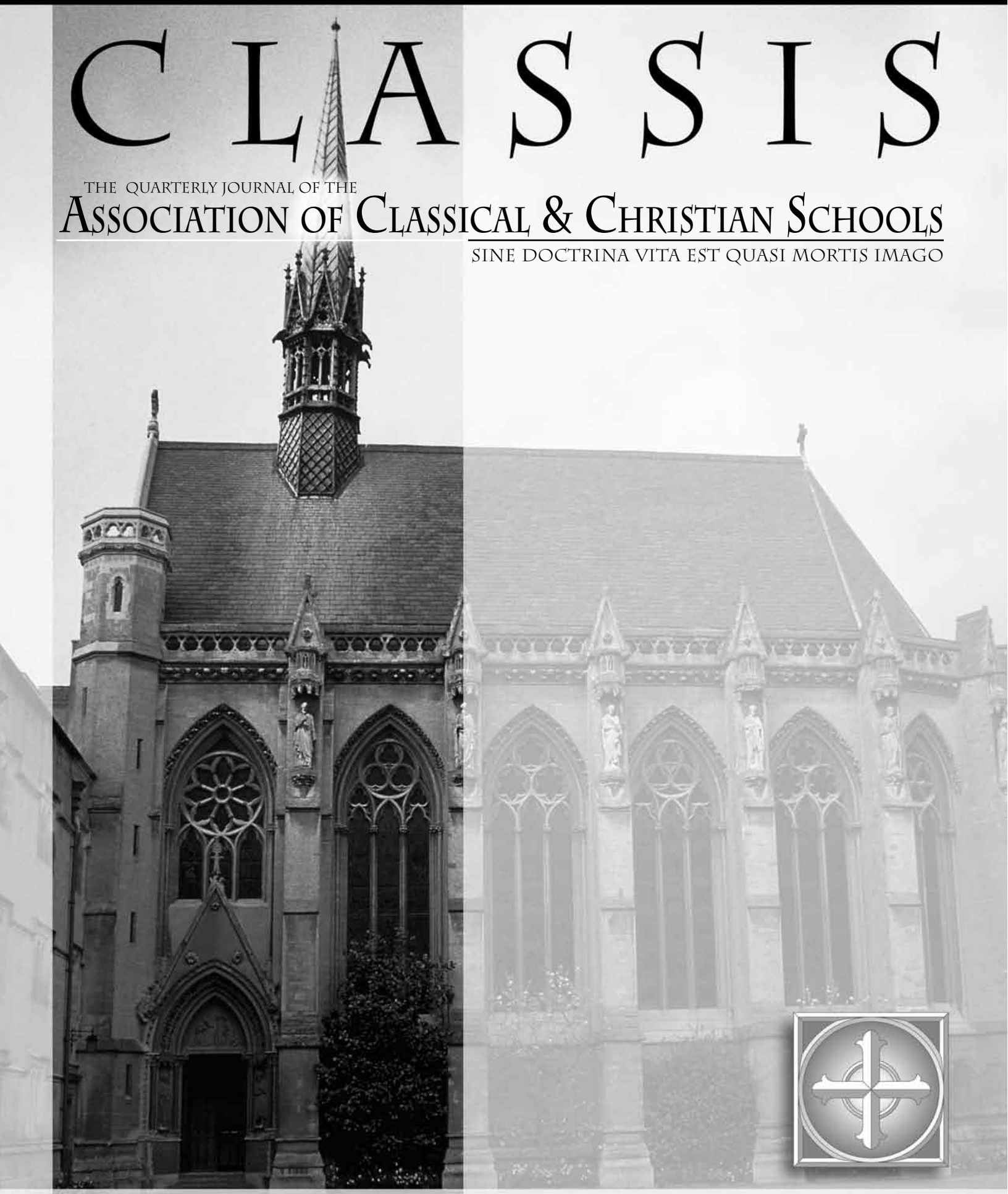
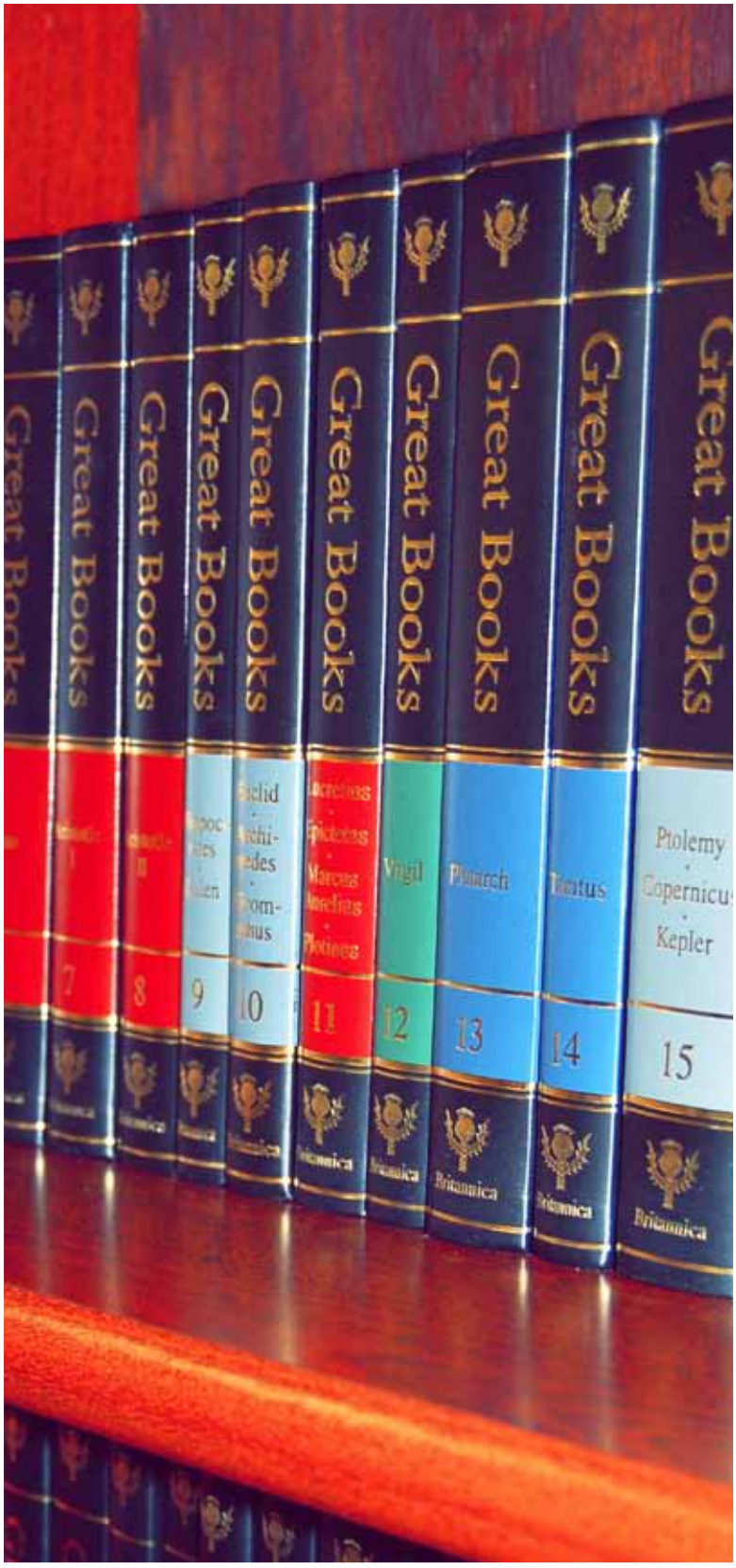
CLASSIS

THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF CLASSICAL & CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

SINE DOCTRINA VITA EST QUASI MORTIS IMAGO



SUMMER • 2013 VOLUME XX • NUMBER 2



The Great Books Honors College

GREAT BOOKS BASED M.LITT. AND PH.D.

