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THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF CLASSICAL & CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

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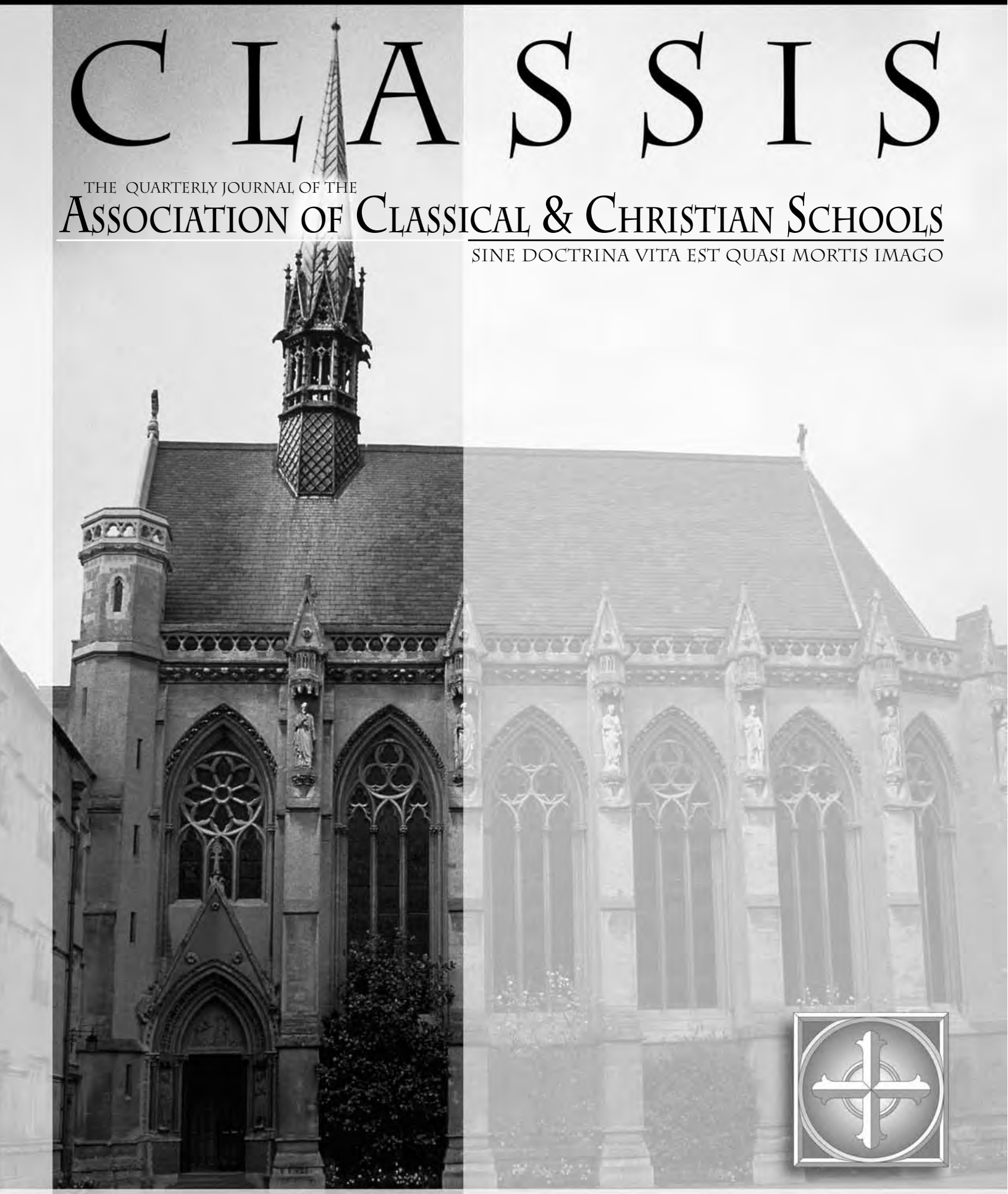

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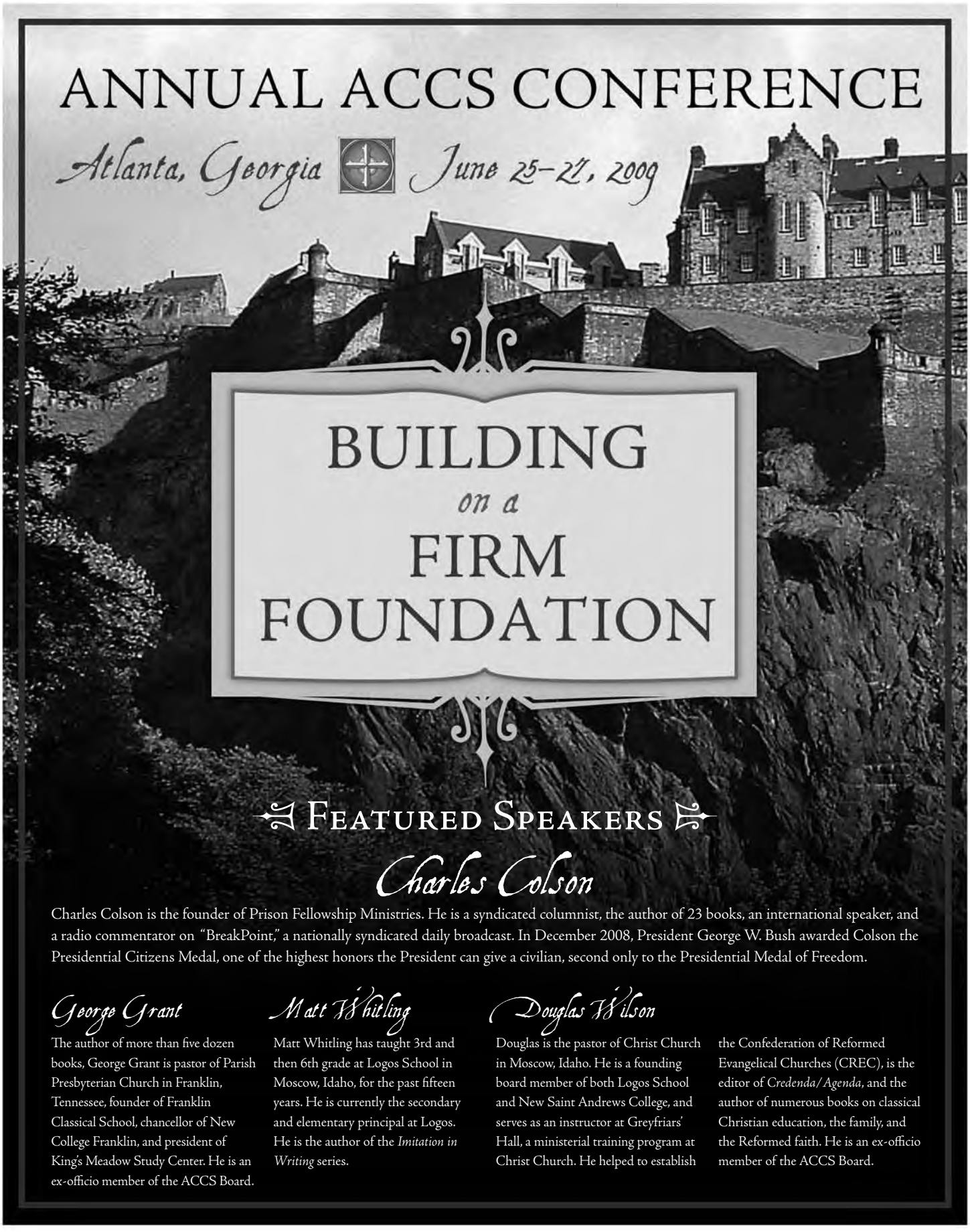