- **Fully informed by Christian conviction**
- **Regionally accredited by SACS**
- **Completely distance using highly interactive conference calls and online learning tools**
- **Tutorials on the Trivium Available**

studyliberalarts.org

For more information please contact Robert Woods at (334) 303-8134 or drrwoods@gmail.com

Faulkner University
A CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

CLASSIS

THE JOURNAL of THE
ASSOCIATION of CLASSICAL & CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Sine doctrina vita est quasi mortis imago

SUMMER 2013 VOLUME XX NUMBER 2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ARTICLES

ACCS

Classical Christian education: A New "Old Way"

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.

Publisher: Patch Blakey
Senior Editor: Tom Spencer
Technical Editor: Deb Blakey

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.

CONTACT
Association of Classical & Christian Schools
PO Box 9741
Moscow, ID 83843

Phone: (208) 882-6101
Fax: (208) 882-8097
Email: execdirector@accsedu.org
Web: www.accsedu.org

All to the Glory of God

by Patch Blakey, ACCS

What is the goal of classical Christian education?

Is it to have our children accepted into the best universities so they can be better positioned to obtain the best jobs and to enjoy a life that is better than that of their parents? Is it to produce great statesmen for the next generation who can understand the times and are able to stir the hearts of the people to pursue justice and righteousness, and in the process hopefully set our country on the right path? Is it to develop erudite scholars who are lifelong learners and who will write stirring, persuasive and inspiring books, letters, and essays, or who will deliver moving and informative lectures, raising the bar of knowledge and academic achievement? Is it to deepen and broaden the artistic and musical appreciation and skills of our children so that they will love and perhaps even create great works of art, write great plays, or compose beautiful arrangements? Is it to train skilled artisans who will design and build great edifices, communities which include the infrastructure resulting in glorious and peaceful urban centers adorned in a bucolic style?

I have no doubt that, by the grace of God, all of these things will happen, albeit not without intensive labor, investment of time, and incredible wealth. After all, one of the aspirations of parents is for their children to do better than they did. Our nation today is in desperate need of great statesmen. We are starved for real education, not indoctrination or propaganda. There is a dearth of great art and a paucity of appreciation for the good, the true, and the beautiful. Our metropolitan areas and even our rural towns suffer from the blight of billboards, a tangle of overhead wires, and lowest-bidder buildings while what remains of an earlier era is crumbling.

But is this, even in a representative way, the goal of classical Christian education?

To some degree, we may be inclined to lean towards the affirmative, but perhaps in a tangential fashion. Man is created in the image of God, and our first indications of the nature of God reveal that He is a creator of good things. Genesis describes the first seven days of the universe and of our world. In completing this vast incomprehensible opus, God decreed that it was all good, a word denoting extremely high praise indeed. We should not then be surprised or reluctant to believe that man would follow in the footsteps of his Creator, although in a manner that reflects our fallen and finite nature. As the world comes increasingly under the sway of the gospel, we should hopefully expect to see the outworking of the gospel in all that mankind does. Christ's kingdom is perpetually pressing forward, even if in various local pockets it is regressing. And for all of this, I rejoice and give thanks.

However in another sense, I am compelled to affirm the negative. Speaking of the Lord God of Israel, Malachi said that "He seeks godly offspring" (Malachi 2:15). The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). From these two verses, among many others of a similar vein, we conclude that our primary goal for classical Christian education is to help parents raise up godly offspring to the glory of God. All of these other things listed in the paragraphs above, while of great value and benefit to mankind, are actually the fruits of pursuing the primary goal. The fruits are not to be despised or rejected as though they were somehow evil, but they are to be received with thanksgiving and praise, for we know that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

May the Lord grant us mercy and grace as we apply ourselves diligently to repair the ruins. To that end, we have several thoughtful, encouraging, and provoking articles in this issue of *Classis* to hopefully stir us on to "press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14).

***Patch Blakey** is the ACCS executive director.*

Lessons John Amos Comenius Can Teach the Twenty-First-Century Classical Christian Educator

by Matthew Allen, The Paideia School of Tampa Bay

John Amos Comenius has long been considered a forgotten hero of the Reformation era. Yet we, as classical Christian educators, have more to learn from Comenius than anyone else, for he is one of us. Comenius was above all a *Christian* educator, and he worked for reform in the milieu of the classical Christian schools of his day. As a result, in his life and work, there are a number of important lessons for us to learn as we seek to further his legacy in our own schools.

Comenius's Life

Comenius was born in Moravia (now the Czech Republic) in 1592. Orphaned at age 12, he was educated in the local Latin school, the "classical Christian" school of the day. Comenius later called this setting "the terror of boys and the slaughter-houses of minds; places where a hatred of literature and books is contracted, where ten or more years are spent in learning what might be acquired in one, where what ought to be poured in gently is violently forced in and beaten in."[1]

The outbreak of the Thirty Years' War in 1621 caused Comenius, by this time a school teacher and pastor, to flee his homeland for Poland. He lived the rest of his life a refugee. While in Poland, Comenius wrote his most significant work on education, *The Great Didactic*, which was published in 1632. Throughout his life, he was poor. And yet, he was consulted regularly by the elite of Europe about his educational ideas.

George Grant, who has done as much as any to revitalize the name of Comenius among our own circles, calls him "among the most influential and sought after men of his day." In God's providential plan, it was this poor, destitute refugee who helped to shape the education systems of Holland, Sweden, Prussia, Scotland, and Puritan New England. He even was asked to become president of King's College in Cambridge and Harvard College in America.[2] Comenius died in 1670 at the age of 78.

Comenius was a visionary ahead of his time in the area of Christian education. Here are eight of his proposed reforms. If he were to come to your school, how many of them would he find being put into practice?

1. The ultimate goal of education is not to make better citizens or scholars but to make better disciples.

For all his pedagogical reforms, Comenius never lost sight of the ultimate goal of education. It is not to create better citizens of this world or to create academic scholars. Rather, the ultimate goal is to create disciples of Christ.

In his most famous work, *The Great Didactic,*[3] Comenius wrote that the "final end of man lies beyond this life." Man is made in the image of God, and therefore, "God is the end of [the soul's] striving, and this is the *summum bonum*—a longing not wholly extinguished by the Fall."[4] Thus, the ultimate goals of education are to obtain religion, knowledge, and virtue. Moreover, man must be educated to obtain these things. And man is not truly educated without them. Nor, importantly, is man fully human without them.

Based on these things, Comenius said instruction should be "in those things which make a man wise, good and holy."[5] The end of education is "morality and piety," "virtue and religion."[6] He condemned educational approaches (which would include contemporary public education) that "have sought only knowledge, not morality and religion."[7]

Thus, he rightly considered it "essential to a harmony of the moral nature" that students learn the cardinal virtues of prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice. At a young age, children should be taught to discern the good from the bad. These things are not naturally evident to children. They further must learn temperance in eating and drinking, sleeping and working, labor and play, speaking and keeping quiet. Next, students must learn how to temper their desires to play when it is time to work, to restrain their impatience, grumbling, and anger. Such self-governance is not natural to the child. He must be taught to promptly obey in all things. And he must learn justice, which includes learning to do no harm to others, to avoid lying and deceit, and to be amiable and of service to others.[8]

Comenius said these virtues must begin to be formed in students from tender years. Hence our schools must make these aspects of "socialization" points of emphasis beginning right in kindergarten and continuing up and down each grade level. Learning prudence,

Matthew Allen *teaches biblical apologetics at The Paideia School of Tampa Bay. The Paideia School is a candidate for ACCS accreditation. Learn more at http://www.paideiatampa.com/.*

Lessons John Amos Comenius Can Teach . . .

temperance, fortitude, and justice should never go out of style.

And if students do not obey? Comenius said, "Discipline is necessary for the purpose of withstanding immoral habits." By discipline, he first means verbal reproof, and then, if necessary, "chastisement by stripes." Corporal punishment, he said, should be reserved for "moral offenses."[9] Contemporary classical Christian schools may have different perspectives on corporal punishment in the school setting. Even schools that do not directly administer corporal punishment, however, should consider at least requesting (dare I say requiring?) that parents of rebellious students administer spankings at home, in support of the school's discipline program.