Featured Speakers

Charles Colson

Charles Colson is the founder of Prison Fellowship Ministries. He is a syndicated columnist, the author of 23 books, an international speaker, and a radio commentator on "BreakPoint," a nationally syndicated daily broadcast. In December 2008, President George W. Bush awarded Colson the Presidential Citizens Medal, one of the highest honors the President can give a civilian, second only to the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

George Grant

The author of more than five dozen books, George Grant is pastor of Parish Presbyterian Church in Franklin, Tennessee, founder of Franklin Classical School, chancellor of New College Franklin, and president of King's Meadow Study Center. He is an ex-officio member of the ACCS Board.

Matt Whitling

Matt Whitling has taught 3rd and then 6th grade at Logos School in Moscow, Idaho, for the past fifteen years. He is currently the secondary and elementary principal at Logos. He is the author of the *Imitation in Writing* series.

Douglas Wilson

Douglas 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 serves as an instructor at Greyfriars' Hall, a ministerial training program at Christ Church. He helped to establish the Confederation of Reformed Evangelical Churches (CREC), is the editor of *Credenda/Agenda*, and 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.

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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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Elementary!

by Patch Blakey

"Elementary, my dear Watson." Thus we remember Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's famous detective commenting condescendingly to his faithful yet less observant companion. The implication of Holmes' statement is that what he deduced was simple, easy, based on readily apparent facts. But *elementary* has another connotation, one that doesn't necessarily conjure up thoughts of base triviality.

In the book of Hebrews, the author states, "Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment" (Heb. 6:1-2). These *elementary* principles of Christ, repentance, faith, baptism, laying on of hands, resurrection, and eternal judgment are called elementary principles. But they are not simple or easy concepts, as the author makes clear when he later writes that he will press on from these, "if God permits." The author uses the term elementary, not as implying the trivial nature of these principles, but rather the *foundational* aspect of them.

A similar misperception often occurs with regard to those who teach in the elementary or grammar stage at classical Christian schools. Because we see or think of young children in these grades, it is a simple step to conclude that what is imparted is easy or childish, much like the old basal readers: "See Jane run. See Spot run. Run, Spot, run!" But this is not the case, as can be readily attested to by any parent who has observed the grammar classroom instruction of their young children.

Having been a part of five different accreditation visits this past academic year, I am continually amazed by what the teachers in the grammar classrooms are accomplishing with their students. I have observed first graders who were able to accurately identify the parts of a sentence and to read far above the level of the insipid basal readers of my first grade experience.

I have also witnessed children who have memorized vast quantities of valuable information and who are able to recite it accurately at a moment's notice. These children are well-behaved, organized, cheerful and eagerly engaged with their instructors in the lesson at hand. The grammar stage education in a classical Christian school is indeed elementary, but more in the vein of foundational rather than trite. This level of education is preparing children for the next stage of their education, the dialectic stage where the focus or emphasis is on logic (and that is not to imply that the grammar stage is devoid of logic).

The articles that are provided in this issue of *Classis* focus primarily on the grammar stage, and for the most part, are written by grammar stage teachers. Some of these teachers I have had the privilege to observe in their classrooms during an accreditation visit and was humbly overwhelmed by their loving but firm classroom control. The kind of teachers that are serving in the grammar stage classrooms of classical Christian schools have invested a lot of effort in mastering their instructional art. They love their students, the subjects they teach, and most of all, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is not the sort of teacher training that comes from pursuing a degree in elementary education at a state college.

At the heart of all that goes on in a grammar stage classroom is a strong, positive respect and appreciation for the Word of God. Moses commanded the parents in ancient Israel, "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up" (Deut. 6:6-7). Apart from a sound knowledge and understanding of the Bible, these schools would only be creating *classically trained* students, which would ultimately lead us back to the very sort of godless culture we have today. But we want better for our children and for their children. We want children that grow up with a hunger to learn about all of God's creation and to evaluate all that they read and hear in light of the Scriptures.

The grammar stage at ACCS schools does indeed provide an *elementary* education, but it is not simplistic, it is *foundational.*

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

The Calling of A Kindergarten Teacher

by Gail Linville

My "calling" to teach kindergarten began the summer of 1993 when I received not one, but three phone calls from Chris Acton, the headmaster of Regents School of Austin. Regents, a classical and Christian school in Austin, Texas, was just taking off, offering classes for first through fourth grades and planning to add a kindergarten. Chris asked me to consider applying for the job of kindergarten teacher, which included setting up a classroom and developing most of the curriculum. Not only did the assignment sound daunting, but the school was inconveniently located seventeen miles from my home. I declined his offer. Twice.

When the third call came, I was in the midst of searching for a new private school for our daughter. I was also in the middle of reading *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning* by Doug Wilson, a book which had come highly recommended by a friend and strongly extolled the value of a classical Christian education. I wondered, "Could God possibly be trying to get my attention? Is this where He is leading me?" Merriam-Webster defines calling as "a strong inner impulse toward a particular course of action, especially when accompanied by divine influence." Perhaps my calling was coming in the form of phone calls from the Regents' headmaster, but I needed to investigate further.

After the long trek to the school, I toured the campus with its student gardens and outdoor theater in the woods for class plays and reading times. I then visited with a board member, my daughter's future teacher, and the headmaster about the Christ-centered vision and philosophy of the school which employed a historical time line to illuminate history in all the disciplines and arts. I was intrigued. The school's mission statement reads: "The purpose of Regents School of Austin is to provide a classical and Christian education founded upon and informed by a biblical worldview that equips students to know, love, and practice that which is true, good, and beautiful, and which challenges them to strive for excellence as they live purposefully and intelligently in the service of God and man." Regents' philosophy matched my own—that all truth is God's truth and all subjects, science, music, art, literature, and history should be taught in view of God's sovereignty.

Teaching young children provides the opportunity to witness their delight and joy in the works of God. . . .

In *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning*, a book which largely influenced the founders of Regents, Doug Wilson states, "In 1947, Dorothy Sayers, a clear-thinking classicist, lamented lack of true thought: . . . 'although we often succeed in teaching our pupils "subjects," we fail lamentably on the whole in teaching them how to think . . . . They learn everything except the art of learning.' Her suggested solution to this problem was a return to an older educational method—the *Trivium* of the Middle Ages. This *Trivium* consisted of three parts: grammar, dialectic and rhetoric. The three-part program prepared students for the *Quadrivium*—the study of various subjects. The Trivium equipped students with the tools of learning in order to undertake the discipline and specialization of the *Quadrivium*."[1]

This was the education I desired for my own daughter. The Trivium method of "teaching with the grain," along with hands-on learning experiences and much time spent in nature was the way that I wanted to teach young children. I felt strongly that God was calling me to an opportunity to teach His truth vigorously and to build a kindergarten program that would glorify Him and make learning an adventure for my students.

Further, I felt confirmed in my calling to teach kindergarten because of my understanding of young children and the ways that they learn and grow (academically, socially, emotionally, physically and spiritually). A degree in child development and family relations along with seven years teaching experience helped equip me for this calling. God has given me an ability and desire to nurture, encourage, and gently direct young children's growth so that goals, such as those set forth in the school's mission statement, continue to be realized in their lives.

An essential part of my calling and one of the greatest joys of being a kindergarten teacher is understanding the

Gail Linville *is presently teaching Kindergarten at Regents School of Austin in Austin, Texas. For more information on Regents, visit www.regents-austin.com/.*

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kindergartners themselves. To know kindergartners is to know that they are seeking to make sense of the big, complicated world around them, gain understanding of its language and systems, and navigate human relationships. Young children are innately equipped by God to desire the richness and fullness that life has to offer and to yearn for knowledge and stretch for growth in all areas of their being. They must learn to share, communicate, negotiate, empathize, cooperate, and develop good habits and self control. One of the great benefits of teaching young children is that they are tender, eager to learn, and trusting, and are often quick to recognize and appreciate truth, beauty, and goodness.

Teaching young children provides the opportunity to witness their delight and joy in the works of God as they watch a butterfly emerge from its chrysalis, pick and eat carrots fresh from our garden, smell flowers and herbs, listen to a cardinal's call while searching for his bright plumage in the tree tops, or gently hold a fuzzy baby chick or a tickly, crawling caterpillar. I share in their delight as they develop the gifts God has given them and discover the joy of reading, sing songs louder and sweeter, run faster and climb higher. They are busy developing their cognitive abilities, learning about others, and coming to know God better through hearing, reading and memorizing His Word, prayer, repentance and obedience. Clearly, the list is endless.

In *Orthodoxy*, G.K. Chesterton writes, "Because children have abounding vitality, because they are in spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things repeated and unchanged. They always say, 'do it again' . . . It is possible that God says every morning, 'Do it again' to the sun; and every evening, 'Do it again' to the moon. It may not be automatic necessity that makes all daisies alike; it may be that God makes every daisy separately, but has never got tired of making them. It may be that He has the eternal appetite of infancy; for we have sinned and grown old, and our Father is younger than we. The repetition in Nature may not be a mere recurrence; it may be a theatrical encore."[2] Participating in a child's sense of wonder and discovery always refreshes my appreciation of life.

To my surprise, my calling to Regents was not just for me to serve my students and their families but to be the recipient of God's grace and comfort at the hands of that very community. As my daughter and I thrived in this new school, God was not only showing us new ways to learn and teach but was also joining our family with other like-minded families at Regents. Little did we know that our bond with these families would help sustain us through difficult times ahead. Everyone has heard the expression "life doesn't turn out the way you plan." Our common response is "I just didn't know that meant my life." We never know what the future holds; my family's held cancer.

As I completed my third year of teaching and our daughter her sixth grade at Regents, my husband, Marlin, was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer. The school family I felt called to serve graciously served *our* family through the five years of his illness and through his death and our grief. Gene Edward Veith in an article on vocation writes " . . . God has called each of us to specific tasks, relationships, and types of work in which we are to love and serve Him and our neighbors."[3] God continues to confirm my calling through the fulfillment I find in teaching kindergarten and the relationships with students, families, and staff with which He has blessed me.

ENDNOTES

1. Douglas Wilson, *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning: An Approach to Distinctively Christian Education* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 91.

2. G.K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (New York: Doubleday, 1908), 58.

3. Gene Edward Veith, "Called Out," *World Magazine*, Vol. 19, No. 33, August 28, 2004.

The Classical Brain

by Karen Blankenbeckler

Classical education is an ancient approach. How can an educational philosophy reaching back to the 10th century be relevant to students today? Should the methods change to keep up with the ever-changing environment? Neuroscientists have done a tremendous amount of research on the brain in the last fifteen years and some people may be surprised to hear that the research supports the classical approach. While no one would claim that the findings of current brain research can or should completely prescribe teaching methods, there are many exciting discoveries that help us better understand the brain and support methods of classical education.

Perhaps the greatest opposition to the classical approach comes from modern education proponents who criticize the concentration and focus on the grammar stage and on memorization, repetition, skill rehearsal, and general knowledge acquisition. Some educators argue that in this day and age the knowledge that students must master is overwhelming in quantity and it is not necessary to commit it to memory. They claim we must instead teach our students to "access information," think critically, and problem solve. We would all agree that problem-solving skills and critical thinking are important and it is true that students can access information at the touch of a button; therefore, this argument may seem valid at first glance. However, brain research supports the idea that brain development in the early years is critical, and activities such as memorization, repetition, and review can structurally and chemically change the make-up of the brain. The development in the brain that occurs through knowledge acquisition, memorization, and repetition is essential in allowing the type of connections that must happen for problem solving and critical reasoning.

As students exercise their brains through grammar stage experiences . . . they are actually growing more dendrite branches which allow the brain to build up its strength and ability to acquire more information.