Beyond the cardinal virtues, Comenius recommended that students be taught early on how to express bodily devotion to God in prayer, "by gazing towards heaven, spreading out his palms, bending his knees, and invoking God and Christ, reverencing and adoring the invisible Majesty."[10]

He also advised that students be taught "that we are not here for this life alone, but that eternity is our goal." They should be instructed to walk with God in this life, to fear him, and keep his commandments. "Let the Holy Scriptures be the Alpha and Omega of Christian schools."[11]

Students further should be taught the three graces of faith, hope, and love. Students should learn "to believe all that God has revealed, to do what He commands, and to hope for what He promises." They must be taught the way of the cross as the way of salvation. "Finally, let them be taught that, since, because of the imperfections of their nature, they can do no good thing, they must rely on the perfections of Christ, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world."[12] Teaching students to be disciples of Christ is the most important task a teacher has.

2. Learning requires discipline, but not drudgery.

Comenius next observed that children are uniquely suited to be educated. Education best occurs "while the mind is yet tender and the brain soft."[13] Moreover, God gave humans "certain years of childhood during which he is not fit for active life."[14] By the way, Comenius did not limit education to young males or to the elite of the day. He said that "the whole of the youth of both sexes" should be educated in schools.[15] Of course, Comenius recognized that education does not come easily or automatically to children. He understood that religion, virtue, and knowledge must be "striven for." In other words obtaining them requires discipline.[16]

In our own day, we too need to remember that education requires hard work. Both teachers and parents must understand that children sometimes do not want to do that work. Homework is "too hard." It takes "too long" to complete an assignment. "I can't do it." "I'm tired." The excuses are many. Parents and educators should not shy away from agreeing with our children and students that education indeed is hard work that must be "striven for." But we equally must not give in to students' childish impulses to shirk the work that must be done. In other words, parents and teachers should be united in requiring students to do the hard work that is required for the goals of education to be reached. After all, the results—wisdom and virtue—are worth striving for. Education requires discipline, and as Comenius recognized, a child "cannot truly become a man except through discipline."[17]

This is easy to say and perhaps easy to encourage in the short run. But success or failure is measured by the long run, not the quick sprint. In other words, discipline requires perseverance on the part of student and parents. Comenius recognized this. He said: "He who is handed over to the school should be retained there until he is ready to come forth an instructed, moral, and religious man."[18] Thus, he recognized the temptation to want to quit when the going gets hard. "Let me just go to public school," the middle school boy may whine. "This is too hard," the sixth grade girl may snivel. "I want to go out with my friends," the high schooler preparing for a debate may complain. But as Comenius observed, the educated man is instructed, moral, and religious. Sound instruction, morality, and religion cannot be taught in the public school. We believe they are best taught in the classical Christian school. Real education involves moral and religious training. Real education requires perseverance. When the going gets hard, our parents and students need to be gently and patiently reminded of this.

At the same time, Comenius denounced educational methods that resulted in drudgery. He agreed with Martin Luther that students should "derive no less pleasure from their studies than from their games." He criticized the Latin schools of the sort in which he spent his "wasted boyhood," calling them "a terror to boys and torture chambers of minds."

Lessons John Amos Comenius Can Teach . . .

He denounced tedious learning approaches that spent five, ten, or even more years in teaching what could be taught in one year. He advocated clear pedagogies rather than "obscure, perplexed, and intricate" presentation methods. He condemned violent and coercive methods.[19] In other words, he wanted to create schools where learning was a delight, not drudgery. This includes satisfaction with a job well done, of course, but also pleasure in the process of learning. That should be our goal in our classical Christian schools as well. Our students, in the main, should look forward to coming to school every day. They should love their teachers and understand that their teachers love them, even as they may not enjoy every aspect of the task at hand. Learning should be a delight.

Comenius's suspicion of learning by rote memorization should be viewed in this context. He knew only schools where memorization was purposeless, joyless, and tiresome. He knew nothing of our contemporary classical Christian schools where grammar school students love to chant, sing, and memorize, and do so daily with great delight. Do not let contemporary secular educators remake Comenius in their own image. Comenius was in favor of memorization. "There must . . . in everything be very frequent repetitions and exercises."[20]

What Comenius was really opposed to was *mindless* memorization, or memorization without adequate explanation of what was being memorized. "Let everything which is presented to the pupil, and rightly understood, be fixed in the memory."[21] Even here, his advice should be viewed judiciously, though not discarded. It may be that a young child may not fully understand what is being learned by rote. That fuller understanding may come at a later stage of the Trivium. But even at the pre-polly level, a teacher should always provide, in age-appropriate terms, the context of a verse, poem, or song being memorized to facilitate as much understanding as is possible.

Comenius's overarching point is that learning should be a delight, not drudgery, and that it is a teacher's responsibility (and challenge) to make it so. Practically speaking, he urged teachers to "be kind, paternal, and ready to commend." He urged administrators to make their schools "pleasant," "well-lighted, clean, and adorned with pictures." He argued that the curriculum should be "presented so as to attract." Good advice all. This should be the classical Christian school's pledge to enrolling families. And Comenius suggests, in turn, that parents should show "their respect for schoolmasters and learning."[22]

3. Learning should be staged.

A third lesson from Comenius is that learning should be staged. A current debate in classical Christian education circles revolves around whether Dorothy Sayers was innovative in suggesting that grammar, logic, and rhetoric are stages of learning that correspond roughly with elementary, middle, and high school years and stages of child development, as well as subjects of the medieval curriculum.[23] May I suggest that if Sayers was like Columbus who "discovered" America, Comenius was like the native Indians, who were already here. As Josef Smolik has observed, Comenius had an interest in psychology "at a time when psychological consideration in education had no place at all." He focused on levels of mental development in accord with his desire to make learning easier for students.[24]

Speaking of the method of education in *The Great Didactic,* his first principle was that "nature attends to a fit time." Just as there are seasons for operations of nature, there are seasons for learning. He said, "Nothing should be taught except when it can be comprehended."[25] Or, as put in his third principle, "Whatever study is taken up for treatment, let the minds of the pupils be predisposed towards it (*and prepared for it*)." [26]

In his sixth principle, he added that "every language, science, or art should first be learned in its simplest rudiments."[27] After that, "let all studies be arranged that the subsequent things shall be founded in what has preceded, and be strengthened by them."[28]

Thus, as he put it, "The whole sphere of studies should be distributed carefully among the successive classes of the school in such a manner that the earliest study always prepares the way for what is to follow, and, as it were, lights the path to it."[29] As the seventh principle states, "Let nothing, then, be done against the grain."[30]

How does this work practically? Teachers should start by exercising the senses of students, and then proceeding to memorization, then to intelligence (or logic), and finally to judgment.[31] Hmm. This at least echoes Sayers' description of the pre-polly, polly, dialectic, and rhetoric stages. Even more

Lessons John Amos Comenius Can Teach . . .

aligned is Comenius's division of the four ages of learning a language: (1) infancy, (2) the boy age, (3) the juvenile age, and (4) the virile age.[32] It seems fairly apparent, then, that the principle advocated by Sayers' of "teaching with the grain" is very much in line with ideas taught by Comenius centuries earlier.