It is important to start with some basic brain anatomy and then examine what learning does to enrich the brain. The brain is an oblong organ weighing about three pounds. It is surrounded by the cerebral cortex, which is a wrinkled covering of cells about one quarter inch thick. Neuroscientist and professor of neuroanatomy at University of California Berkeley, Marian Diamond, states, "If I had to teach educators what they need to know most about the brain, I would teach about the cerebral cortex. That's where higher cognitive processing occurs."[1] The nerve cells that make up the cerebral cortex cannot increase in number, but studies have shown that the number of branches or dendrites that act as receptors can be increased. This is important because it is these connections that create learning and memory. As students exercise their brains through grammar stage experiences such as memorization, repetition, and review they are actually growing more dendrite branches which allow the brain to build up its strength and ability to acquire more information. Ronald Kotulak, author of the book *Inside the Brain*, uses the metaphor of a banquet to show the importance of the learning environment. "The brain gobbles up the external environment through its sensory system and then reassembles the digested world in the form of trillions of connections which are constantly growing or dying, becoming stronger or weaker depending on the richness of the banquet."[2] When students are learning the grammar of any subject, the banquet must be rich in order to build and strengthen connections in the brain.

Brain research also supports the idea that some abilities are more easily acquired during certain sensitive time periods or windows of opportunity. While we cannot increase the number of neurons within the cerebral cortex, there is an explosive growth of dendrites in the first eight to ten years of life. When the dendrites increase they add to the surface area available for synapses which act as functional connections among the cells. At peak times these connections are built at the

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speed of three billion per second. From birth to age ten the number of these synaptic connections rises rapidly. After that time, if the dendrite branches have not made connections, they die off. The need to increase and strengthen the dendrites highlights again the significance of specific focus on memory, repetition, and review during early learning.

Should this lead classical school educators to the conclusion that all instruction in the early years should be geared toward the grammar stage? While emphasis in grammar is critical for brain development, brain research supports the need for educators of young students to also provide learning activities that are commonly applied in the dialectic stage. As the brain accumulates knowledge, experiences, and information it stores that information in short-term memory. After a period of time if that stored information has not been used in any meaningful way through application, connection with other information, or reasoning then the learner is unable to access that memory. Information that has been used will move into long-term memory and more permanent storage. This supports the need for learning to start with the grammar of a subject area and then move into the dialectic where students are reasoning, problem solving, wrestling with ideas, challenging, considering, and resolving. The most powerful brain activity is happening when the brain has prior knowledge through memorization or experience, reviews that information to strengthen the dendrites and then makes connection through pathways in the brain that require the learner to apply information to new situations, to reason, and to problem solve.

This leads to some recommendations for teachers as they seek to apply brain research to lesson planning and instruction. When approaching content, teachers should begin by helping students acquire new information, knowledge, or skills in an enriched classroom environment. Next, review information through repetition and practice, thereby growing new dendrites and strengthening pathways. Then provide opportunities for the students to apply that information through reasoning, problem solving, wrestling with ideas, and application, which moves the knowledge into permanent memory storage. While this is a very simplified outline of the learning process, it can provide a framework for structuring the approach in a classroom.

Experts in the brain research field advise educators to study brain development in order to have a better understanding of the learners in the classroom and how the teacher may alter the brain by providing an enriched environment. However, neuroscientists caution educators to avoid jumping to quick conclusions and fad approaches, but rather to combine what we know about the brain with what educators know through tested teaching methods. The classical approach is a tested method that has produced many of the world's most influential scientists, philosophers, and leaders. It is fascinating to see how the findings in brain research support this approach.

ENDNOTES

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Memorization—A Valid Teaching Tool

By Pamela E. McKey

What forty-year-old American's mind is not inundated with childhood memories of past theme songs from situational comedies, prose from nursery rhymes and verse taught to them by their mothers or Sunday school teachers? Why can one easily quote nursery rhymes learned years ago yet cannot remember that which was newsworthy only a few weeks prior? These and other questions have been asked for years, the researchers seeking answers to how and why humans memorize. Several years back I conducted a study to investigate the memorization techniques used in many classical schools and to identify the benefits or weaknesses of these techniques. My goal was to determine if memorization in the forms of songs, chants, and recitations is an effective teaching tool.

History

The earliest mention of memory in ancient literature tells of Egyptians performing brain operations in an attempt to locate the human memory. Many ancient beliefs about memory were surprisingly accurate. The Chinese believed the center of memory was in the heart, thus our expression that we learned something "by heart." Even the great Greek scientist and philosopher, Aristotle, was concerned about and researched the nature of memory. Only in the last two centuries have researchers within the psychological and medical fields developed reliable theories on memory. A nineteenth-century German scientist named Hermann Ebbinghaus[1] (1850-1909) was the first to address memory from a scientific point of view. He questioned how much we could remember, how fast we acquire it, and how long we can keep it. Many researchers since then have conducted psychological studies of memory but with disappointing conclusions. Empirical generalizations have been established, but for the most part, they provide very little insight to inform practical use in the realm of education. Many studies have been conducted and innumerable hours of research have been invested to seek insight into memory. Most deal with the development of memory in the very young child or the loss of memory in the aged. Hardly any research has been conducted with young elementary aged children and the effects of repetition on their long-term memory, yet most books and articles on memory mention children's great ability to memorize. Parents are constantly amazed at the amount of information their young children retain and are able to recite.

Why Not Teach "With The Grain?"

Why is this tremendous aptness all but ignored by modern educators and, in most cases, ostracized from the classrooms of public education? Rote memory and memorization techniques in general have been ridiculed and all but abandoned over the past four decades. Is it only chance that this coincides with the serious academic problems in American schools? Working as the head of school and leading and promoting our memory period in a classical setting required answers to my many questions. Is memorization, in fact, a viable teaching tool for today's classroom? How much do children retain of the information gained in songs, chants, and recitations? Is this information transferred into children's long-term memories and readily retrievable? Is there a difference in male and female children's ability to retrieve information learned in a memory class? At what age or grade level is the implementation of a memory period most beneficial? I set out to answer these and other pertinent questions.

Recitation was described by an 1830s principal as "the life blood of the public school system.". . . Both recitation and memorization were viewed as primary tools of learning.

Theories

There are many theories as to how humans memorize. Memory is described as the mental faculties associated with storing past

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experiences and recalling them at will. Most research is concerned with two types of memory: short-term memory and long-term memory. Short-term memory is just as it appears, memories that last only a short period of time such as remembering what one ate for breakfast or wore to work the previous day. Experts disagree as to exactly how long short-term memory lasts. Some suggest only a couple of days while others ascribe a certain number of items. The number seven seems to be agreeable to most researchers as the number of items of information stored in short-term memory, thus our seven-digit phone numbers. All research agrees that short-term memory can become long-term memory. Scientists have termed short-term memory as "primary" and long-term memory as "secondary" memory. They found that when information in the primary memory is rehearsed, it is transferred into the secondary memory and stored. This occurs when memories are "filed" away in our brains and are available for retrieval. No one has been able to identify exactly when this occurs but for the sake of my study, I considered short-term memory as information retrievable from one to thirty days. After this length of time, memories retained were assumed to have been transferred into long-term memory. Long-term memory is thought to be infinite in capacity and the duration is seemingly an endless number of years but studies disagree on this point. Some people think long-term memory has to be emptied periodically to make room for more information. Others believe that people learn and remember new things all their lives. Some studies seem to show that memory can fade while others show that it is only covered over by other related material and has the potential of retrieval. Some memory is defined as "potential recall" or the ability to retain or hold a memory. Retention is taking all the millions of bits of information learned daily and placing parts of it into long-term memory, making it possible to retrieve. Retrieval can be either voluntary or involuntary.