4. While learning classical language is important, so are other subjects.

A fourth lesson involves teaching the whole man. In Comenius's day, the Latin schools focused on language learning to the virtual exclusion of other subjects. As Lois Lebar put it, "The schools of Comenius's day furnished pupils with classical Latin verbiage, but did not train them to observe or to think."[33] Comenius advocated reform. To be sure, he was not in favor of entirely eliminating language study. To the contrary, he suggested that all communication in the ideal university (which he called the pansophy) occur solely in Latin. But he equally believed that the best education was a broad one. He said, "If so much time is to be spent on the language alone, when is the boy to know about things—when will he learn philosophy, when religion and so forth? He will consume his life in preparing for life."[34]

5. The learning of all subjects should be integrated.

A fifth lesson involves the integration of subjects. Comenius had a grand vision for education that involved an encyclopedic learning of all subjects. Underlying this vision was an understanding that all learning is integrated because all subjects come from God. Hence, Comenius advised, "Let the studies of the whole life be so arranged that they shall be one encyclopaedia, in which there shall be nothing which does not arise out of a common root, nothing not in its proper place."[35] He was in favor of the integration of subjects. "Let all things be joined together in teaching which are in themselves connected."[36] He considered the fragmentation of topics, too common in his day and in our own, to be an obstruction to learning.[37]

6. The curriculum should focus on key principles, not trivial factoids.

A sixth lesson involves the teaching of key principles, not useless or trivial facts. Comenius said that "fundamental things are to be taught." He added, "A gold coin is of more value than a hundred leaden ones."[38] This means that teachers, particularly in the logic and rhetoric stages, should not focus on hundreds of small facts, but test on the student's understanding of and ability to apply key concepts. As Comenius put it, "the school should neglect whatever is unnecessary, whatever is alien to the pupil or subject of study, and whatever is too detailed."

Obsessing with trivial details is sometimes a temptation to the passionate teacher, who is an expert in and lover of her subject. Comenius understood, however, that too much detail, while interesting to the teacher, serves only "to confuse and overload" the student.[39]

7. Teaching methods should appeal to the whole person.

Comenius also advocated that teachers appeal to all the senses in teaching, not just the ears. In other words, teachers should eschew as much as possible the common lecture format, which appeals only to the ears. Involve as many senses as possible: "Let hearing be joined with vision, and the hand with speech." Comenius said, "It is not enough to tell to the ears, but the teacher must present to the eyes that through them the instruction may reach the imagination. Leave nothing until it has been impressed by means of the ear, the eye, the tongue, the hand."[40] Appealing to multiple senses in preparing lesson plans will require some creativity on the part of the teacher. But it facilitates faster and more sure learning.

Lest there be any misunderstanding, Comenius was not in favor of what we would today call the modern "Montessori" approach, where learning is child-centered and child-directed. He advocated a teacher-centric approach. He declared that the teacher must teach from an elevated place in front of the class. The teacher must introduce the topic and guide the discussion. And Comenius believed in uniformity among classes. He believed all should be taught according to the same method. In other words, he adopted a balanced approach in suggesting that fueling the imagination, not lawlessness, leads to learning.

8. Competition in learning is to be encouraged.

Contrary to our contemporary over-emphasis on cooperation, Comenius had no problem using the rough-and-tumble of competition in the classroom to further learning. He had no problem telling teachers to ask questions of pupils in front of their classmates, and if the first student called upon failed to correctly

Lessons John Amos Comenius Can Teach . . .

answer, to go to the next, and then the next, until the correct answer was given. He understood that peer pressure works. Indeed, for translation work, he advocated having students take turns publicly challenging each other's work, making corrections out loud before the entire class.

Conclusion

Von Raumer called Comenius "a grand and venerable figure of sorrow," who, though "wandering, persecuted, and homeless . . . never despaired," but "with enduring truth, and strong in faith, he labored unweariedly to prepare youth by a better education for a better future."[41] Like the crowd of witnesses mentioned in Hebrews 11–12, he ran his race looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of his faith. There is much we can learn from Comenius, but these eight reforms represent at least a start. Perhaps your school is already doing these things. If so, rejoice and do not grow weary in welldoing. Perhaps your school needs a reminder. If so, this is your opportunity to put Comenius's reforms into practice. Your school has a race to run.

Notes:

1. Quoted in Simon Somerville Laurie, *John Amos Comenius ... His Life and Educational Works* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1884), 23.
2. George Grant, "Heroes of the City of God: Not of This World," *Tabletalk*, March 2004, 58–59.
3. All citations and quotations from *The Great Didactic* are from Laurie, *John Amos Comenius ... His Life and Educational Works*.
4. Ibid., 77–78.
5. Ibid., 82.
6. Ibid., 124.
7. Ibid., 80–81.
8. Ibid., 125–26.
9. Ibid., 128.
10. Ibid., 129.
11. Ibid., 129–30.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., 78.
14. Ibid., 79.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., 78–79.
17. Ibid., 78.
18. Ibid., 87.
19. Ibid., 80–81.
20. Ibid., 98.
21. Ibid., 97.
22. Ibid., 90.
23. See Robert Littlejohn and Charles Evans, *Wisdom and Eloquence* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2006); Douglas Wilson, "A Review of Wisdom and Eloquence," *Classis*, vol. XIV, no. 4 (Autumn 2007); Matthew Allen and Joe Bray, "Re-Thinking the Trivium?" *Classis*, vol. XIV, no. 4 (Autumn 2007); Robert Littlejohn and Charles Evans, "Authors Respond to Re-Thinking the Trivium?" *Classis*, vol. XIV, no. 4 (Autumn 2007).
24. Josef Smolik, "Comenius: A Man of Hope in a Time of Turmoil," *Christian History*, issue 13 (1987).
25. Quoted in Laurie, *John Amos Comenius*, 84.
26. Ibid., 85.
27. Ibid., 87.
28. Ibid., 97.
29. Ibid., 87.
30. Ibid., 92.
31. Ibid., 91.
32. Ibid., 123.
33. Lois Lebar, "What Children Owe to Comenius," *Christian History*, issue 13 (1987).
34. Quoted in Laurie, *John Amos Comenius*, 32.
35. Ibid., 97.
36. Ibid., 105.
37. Ibid., 103.
38. Ibid., 110.
39. Ibid., 112–113.
40. Ibid., 93.
41. Ibid., 65.

Head, Heart, and Hand: A Simple yet Powerful Construct for Teaching Homer's *Odyssey*

by Timothy Ponce and Dr. Lee Courtney

Thousands of lines to read, hundreds of names to remember, countless ancient social customs to comprehend: it is easy to understand how our rhetoric and logic school students get lost in a work as massive as Homer's *Odyssey*. However, it is the job of the teacher to help the student see how literature is, in the words of Horace, "*utile dulci*" [useful and agreeable].[1] Although this appears to be a Scylla and Charybdis situation, it need not be. We have developed a construct for teaching Homer's *Odyssey* that is profound, yet simple enough for our students to walk out the door with the power of the poem, thus spurring them on toward virtue.

This construct, or teaching outline, is based upon the declaration of purpose found in the opening lines of the poem. In that declaration of purpose, Homer provides the definition of a hero by using the Greek word *polytropos* to describe the hero Odysseus; Fitzgerald renders this word as "skilled in all ways of contending."[2] Literally

Head, Heart, and Hand . . .

translated "with many twists and turns,"[3] *polytropos* provides a powerful description of the hero's versatility, yet the question nags in the back of the reader's mind: "If the hero is skilled in all ways of contending, what are those ways?" Continuing to use the Fitzgerald translation, we argue that if the verbs in the subsequent lines are examined, one can interpret the various "ways of contending." For example, "saw" and "learned" can be interpreted as an intellectual excellence, "weathered" can be interpreted as an emotional excellence or staying power, and "fought" can be understood as a physical excellence.[4]

The idea of excellence, or *areté* in the original Greek, is the path by which classical heroes obtain their ultimate goal, *kleos* or glory; hence, in any evaluation of a classical hero, his or her *areté* must be evaluated. Using the tri-part construct of "intellectual," "emotional," and "physical" excellence as a character-tracking and evaluation tool, each of the three protagonists (Odysseus, Telémakhos, and Penélopê) can be profoundly studied, yet easily retained by the student. To help our students remember the three "ways of contending," we use the mnemonic devices of alliteration and analogy, describing intellectual excellence as "the way of the head," emotional excellence as "the way of the heart," and physical excellence as "the way of the hand." To further clarify, we will provide a few examples of how each one of the protagonists fits into these categories, although many more examples exist than the ones provided here.