We Had A Good Start!

In the early 1800s the first public school opened in Baltimore. Concert or "simultaneous recitation" was practiced and remained in vogue throughout the 1800s. Recitation was described by an 1830s principal as "the life blood of the public school system." This pedagogical approach involved all students of varying ages and advancements in recitation at the same time. Both recitation and memorization were viewed as primary tools of learning. One principal reported that "while stumbling along without fully understanding, a younger student mimicked older ones, and through repetitious recitation, gradually was able to count off upon his fingers, a thousand distinct principles, and facts, and rules, and definitions, that he had learned." With the demise of school programs, such as this one in Baltimore, came the more traditional classroom and the subsequent demise of recitation and memorization as a teaching tool.

Less than one hundred years later, classical educator Douglas Wilson[2] reported in 1991 of the National Commission on Excellence in Education's report that the schooling of the average student is barely adequate and that one out of every seven seventeen-year-olds in the United States is functionally illiterate. Wilson also promoted memorization and recitation as an important tool of learning, especially during the grammar years. He pointed out that between the third and sixth grades children love to memorize since the accumulation of facts come easily to children of this age. When teaching facts and foreign languages to children, Dorothy Sayers[3] recommended repetition and memorization at this elementary school age "when inflected speech seems no more astonishing than any other phenomenon in an astonishing world; and when the chanting of 'amo, amas, amant' is as ritually agreeable to the feelings as the chanting of 'eeny, meeny, miney, mo'." She identified the elementary stage as being the one in which learning by heart is easy, pleasurable, and even relished. At this age, children readily memorize, recite, chant, and simply enjoy the accumulation of facts.[4]

Research Supports

Research also shows that the working capacity of memory in children is much greater than in adults and also suggests that there is a limited amount of storage in the brain and that children, by reason of age, have more capacity for storing greater amounts of information than adults. Children evince this ability daily when they quote a conversation, recite verbatim a poem, or cite an extensive passage from a play. The saying "practice makes perfect" illustrates the accepted fact that repetition is crucial for learning. When Ebbinghaus carried out systematic experiments on learning and memory, he showed that the retention of information consistently improved as a function of the number of times that

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information had been studied. He also found that memory retention was greater when information was repeated in the same location and early in the morning. When these important facts are acknowledged, steps should be taken to initiate a return to recitation and memorization in the classroom.

Part of the classical methodology is to include a "memory class" in the regular school day. This class is usually designed for second through sixth graders and is conducted in a large common area such as a gymnasium or auditorium, according to the number of students. There is one leader, usually the principal or head master/mistress of the school. The class is held first thing every school morning for twenty minutes. The leader, with the use of an overhead projector, projects words of songs, chants, and any number of recitations onto a large wall or screen in full view of all the students. Taped music is used to accompany the songs. The leader leads the students in singing, chanting, or reciting. This is a fast-paced, energetic morning exercise that most students of this age enjoy. Leaders attempt to keep it interesting by applying hand motions or clapping rhythms to simple lists of facts. There may be competitions between male and female or grade levels.

The Survey

The students selected for this study were elementary school children that were between first and sixth grades and were being educated in classical schools. When testing student retention, the students were questioned on information learned from songs, chants, and recitations. Songs included any information set to music. Chants were defined as information set to rhythm, usually involving a series of handclaps and foot stomping. Recitations were poems, verse, or other body of words such as the "Lord's Prayer" or Longfellow's "Paul Revere's Ride."

Eighty-nine students participated. Thirty were enrolled at Evangel Classical Christian School and fifty-nine were from Oak Mountain Classical School. Fifty-six percent (50) were male and forty-four percent (39) were female. Their ages ranged from 8-13 with the mean age of 10.5. The group included twenty-four 3rd graders, twenty-one 4th graders, nineteen 5th graders, fourteen 6th graders and eleven 7th graders. They were selected because they were all students that attended the twenty-minute memory class for a period of twenty weeks during the 2000-2001 school year. Achievement levels were not considered for this study, only participation.

A one-page questionnaire was designed and entitled "Memory Questions" and consisted of thirty questions. The first ten questions related to songs learned during the memory class. The second ten questioned their retention of chants and the final ten measured the retention of materials recited in the class. These categorical divisions were not indicated on the test, so students were not prompted in any fashion. The instrument was administered to all students on the same day. Students had no prior knowledge that a test would be given, therefore the students did no studying. The instrument was administered during the first week of the new school year and prior to the beginning of a new memory class. No review of previous information was given. It is possible that some students may have experienced impromptu rehearsal during the summer months, but certainly, there was no formal or group recitation throughout the summer months. This provided a three-month period of time to pass between the time the previous school year's memory class was held and the test. This time lapse served to measure retention of information learned in the class. All correct information was believed to have been placed into the student's long-term memory at this point in time.

Results

Scores reveal that students retain a greater amount of information that is memorized in the form of songs. Seventy percent of the questions pertaining to songs were answered correctly. Fifty-six percent of the information learned by chants was retained and forty-one percent of material from recitations. The results showed that there is no substantial difference in childhood ability to memorize between male and female but there appears to be an increased ability for retention beginning in fourth grade and continuing through sixth grade, and a marked decline occurred with the advent of the seventh grade. This data supports Wilson's and Sayers's opinion that recitation is beneficial and enjoyable among elementary aged children but has a pointed decline as they near the junior high years. This data serves to inform parents and educators of the prime "window of opportunity" in which to employ these methods.

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The Scaffolding of Monuments: Teaching English Grammar

by Tammy Peters

Recently my third graders at Mars Hill Academy shared with an Open House audience how to analyze a sentence. First we chanted the "Eight Parts of Speech," followed by a rousing chorus defining adjectives and adverbs. We recited 49 prepositions. The viewers smiled approvingly. Then the real fun began. In unison, we identified the principal elements and all the subordinate elements in a sentence. I drew the modifier lines on a whiteboard while the class explained the relationships between the words. At the end, we diagrammed the sentence to show a visual representation of the internal structure. The audience stared in disbelief. Hands slowly lifted in the air. "How did you ever discover this method?" "Why teach English grammar in this manner?"