The "way of the head," or intellectual excellence, manifests itself in the three protagonists through a combination of comprehension, curiosity, and cunning. Comprehension, not only knowing information, but also learning from failure, can be seen in Odysseus when he admits to Alkínoös, king of the Phaiákians, that he "would not heed [his men] in [his] glorying spirit" after he had conquered the great Polyphêmos.[5] Odysseus displays his intellectual excellence by being willing to admit that he was wrong and that, through his hubris, many of his men were lost. In addition, Odysseus and Telémakhos both display curiosity on numerous occasions, but the most poignant example is the parallel reactions of father and son upon entering the court of their respective hosts. As he enters the palace of Alkínoös, "Odysseus, who had borne the barren sea, / stood in the gateway and surveyed this bounty. / He gazed his fill . . . "[6] Likewise, upon entering the palace of Meneláos, Telémakhos, like his father, stops to gaze in curiosity at this unprecedented site.[7] Both Odysseus' and Telémakhos' curiosity momentarily overrides their primary objective of meeting with their respective host. This love of learning and knowledge is part of the areté that these two show in the area of intellectual excellence. Odysseus and Telémakhos both show cunning in multiple instances, but arguably the most memorable instance of cunning in the *Odyssey* comes from Penélopê's trick of the shroud.[8] Through her cunning, Penélopê displays her intellectual excellence, thus spurring her on to *kleos*.

This article was published previously:
Lee Courtney and Timothy Ponce, "Head, Heart, and Hand: A Simple yet Powerful Construct for Teaching Homer's *Odyssey*," *The Quint*, 4.4 (2012).

The "way of the heart," or emotional excellence, is displayed by the protagonists via perseverance, poise, and faithfulness. Odysseus exhibits the ultimate form of perseverance when he confronts one of the greatest enemies of humanity, despair. He struggles with one of the most fundamental problems of human existence: "Should I go over the side for a quick finish / or clench my teeth and stay among the living?"[9] This prolific question has been echoed by such famous literary figures as Hamlet in the famous "To be or not to be" soliloquy. It is Odysseus' persistence that allows him to persevere in the face of so many obstacles and move down the path toward kleos via emotional excellence. A moving example of poise comes from Telémakhos when he sees his father being mistreated by one of the suitors. "Telémakhos, / after the blow his father bore, sat still / without a tear, though his heart felt the blow."[10] Although Telémakhos' natural reaction would have been to rush to the aid of his beloved father, he demonstrates emotional excellence by maintaining control of his emotions even in the most difficult of circumstances. When the word faithfulness is used in

Timothy Ponce *teaches English at Alpha Omega Academy in Huntsville, Texas. Learn more at www.alphaomegaacademy.org.* ***Lee Courtney****, PhD, is a professor at Sam Houston State University.*

Head, Heart, and Hand . . .

conjunction with the *Odyssey*, the first character that comes to mind is Penélopê. In a meeting with Odysseus, who is in the guise of a beggar, Penélopê admits "my looks, / my face, my carriage, were soon lost or faded / when the Akhaians crossed the sea to Troy, / Odysseus my lord among the rest."[11] Penélopê counts her famous beauty as forfeit because the only person that she desires to please with it is her husband.

The "way of the hand," or physical excellence, is exhibited by the protagonists through strength and skill. Odysseus shows strength, brute lifting power, on multiple occasions, for example, when he chops down twenty trees in moments on Kalypso's island,[12] or clings to the cliff face of the Phaiákian island.[13] However, we also see him take part in activities where skill is more important than mere strength. For example, while in the court of Alkínoös, Odysseus takes part in a series of athletic contests, one of which is the discus.[14] A successful discus throw does involve strength, but it also relies heavily on funneling that power into a precise form and execution. Telémakhos displays both strength and skill when he attempts to string his father's bow. At the last moment, as he is about to string the weapon, Telémakhos, at the signal of his father, relents and passes the bow to another contestant so that their master plan of revenge will not be disrupted.[15] This accomplishment requires Telémakhos to not only use strength to bend the bow, but also his skill in stringing such a weapon. The physical excellence of Penélopê takes on a slightly different form as she is not chopping down trees, throwing a discus, or stringing a bow. Penélopê's physical excellence, as understood by her culture, would have been found in her beauty. Eurymakhos comments, "Penélopê, / Deep-minded queen, daughter of Ikários, / if all Akhaians in the land of Argos only saw you now! What hundreds more / would join your suitors here to feast tomorrow! / Beauty like yours no woman had before, / or majesty, or mastery."[16]

Although we have provided only a limited number of examples in this article, additional examples that fall into this easy-to-remember tri-part construct will quickly surface upon a rereading of the poem. This outline makes a work as long and complex as the *Odyssey* extremely accessible to a wide variety of students and can be easily incorporated into existing teaching and reading plans. Assignments such as dialectical journal entries or organized reading notes are an excellent companion to this teaching outline. It has been used as a summer reading plan with rhetoric school students, and it proved to be highly enjoyable and beneficial for them; the construct was simple enough to follow during independent study over the summer and students were able to track the protagonists and primary plot points using this system. This allows the teacher to begin the school year strong and quickly move through a large quantity of material without the fear of leaving students behind.

In light of Homer's definition of a hero as described in his statement of purpose at the beginning of the poem, it is safe to say that all three of the protagonists show how they are "skilled in all ways of contending." This tri-part outline is a simple, yet effective tool to help students fully capture a comprehensive view of how the protagonists use *areté* to gain *kleos*.

Notes:

1. Horace, *Satires, Epistles, and Ars Poetica*, trans. H.R. Fairclough (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 478.
2. Ralph Hexter, *A Guide to the Odyssey: A Commentary on the English Translation of Robert Fitzgerald* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 4.
3. Ibid.
4. Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1998), 1.1-9.
5. Ibid., 9.545–546.
6. Ibid., 7.142–144.
7. Ibid., 4.77–81.
8. Ibid., 2.100–117.
9. Ibid., 10.57–58.
10. Ibid., 17.641–643.
11. Ibid., 19.147–150.
12. Ibid., 5.252–253.
13. Ibid., 5.453.
14. Ibid. 8.195.
15. Ibid., 21.140–150.
16. Ibid., 18.307–313.

A Trinitarian View of School Authority

by Leslie Collins, Covenant Christian Academy

The unity and authority of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost provide a model for the authority structure of the board-governed school. Within the Trinity, fellowship, unity, and interdependence are the natural mode of communication and action. Ontologically there is pure unity; economically there is a distribution of function. The Father is the Head of the Trinity. He has a will to which the Son lovingly submits. "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Matthew 24:36). The Father sent the Son, who accomplishes His will, intercedes for the Father's children, and sacrifices Himself to provide for their needs according to the Father's will. "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done" (Matthew 26:42). The Father sent the Spirit, who continues to intercede for His people and equips, encourages, and edifies them as well. "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14:26). Each part of the Trinity has a separate function, all equally important and all equally interdependent. "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

As image-bearers of the Triune God of Scripture, we reflect the unity and model of Three in One in our school leadership: board, administration, and faculty and staff. "We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body" (2 Corinthians 4:10–11). The board, serving as the Head, represents the will of the school. It serves to protect its mission and vision by creating policy and preserving legacy. It guards the future and the past. The administration does the will of the board by fulfilling the mission and vision in the day-to-day operations of the school, interceding on behalf of the faculty, staff, and parents and community. The administration, being called by the board, seeks to serve, protect, and defend the work of the school, serving as the Christ figure and guarding the present. The administration calls upon the strength of the faculty and staff to equip, edify, and encourage the students and families of the school. The will of the Father is accomplished by the Son, and furthered by the Spirit. In the same fashion, the will of the board is accomplished by the administration and furthered by the teachers as they train and teach the next generation, preparing for the future. The work of the Trinity is to establish, build, and further the Kingdom. The Father is the Head of the Trinity. The Son submits willingly to the Father. The Spirit is sent by and, in like fashion, submits to the Father and the Son. The trinitarian authority of the school functions in the same way. The board is the head, the administration submits to that authority, the faculty and staff submits to the authority of both the board and the administration. In this way, all parts of the school understand that there is beauty and specialty in their role, specific and general submission to one another, and unity in the midst of that submission.". . . *I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me"* (John 17:23).

The board is the head, the administration submits to that authority, the faculty and staff submits to the authority of both the board and the administration.

Leslie Collins *is the head of school at Covenant Academy in Cypress, Texas. Visit http://www.covenantacademyhouston.org/.*

The Benefits of Rereading

by Stephen Rippon, Tall Oaks Classical School

Graduation Speech for Tall Oaks Classical School Class of 2011

My exhortation for you today will be "the benefits of rereading."

My concern is that when you leave here, you will think of those books and say, "Oh, yeah, I've read that before." If one of the books we've read here appears on a syllabus in a college course you take, I'm afraid you'll say, "Good—one less thing I have to do—I've already got that one covered, because I read it with Mr. Rippon at Tall Oaks."

I want to encourage you not to think of these books we've read as items to be checked off a life list in a "been there, done that" way, but instead to take every chance to read them again as you move forward in life. Why should we bother to reread any book? I offer two reasons: first, rereading is countercultural, going against the grain of our modern consumer culture; and second, rereading is key to the historic Christian faith and practice.

First, rereading is countercultural. These days, *any* sort of quality reading is countercultural. You may have noticed the pull away from reading in your own lifetimes. I know I have, as other distractions like Facebook and the need to check the latest newsfeed tempt me away from time I might spend reading a good book. In the July/August 2008 *Atlantic Monthly* article entitled "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" Nicholas Carr observes, "What the Net seems to be doing is chipping away my capacity for concentration and contemplation. . . . Once I was a scuba diver in the sea of words. Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski."[1] Carr cites studies to show that he is not alone: people do not really read on the internet; they just skim. Rereading, as I am advocating for you to do, is a discipline that can keep us rooted in deeper soil, that can counter the effects of the media on our habits of mind, training us to be more attentive to God and to others.

In addition to going against the grain of our internet-shaped brains, rereading is countercultural because our modern consumer culture encourages us to throw off whatever is old in favor of the new. As you move forward, you will be constantly bombarded with ads to upgrade your internet service or your software, to get new phones, new clothes, new cars. We seek experiences that are ever new, and we move from one thing to another with blinding speed. That mentality affects many areas of our lives, including our reading. C.S. Lewis saw this modern age emerging when he observed the reading practices of his own day. In his book *An Experiment in Criticism*, Lewis noted, "The majority never read anything twice. The sure mark of an unliterary man is that he considers 'I've read it already' to be a conclusive argument against reading a work."[2] That quote was in a chapter entitled "The Few and the Many." I urge you, graduates, to be among the few, those who reread.

Rereading is a countercultural discipline in our modern age, but there's another culture where it's right at home: Christianity. In fact, rereading is key to the historic Christian faith and practice. I'm sure many of you would agree that the Bible is not the sort of text that you can read once and check it off and say, "Okay, I've done that. What next?" No, it is the sort of book that, as you read the end, sends you back to the beginning. The New Testament is constantly quoting the Old, sending us back to reread the text in light of the work of Christ.

Even within the pages of the Gospels we see Jesus exhorting his disciples as well as his opponents to reread the Scriptures. Several times, he uses the formula, "Have you not read . . .?" (Matthew 12:3,5; 19:4; 21:16,42; 22:31). Then, following his resurrection in Luke 24, Jesus explained to his disciples how "all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning me," and then "He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures" (Luke 24:44–45). From then on, the apostles themselves were able to open up the meaning of the Gospel using the Scriptures. The people of God began to see how the Old Testament pointed forward to Jesus Christ, and that demanded a rereading of it.

Not only was rereading the Scriptures key to the foundation of our faith, but it continues to be an essential part of Christian

Stephen Rippon *teaches literature, debate, rhetoric, and Old Testament biblical theology at Tall Oaks Classical School, an ACCS-accredited school in New Castle, Delaware.*

The Benefits of Rereading . . .

practice. In most traditional Christian churches, we find a culture that embodies the value of reading and rereading Scripture, whether it be using a lectionary—having the same texts come around in a regular yearly cycle to read or preach from—and using a liturgical calendar where certain Scriptures are read each year.

Others, not so high-churchy, nevertheless have a pattern of reading Scripture that ensures regular rereading. You may work through a reading plan like the one developed by Scottish minister Robert Murray McCheyne to take you through the Bible in a year. As we continue to read and hear the same texts over and over across various seasons in our lives, they mean more to us. They serve as a standard to mark our own progress in faith. They read us.

Rereading is essential because in our daily lives we are so quick to forget. A church history professor of mine at Westminster Seminary, Clair Davis, used to say that the Christian life is "a combination of amnesia and déjà vu"; we often find ourselves saying, as Davis put it, "I know I've forgotten this before." Oftentimes, for example, we forget the sufficiency of Christ's work on the cross as we continue to try to atone for our own sins or make others atone for theirs. We try to justify ourselves instead of finding our righteousness in Christ. We need the Scriptures to remind us of what we've forgotten.

Later readers of Scripture like Saint Augustine also saw the importance of rereading as foundational to their own faith. The famous scene of Augustine's conversion recounted in the *Confessions* where he responds to the child's voice to "Tolle, lege! Tolle, lege!"[3] was not his first-ever exposure to Scripture. Leading up to that moment, Augustine had already been studying the writings of the Apostle Paul, which is why he had that book with him. Over a decade earlier, Augustine had first read the Scriptures as a young student who was enamored with Cicero's call to philosophy. He was curious about what wisdom Scripture might have, but upon initially reading it, Augustine was not impressed. As a scholar of literature and rhetoric, Augustine confused style with substance, and when the Latin translation of the Bible he was reading did not compare with the elegance of Cicero, he dismissed it. Later, as the bishop of Hippo writing the *Confessions*, Augustine would write "the Bible was composed in such a way that as beginners mature, its meaning grows with them."[4]

So we should keep rereading the Bible, but what about other works? I would argue that rereading even non-biblical, pagan literature is helpful for our Christian discipleship. Augustine serves as an example here, too. In his *Confessions*, Augustine remembers with wonder how he was so moved by *The Aeneid* as an adolescent: "What is more pitiable than a wretch without pity for himself who weeps over the death of Dido dying for love of Aeneas, but not weeping over himself dying for his lack of love for you, my God . . ."[5] However, when he wrote his *Confessions* about 25 years later, Augustine shaped his own journey to faith after that epic. Just as Aeneas moved from Carthage to Italy to fulfill his divine calling, Augustine too moved from Carthage to Italy, eventually coming under the influence of Saint Ambrose of Milan, who baptized him. The young Augustine's response to *The Aeneid* revealed his spiritual blindness, but the middle-aged Augustine shows how, when read through Christian eyes, *The Aeneid* becomes a conversion story. Aeneas's awakening to his true calling anticipates Augustine's own conversion.

In addition to being foundational to Christian practice, the willingness to reread displays a certain childlike spirit that Jesus commends, a childlike sense of wonder that does not grow bored with repetition. Here I'll borrow a favorite motif from Mr. Turley [another teacher at Tall Oaks] and invoke how G.K. Chesterton points out in a chapter of *Orthodoxy* called "The Ethics of Elfland," that children are willing to say "do it again," reflecting our God who says the same to the rising sun each day. My youngest son still loves for me to read books like *Goodnight Moon* and *Big Red Barn* to him, though he's heard them dozens of times.

But what other books should you reread, in between board books and the Bible? In his book *How to Read a Book*, Mortimer Adler divides books into several categories, the last of which are ones that you want to reread. He says, "You discover on returning that *the book seems to have grown with you*. You see new things in it—whole sets of new things—that you did not see before. Your previous understanding of the book is not invalidated (assuming that you read it well the first time); it is just as true as it ever was, and in the same ways that it was true before. But now it is true in still other ways, too."[6] Those are the types of books that we have read at

The Benefits of Rereading . . .

Tall Oaks, for the most part: ones that can bear multiple rereadings.