So why teach English grammar in this way? It reinforces Dorothy Sayers' view of the grammar stage (ages 9-11) as being focused on language.

Nine years ago, we as a young classical Christian school began to wrestle with how to teach English grammar using the Socratic method of questioning. At that time, our program had the students identify parts of a sentence through parsing. But as the children progressed up the academic ladder, we found that they never really understood the relationships of words within the sentence. There seemed to be a disconnect between identifying all its parts and understanding why a sentence behaved as it did. It fell short of our expectations. We began to search for a better way.

Our search led us to Thomas W. Harvey. This 19th century grammarian incorporated the correct standard and usage within his lessons by building on concepts. He started with the principal elements and slowly added subordinate elements (adverbs and adjectives). Introducing his readers to a concept, he instructed them to identify an element within a sentence, and then directed them to explain why it behaved as it did. For example:

"Iron is heavy."

"This is a *sentence*; it is a group of words making complete sense: *declarative*; it states a fact. **Iron** is the *subject*; it is that of which something is affirmed: **heavy** is the *predicate*; it is that which is affirmed of the subject; **is** is the copula; it joins the predicate to the subject."[1]

Harvey built on existing knowledge. In the second example, he provides only the new analysis for the reader to learn or memorize while the explanations of previous lessons need to be recited by memory.

"Scholars learn lessons."

"This is a *sentence*; (why?): *declarative*; (why?). **Scholars** is the *subject*; (why?): **learn** is the *predicate*; (why?). "Learn" is modified by **lessons**, an *objective element*."[2]

Using what we gained from Harvey's *Grammar*, we began to design our own program with our own grammar definitions and analysis. We use three main components to frame our lessons: grammar terminology, choral analysis, and diagramming.

Grammar terminology

To learn the language of grammar, we sing or chant the definitions. Singing definitions provides the memory pegs of learning. This reinforces our classical method of teaching younger children. First, we focus on the building blocks of our language, the eight parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions, interjections). Second, we focus on the mortar to create complete thoughts, the principal elements (subject and predicates) and the subordinate elements (modifiers, phrases, and clauses). We use "Grammar School Grammar," a music CD.[3]

Choral analysis

To learn the structure of a sentence, we analyze as a whole class. As with Harvey, we analyze a sentence element by element, though we added a marking system to identify each part while we analyze. For example:

S	lv	PA
Iron	**is**	**heavy.**

This sentence is about *iron*. So, *iron* is the **subject** (S) because it

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is what the sentence is about. This sentence tells us that iron is *heavy*. So, *heavy* is the **predicate** because it is what the sentence tells us about iron. It is a **predicate adjective** (PA) because it tells a quality of the subject. Is is the **linking verb** because it joins the subject to the predicate.

Once the students understand simple sentences identifying the subject and the predicates (predicate verb, predicate nominative, predicate adjectives) plus the prepositional phrases, they are ready to handle complex sentences with clauses (relative clauses, adverbial clauses, noun clauses).

Diagramming

To learn the relationship of principal elements with the subordinate elements, we use the Reed and Kellogg method of diagramming.[4] Its main goal is to visualize the relationship of subordinate elements to principal elements.

So why teach English grammar in this way? It reinforces Dorothy Sayers' view of the grammar stage (ages 9-11) as being focused on language. Children at this age possess a God-given ability to memorize large amounts of materials, which then become the scaffolding for building the dialectic (ages 12-14) and rhetoric (ages 14-16) stages that follow. The singing of grammar definitions and choral analysis provide the framework where further learning takes place.

At the close of our Open House, I related a story of a few years ago when my husband and I took our kids to Washington, D.C., to see the sites. I personally wanted to visit the Washington Monument. This marble sentinel lays claim to being the largest masonry building in the world, and I couldn't wait to see it. Yet alas, the monument wore a shroud of scaffolding, which surrounded the grand masterpiece and obscured it. Though impressive, it wasn't what I desired to see.

I warned the audience of the danger of focusing on the scaffolding and missing its reason for being there. While visitors are often impressed by our students' ability to analyze sentences, I explained that its purpose is twofold: (1) to provide the structure to better understand their own language, and (2) to provide the wherewithal to construct monuments of thought through their writing and speaking. Each stage of learning reinforces and shapes the next. When these grammar years are successful, its lasting reward is our childrens' ability to communicate about God's world and His truth using His precious gift of language.

Note: For more information about the "Grammar School Grammar" music CD used at MHA contact Tammy Peters at htpeters@fuse.net or (513) 777-1167.

ENDNOTES

1. Thomas W. Harvey, *Harvey's Elementary Grammar and Composition* (New York: American Book Company, 1880), 21.

2. *Harvey*, 26.

3. Tammy Peters, *Grammar School Grammar*, 2004. (Music CD)

4. Alonzo Reed and Brainerd Kellogg, *Graded Lessons in English: An Elementary English Grammar* (New York: Effingham Maynard & Co., 1890).

Memorization...

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Conclusion

The data results show a very high percentage of retention (70%) from songs learned during the class as compared to only 40% from recitations. Students also retained 56% from chants. So where should parents and educators spend much of their time? Teach factual information in songs, chants, and jingles throughout the elementary years!

The survey revealed clearly that elementary aged students, especially during second through fifth grades, benefit from a memory class and retain much of the information presented. At ECCS we will continue our memory class and use these times, and research-proven methodologies to teach with the grain of our students.

(This article contains excerpts from Mrs. McKee's research. You may request a copy of the paper in its entirety, including graphs and other references, by e-mail at pammckee@aol.com.)

ENDNOTES

1. Hermann Ebbinghaus, *Memory: A Contribution to Experimental Psychology* (New York: Dover, 1964).

2. Douglas Wilson, *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning: An Approach to Distinctively Christian Education* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 14.

3. Dorothy Sayers, "The Lost Tools of Learning" (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 1990).

4. Wilson, 1991, 155.

Developing a Literacy, Legacy, and Worldview Using Bible Reading, Psalms, and Proverbs

by Brent Harken

One concern many have expressed to me is that they see students more affected by modern American pop culture than by the Scriptures and their position in God's kingdom. I believe this trend can be reversed as schools seek to biblically educate students. The question is how?

It is important that classical Christian schools give careful consideration to the way in which they use the Word of God in their schools—especially in the elementary years. Classical Christian schools know the importance of implementing Scripture in our schools, but have we drifted from what have been our historic roots? Important pillars of a historic biblical education were the following: (1) learning and singing the Psalms, (2) knowing and studying the Proverbs, and (3) the public reading of Scripture. These were central to Hebraic-Christian education in the past. The purpose of this article is to take a fresh look at the curriculum and pedagogy for Bible memorization and Scripture reading in the elementary years.