The Iliad is one such book. G. K. Chesterton once wrote, "The 'Iliad' is only great because all life is a battle, the 'Odyssey' because all life is a journey, the Book of Job because all life is a riddle."[7] To conclude, I will share a little of my own experience reading and rereading *The Iliad* over the years, and I hope it might encourage you to read it and other works again as you move forward.

I first read *The Iliad* when I was in tenth grade, in the fall of 1989. My father was in the Air Force and my family had just moved from Hawaii to Louisiana, where I was to finish up my high school years. Having spent a lonely summer reading many Stephen King horror novels, my first reaction to reading *The Iliad* was rather unliterary: I thought the death scenes were awesome! I thought it was great that we could read a book in school that was as gory as the horror novels I had been reading on my own. Yet I had an English teacher that year, Mrs. Hemingway, who, when I proudly listed all the Stephen King books I had read that summer, did not ridicule me, but instead patiently pointed me toward better books. She did what C.S. Lewis said in *An Experiment in Criticism*, "The real way of mending a man's taste is not to denigrate his present favourites but to teach him how to enjoy something better."[8] I doubt I would be teaching literature at a classical school if it weren't for Mrs. Hemingway's encouragement when I was in tenth grade.

Since then I have had the opportunity to reread *The Iliad* several times. In between each of those readings I grew as a person, and my reaction deepened beyond my adolescent excitement at the gory death scenes. Five years later, in 1994, I reread *The Iliad* in a literature course when I was a cadet at the Air Force Academy. Having committed to serve in the military, I could better understand what war might cost and what it might mean to be an honorable soldier. Then, when I was preparing to teach a literature course at the Academy six years after that, in 2000, I read it again. Having lived overseas in Korea for almost a year, having seen the way the North Korean soldiers and South Koreans stare at each other across the de-militarized zone—I was more sensitive to the way Homer showed how war affects both sides.

Several more years passed in-between readings of *The Iliad*. I left the Air Force and went to seminary. My wife and I had two children and our third was on the way, when, in August of 2007, I showed up in a classroom of ninth-graders . . . and toward the end of each class period Mr. Todd would come up from teaching the sixth graders; he always seemed to come in at an awkward time, and point out something that I should have been paying attention to, like a certain back-row student chewing gum who deserved a demerit. Sometimes he would come when we were reading an especially gruesome scene in *The Iliad*, and he made fun of me for that, but I had to read those scenes, because that was what first got me into *The Iliad*. But studying in the context of a Christian school, we could see so much more there: we could see how tragic life was under polytheism, without the one true God; how all of that bloodshed was a perverse counterfeit of the blood of Christ, shed for us; how apart from Christ, serving our own idols, we would continue to shed each other's blood in an attempt to make things right on our own terms. The heroes of those epics are mere shadows of the one true Hero, our Lord Jesus Christ.

. . . I urge you to reread *The Iliad* because life is a battle, reread *The Odyssey* because life is a journey, and definitely keep rereading the Scriptures because they tell the story that includes and accounts for all of the other stories, not only posing riddles like Job but giving answers in the Gospel; the Scriptures are the story that God is telling through all our battles and journeys, all our losses and gains, all our commencements and all our returns home. May that great Author and Finisher of our story , our Lord Jesus Christ, bless you, graduates, as you go from here.

Notes:

1. Nicholas Carr, "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2008, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/07/is-google-making-us-stupid/306868/
2. C.S. Lewis, *An Experiment in Criticism* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 2.
3. St. Augustine, *Confessions*, VIII. xii. View at http://www.ccel.org/ccel/augustine/confessions.pdf
4. Ibid., III.v.
5. Ibid., I.xiii.
6. Mortimer J. Adler and Charles Van Dorn, *How to Read a Book: The Classic Guide to Intelligent Reading* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972), 343.
7. G.K. Chesterton, *The Defendant* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1902), 47.
8. C.S. Lewis, *An Experiment in Criticism* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 112.

Family Driven Faith: Doing What It Takes to Raise Sons and Daughters Who Walk with God

by Voddie Baucham Jr., Grace Family Baptist Church

Read the Bible

I often meet people who complain about the Bible's complexity or lack of relevance (or both). However, when I ask them how much of the Bible they've actually read, they usually begin to backtrack. . . . Listen to what the Bible has to say about its place in our lives.

The Bible is our source of wisdom: "The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks justice. The law of his God is in his heart; his steps do not slip" (Psalm 37:30-31). *The Bible is our source of righteousness*: "Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You" (Psalm 119:11). *The Bible is our source of direction*: "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105). *The Bible is our source of hope*: "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Romans 15:4).

Our ultimate prayer for our children should be for them to utter the words of Psalm 40:8: "I delight to do your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart." However, this will not happen unless we read the Bible at home. We must get our kids into the Word of God if we intend to get the Word of God into our kids. It won't happen by osmosis.

In our home we read through the Bible night by night. In the morning we have our time of family worship and catechism, but the evenings are a lot simpler. We just get on a schedule and work our way from Genesis to the maps. There are plenty of tools to help along the way. In fact, there is a one-year Bible designed to give you the Bible in daily doses and keep you on track to finish in a year. There are also numerous web sites that will send you a daily reminder of what sections you should read. I don't care what methodology you use as long as you are reading. You don't even have to do it in a year. You could slow down and do a two-year pace if you want. *What matters is that you read the Bible.*

Why is reading the Bible so important? That is a legitimate question. Let me offer a few answers. *First, the Bible is the very Word of God.* In 2 Timothy 3:16 Paul writes: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness." The Bible is not just a good book—it's God's Book. In fact, the Bible is the plumb line against which we measure all other books.

Second, the Bible is God's primary tool in preparing us for a life of godliness and service. Paul continues in 2 Timothy 3:17, ". . . so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." Peter echoes this idea in 2 Peter 1:3 when he writes, ". . . seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence."

Third, the Bible is an agent by which God conforms us to the very image of Christ. Second Peter 1:4 tells us, "For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust." Peter makes reference to "true knowledge" (v. 3) and "precious and magnificent promises" (v. 4). There is no doubt that the revelation of which Peter speaks is accessed through the Bible. I don't know about you, but I want to be like Jesus. More importantly, I want to raise sons and daughters who are like Jesus. God will use the Bible to make that happen. Reading the Bible will lead us to the true knowledge of the Lord. Reading the Bible will expose us to the "precious and magnificent promises" of the Lord. God will use the Bible to transform our lives.

Fourth, the Bible is a change agent. Hebrews 4:12 reads, "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to

Selection from:

Family Driven Faith by Voddie Baucham, Jr., ©2007, pp. 96–102. Used by permission of Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, IL 60187, www.crossway.org.

Voddie Baucham *serves as pastor of preaching at Grace Family Baptist Church in Spring, TX, where he resides with his wife and six children.*

Family Driven Faith . . .

judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." You may not be able to change your son's heart, but the Word of God can. Try all you want, but you can't reach that sullen teenage daughter of yours the way the Bible can.

> Reading and memorizing Scripture and the catechisms of the church results in incredible development of children, both spiritually and intellectually. What families regard as important is evidenced by the manner in which they spend their time. Therefore, regular family worship shows the children that their parents believe that Jesus Christ is central to all of life. This practice leaves a legacy that will benefit thousands in generations to come.[1]

Q&A

My family and I recently worked through R. C. Sproul's book *Essential Truths of the Christian Faith* during our breakfast devotionals. The book is divided into 102 small chapters, each one dealing with a great doctrine of the faith. Reading the daily chapter took no more than five or ten minutes. However, we often spent half an hour or more discussing the truths we read.

I wouldn't trade those morning discussions for anything. I absolutely love sitting around the breakfast table with my family, discussing the great doctrines of the Christian faith and their implications for the way we live our lives. In fact, we discovered that the children enjoy it as much as my wife and I do. Now we are working through Starr Meade's book *Training Hearts and Teaching Minds*. It is a daily devotional based on the Westminster Shorter Catechism. The type and level of questions we have encountered recently has been amazing.

Some time ago Bridget raised an issue that we needed to discuss as a family. The children sat and listened; they even added their two cents. At the end of the discussion Bridget and I rose from the table (about to head for our room to get ready for the day) when our eleven-year-old son chimed in, "Aren't we going to do the book today?" "Yeah, we forgot our devotion," Jasmine added as Trey reached over and grabbed the familiar text from the bay window next to the table. Bridget looked at me with a smile and said, "Yeah, Daddy, I can't believe you were going to leave the table without our morning devotional."

The fact is, my children weren't hungry little theologians who couldn't wait to tackle another complicated theological truth. They were just a couple of kids who had questions. As their parents we found an avenue for providing answers. All kids wonder about theology. What child hasn't asked questions like "Who made God?" or "If Jesus is God, how can He be *the Son of God?*" These are theological questions, and one of the greatest things we can do as parents is provide opportunities for those questions to be asked and answered. But how do we create such a place?

First, give your children permission to ask biblical questions. Bridget and I have been blessed with very inquisitive children. I say blessed because their inquisitive nature makes them very teachable. However, I must admit that we haven't always seen it as a blessing. Let's be honest—one can only take so much, "Daddy, why is that?" Eventually we all learn how to say, "That's just the way it is."

However, if you want your children to learn biblical truths, you are going to have to give them permission to ask biblical questions. That means we can't say it's OK with our lips but tell them something different with our attitude. We must demonstrate a genuine willingness and desire to hear our children out. Parents who huff and puff when their children ask biblical questions are saying, "Don't bother me, kid, I'm busy."

Second, validate your child's honest biblical questions. One of the best things you can say to an inquisitive child who asks you a theological question is, "That's a great question." Or better yet, you might say, "I have often wondered that myself." This not only lets the child know that it's alright to ask legitimate questions but affirms the factual nature of the Christian faith. Think about it. What if you kept asking someone about his or her faith but he or she never acknowledged or tried to answer your questions? Eventually you would assume that the person either didn't know very much about his or her faith or that there wasn't much to be known. The same is true with our children.

In fact, you may be reading this book right now looking for answers because no one cared enough or knew enough about the Christian faith · to validate the legitimate questions you asked along the way. Perhaps you grew up believing that one must accept Christianity on "blind faith" but later realized there had to be more to it than that. Or maybe you had well-meaning parents who taught you things that turned out to be false. Although this may be common, it is not biblical.

Family Driven Faith . . .

The Bible gives a beautiful example of the kind of attitude we should have toward those to whom we teach the faith in the prologue to Luke's Gospel:

> *Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus*; so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught. (Luke 1:1-4, *emphasis added*)

Note Luke's choice of words and phrases: *compile, eyewitnesses, investigated, carefully, consecutive order, exact truth*. This is not the stuff of fairy tale or legend. This is solid, verifiable, historically reliable truth! Let your children know that our faith can stand up to their questions.

Third, answer your child's biblical question. It's one thing to validate a question; it's quite another to answer it. A child who is encouraged to ask biblical questions and has those questions validated but unanswered may get the idea that the Bible has no answers or that his parents don't. In either case a very important authority in the child's life will be undermined.

I have told the story of my journey to faith so many times that those closest to me know it by rote. That story is important to me for many reasons—not least of which is the fact that I was lost, but now I'm found. However, one of the most important elements of my story is the fact that the young man who shared the message of Christ with me took the time to answer all of my questions (over a period of three weeks).

Sometimes those answers were on the tip of his tongue. However, I distinctly remember that on more than one occasion he had to admit that he didn't have an answer. But he didn't stop there. He always followed up with "but I will find out." Eventually he would find the answer to my questions. This process taught me two things that have greatly impacted my Christian walk.

First, I learned that being a Christian doesn't mean you have all of the answers. In fact, the more I walk with Christ, the more I realize that I have more questions than I do answers, a lot more. Paul alludes to this reality when he writes, "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known" (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Second, I learned that Christianity stands up to scrutiny. Steve didn't try to convince me to stop asking questions. Nor did he cop out by claiming that I had to close my mind in order to exercise my faith. He went and found answers. Granted, there are some questions that can't be answered (like, why did God do things the way He did?). However, those things are unanswerable because of the infinite nature of God and the finitude of man.

Fourth, teach your children to answer their own questions when they can. When my daughter was fourteen she began to work with a writing tutor. She has always been a very gifted writer, and she was finished with tenth and eleventh grade English by the time she was fourteen. Her tutor had developed a composition course that was part biblical worldview, part critical thinking, part creative writing, and part research methodology. It was a perfect fit. Jasmine met with the tutor once a week, and Bridget and I worked with her on the daily nuts and bolts.

One of the greatest blessings of this course was the day I realized my daughter and I had begun sharing a library. She walked into my office one day with a determined look on her face and said, "Daddy, I just *love* your office" as she diligently searched for a book on comparative religions. It was one of the greatest moments she and I had ever shared. My little girl had gone from "Daddy, what does this verse mean?" to "Daddy, where can I find information on Mormon theology?" She had begun to seek her own answers!

I have to admit my daughter's act of independence was a bittersweet moment. Part of me was excited about the achievement of one of many parental goals. However, another part of me was sad to see the little girl we brought home from the hospital getting smaller in the rearview mirror. But if my goal is to send my children forth as arrows (or nuclear missiles) bent on making a significant impact in the world for the cause of Christ, they are eventually going to have to know the Lord for themselves and think His thoughts after Him without me looking over their shoulders.

Notes:

1. David Wegener, "A Father's Role in Family Worship," *Journal of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, Vol. 3, Issue 4, 1998.

REPAIRING *the* RUINS

PRE-CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Dr. Phil Graybeal will be speaking on **Effective Board Governance.** Dr. Graybeal's primary emphasis is training boards of non-profits to understand and implement the Policy Governance® system of leadership.

Robert Enlow will be speaking on **The Promise and Peril of School Choice for Private Schools.** Robert Enlow is president and CEO of the Foundation for Educational Choice, the school choice legacy foundation of Milton and Rose Friedman.

PRE-CONFERENCE JUNE 19, 2013

JUNE 20—22, 2013

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

ACCS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

FEATURED CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

VODDIE BAUCHAM

The Culture War: Part I & Part II

Voddie Baucham is a husband, father, pastor, author, professor, conference speaker, and church planter. He currently serves as Pastor of Preaching at Grace Family Baptist Church in Spring, Texas. He was very well received at the 2011 ACCS conference and we are excited to have him return to the conference this year..

GEORGE GRANT

A Wider Diameter of Light: Instilling Humility in Our Students

George Grant is a twenty-year veteran of Christian and classical education. He is the pastor of Parish Presbyterian Church in Franklin, TN, and also founded Franklin Classical School, New College Franklin, King's Meadow Study Center, Sum Ergo Zoom Running Team, Comenius School, among others. He is the author of more than five dozen books. He is an ex-officio member of the ACCS Board.

MATT WHITLING

Contra Prep

Matt Whitling has taught elementary and secondary classes at Logos School in Moscow, Idaho, for the past 18 years. He is currently the secondary and elementary principal at Logos. He is a parish elder at Christ Church and a trustee of New Saint Andrews College.

DOUGLAS WILSON

The Classical School and Music

Douglas is the minister of Christ Church in Moscow, Idaho. He is a founding board member of both Logos School and New Saint Andrews College, and serves as an instructor at Greyfriars' Hall, a ministerial training program at Christ Church. He is the author of numerous books on classical Christian education, the family, and the Reformed faith. He is an ex-officio member of the ACCS Board.

To find out more to register online, visit www.accsedu.org › Conferences

ASSOCIATION OF CLASSICAL & CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

P.O. Box 9741
Moscow, ID 83843

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

21ST ANNUAL ACCS CONFERENCE WITH VODDIE BAUCHAM

JUNE 20–22, 2013 • ATLANTA, GA

RENAISSANCE WAVERLY HOTEL

WATCH WWW.ACCSEDU.ORG > CONFERENCES

FOR REGISTRATION AND INFORMATION