First, it is important to ask many foundational and reflective questions to shake our paradigm for why we do what we do regarding the Scriptures such as: does singing implant the Word of God in us in a unique and beneficial way? Why is there a hymn book in the middle of the Bible and what are we to make of it today? What are the purposes and benefits derived from singing God's thoughts back to Him? What are the purposes and benefits derived in the memorization of the Proverbs? How are we to educate students to know and love the Word of God, as well as understand and apply it accurately? We live in exciting times and modern classical Christian education is in its infancy. We are just beginning to ask and unfold answers to these and many other questions.

> *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, . . .*
> *II Timothy 3:16*

Classical Christian schools should attempt to ask and answer many of the questions above and develop a solid classical Christian education where the Scriptures are paramount. Schools should implement a number of important items that together build a solid base of biblical literacy and application such as singing psalms corporately as a school Monday mornings and in individual classes throughout the week, memorizing the book of Proverbs beginning in first grade and culminating in twelfth, publicly reading the Scriptures twice a day, teaching through the Bible twice and developing tools for more advanced Bible study in dialectic and rhetoric classes, and orienting the school calendar around the historic Church calendar.

The goal is to create an environment where God's Word is revered, taught, and lived—creating a culture intentional in building a liturgy of life and a legacy of faithfulness.

This begins in the elementary by memorizing the psalms and proverbs through singing, chants, and sound offs. Schools should utilize the public reading of the Scriptures in the morning and afternoon. Also, teachers should use the pedagogical tools of the sound off, catechism, singing, chanting and memorization of other Scripture, creeds, and works to infuse a Christian paideia. In conclusion, let me briefly attempt to defend why three of the items listed above are very beneficial.

Why sing psalms? We sing for three primary reasons. First, it is commanded in the New Testament that we speak and sing psalms (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Secondly, the Psalms have three beneficial interpretative paradigms: they reveal the life, prayers, thinking and promises of that day; they provide valuable patterns, teachings and prayers for our life of faith. Singing psalms enhances and develops worshipers. Lastly, all the psalms are all about Jesus and unfold the messianic promise in vivid detail. The singing of the psalms provides many blessings!

Why memorize the book of Proverbs? The Scripture has provided many tools to assist the believer to live the sanctified life. Some are designed for specific

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LATIN PRIMER | BOOK 1

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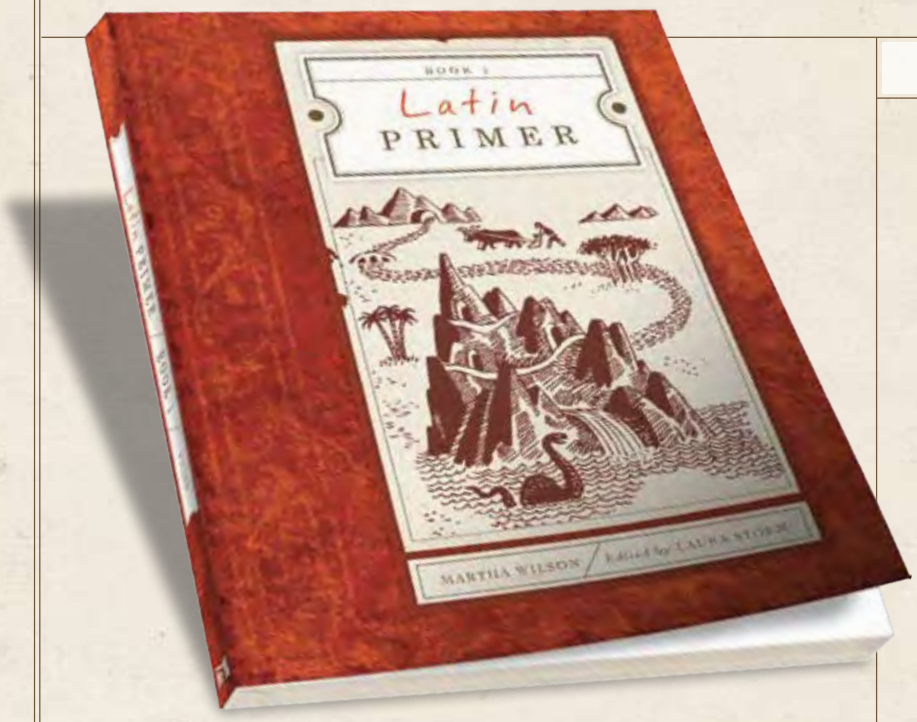

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Bible Reading, Psalms, and Proverbs...

functions for the people of God. Just as the book of Psalms is the Bible's hymnal, the book of Proverbs is the Bible's catechism. Proverbs 1:2-5 states its purposes: (1) attaining wisdom and discipline; (2) gaining understanding; (3) acquiring a disciplined and prudent life; (4) providing a life that is right, just and fair; (5) giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young; (6) adding to learning, and (7) providing discernment and guidance to understand parables, proverbs, sayings, and wisdom. Proverbs is filled with succinct, pithy truths that are applicable to every area and situation of life. They contrast wisdom with folly, painting clear and indelible images that flash into our minds as we encounter nearly every situation. They direct our moral choices like a keel on a ship. They set the road map for clearly distinguishing the causes and effects of choices, and direct one to the way of life.

Why publicly read the Scriptures twice a day? We read for a number of reasons. It "makes one wise for salvation" (2 Tim. 3:15). It provides knowledge of the biblical characters, themes, stories, teachings, and plotline. It's the avenue of faith—"faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17). It develops foundational tools for faithful living that will be accessed later in the child's education.

The above uses of Scripture are a blessing and may be of use for Christian educators to more effectively utilize the Word of God in their schools. There are many ways a school can work toward developing a biblical mindset such as chapels, devotional Bible reading, curriculum, and a solid scope and sequence. I have found Bible reading, psalm singing, and the memorization of Proverbs of particular benefit in developing a literacy, legacy, and worldview in both schools and students.

Loving Discipline:
Suggestions for a Well-Managed Classroom

by Kimberly Grimes

"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it" (Proverbs 22:6, NIV). This is a proverb we hear often. It is one of those famous Bible verses we grow up hearing even before we are adults, teachers, and parents. But how do we train a child in the way he or she should go? What is our part in God's promise that our children will not stray from God's ways? Scripture is filled with stories, commands, and proverbs stating the importance of loving discipline (Proverbs 12:1), respecting commands (Proverbs 13:13), and accepting instruction (Proverbs 19:20). The greatest commandment, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and love your neighbor as yourself, is based on a commandment of obedience. Every commandment written throughout Scripture is based upon the authority of God, meaning our obedience to Him is foundational in our Christian faith. As teachers and parents, training our children in His ways is a responsibility given to us by God. This is a high calling, and one that seems daunting at times. Directing a child to love discipline and accept instruction with a desire to obey is an achievable goal. How can it be accomplished in the classroom? How do we manage a room full of children with different backgrounds, home lives, personalities, and needs? The answer is to expect obedience, instruct clearly, and ask for God's grace and wisdom.

> *"Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid" (Proverbs 12:1).*

As a fourth grade teacher, it often feels as if hundreds of things are pummeling me at once: students asking questions, papers being passed to and fro, parents' questions and concerns, and meetings to attend. Somewhere in the midst of the chaos I am required to teach my students to love knowledge and heed correction. How does it all get accomplished? Outlined below are suggestions that have helped me succeed in managing my classroom and students. These steps have alleviated discipline issues and enabled my students to love obedience and discipline.

Expect children to obey.

Children will meet the expectations you set for them. If you say something, but do not expect them to obey it, they will learn that they need not obey. If you expect them to obey always, with a good attitude, then they will rise to the occasion. However, your actions must follow your words. When you say, "Stop, look, and listen," expect your students to do exactly what you said. Do not give instructions or go onto the next task until everyone has stopped, looked, and is listening. High expectations will allow children to gain the knowledge and discipline God requires.

Do not give instructions unless you have 100% attention and participation.

When giving instructions to students, do not speak unless all students are attentive to your instructions. If you are in the midst of a sentence, and one student begins talking or doing another task, stop mid-sentence. This immediately gets the attention of the whole class. They need to know you will not continue until all eyes and ears are focused on you. As soon as all students are listening, continue with the directions. The lack of focus of one child in your classroom should not be acceptable. One hundred percent of students' attention leads to 100% of students who learn.

Give clear instructions in multiple ways.

When explaining instructions to your class, express them verbally and then ask students to repeat what you said. As they restate your instructions, write the list of tasks on the board for students to refer to as they follow your instructions. Modeling a task while explaining it is also a great tool that will enable students to fully understand your instructions. As you state each step of the instructions, show students what it would look like to obey each step. Always choose at least two ways in which the instructions are given: verbally, through modeling, or in written form.

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Loving Discipline...

Have a quiet signal.

A quiet signal is a tool which allows you to gain the attention of all your students at any time. Whether they are in the midst of an active project or are quietly writing a composition, the quiet signal is a signal you give students to which they respond. For example, the most useful signal for me is raised hands. When I raise my hand in the air, my students mimic me by raising their hands and looking at me. After instruction and practice at the beginning of the year, my students know that just raising their hands and continuing with their tasks is not the quiet signal. They must raise their hands, stop, look, and listen. This takes time and energy at the beginning of the year, but is worth the effort as the year progresses. There are many signals you can use aside from raised hands: turn the lights out, say "stop, look, listen," or use "ostrich." ("Ostrich" is a technique in which the teacher says "ostrich" and all students put their heads on their desks, just like ostriches put their heads in the ground.) Whatever signal you use, make sure you teach students the signal ahead of time and practice using it often. Expect all students to follow the signal and don't go on with instructions until you have 100% of the students' attention. When you really need the children's attention, the quiet signal will work like a charm!

Obtain organizational tools.

Learn, create, and use organizational tools and systems that keep you and your students well managed. Post the schedule on the board each day. Have a "turn-in" box for student work. Give students weekly jobs they are responsible for throughout the week. There are many useful tools that will keep your classroom organized and running smoothly. I have found that placing students in groups of four keeps my classroom functioning well. Within these groups I use a system known as "numbered heads." Numbered heads is a strategy in which each student in the group has an assigned number: 1, 2, 3, or 4. When I need papers turned in or collected, I ask one of the "numbers" to collect the papers for their group and turn them in to the turn-in box. This works well since only five or six students go to the box instead of 20 or 30 at a time. Any tool that helps your classroom run smoothly and efficiently will benefit your students' learning experience.

Implementing these suggestions all at once can be overwhelming. Start small and give yourself time to form patterns using these ideas. Focus on one step for one week and see how it goes. As you become more comfortable, apply another tool. This will create success and habit-forming behaviors. Don't expect to use all these suggestions at once and become the perfect classroom manager. Forming teaching habits takes practice. Also, be patient with your students. Take time to stop and require their attention, and don't be in a hurry to get through the lesson. Taking time to establish high expectations now will save time in the future. Although it may feel like everything is taking a long time to accomplish, it will be worth it!

The Bible is very clear when examining obedience and discipline, "Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid" (Proverbs 12:1, NIV). As educators our goal is to instill knowledge, not stupidity. Obedient students create more learning opportunities in the classroom. By eliminating discipline issues with good classroom management, more attention can be given to the education we desire to provide. Children desire boundaries by which to function and work. They want to please and obey, and we must give them a classroom environment conducive to accomplishing those goals. One of my fourth graders said it best when he told his mother, "My teacher is very strict, but it's a good thing." Let us show God's love to our students by requiring obedience and cultivating discipline.

ACCS Statement on History and Protestant Education

ACCS Position Paper
Approved June 5, 2002

As an association of classical and Christian educators, we are dedicated to the supremacy and sufficiency of the Scriptures for all of life. In the nature of the case, this is not something that can be limited to the classroom, but must also pervade everything that we do—whether as individuals, administrators, teachers, or as national board members of ACCS. And this means, in its turn, that as an association we have to "come down" on certain issues. The Scriptures teach us that neutrality is an impossibility (2 Cor. 2:1-5).

Therefore, genuine Christian education has specific and defined boundaries. ACCS maintains this unpopular truth in an era dominated by cultural relativism, and so this means we must reject the pressure put on us to adopt a relativistic or postmodern "big tent" approach. As classical educators, we do participate in the "great conversation" noted by Mortimer Adler, but as Christian educators we do so with a definite point of view. In that conversation we have something to maintain, which is the lordship of Jesus Christ over every aspect of life. This means that we are willing to be specific.

And so in this vein, as Christians, we reject the follies of ancient paganism, while seeking to appreciate what God gave them through common grace. As classical Protestants we affirm that the Protestant Reformation was a glorious recovery of the truth of the gospel, and was not an unfortunate mistake. As medievalists, we affirm that the soul-destroying Enlightenment was an unfortunate mistake. As private educators, we affirm that the growth of government education in America cannot be understood apart from the war and its aftermath that established a centralized state in our nation. And, as classical educators, we welcome the input of classical educators from other traditions who differ with us on all these points, and cordially invite them to join with us in civilized debate.

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