

“SINE DOCTRINA VITA EST QUASI MORTIS IMAGO”

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CLASSIS

THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF CLASSICAL & CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

FEBRUARY, 2022

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WHY AMERICAN CHILDREN STOPPED BELIEVING IN GOD

by Cameron Hilditch, National Review Institute

The time has come for religious parents to take their children back from the state.

In a report released earlier this year from the American Enterprise Institute, Lyman Stone tracked the history of religious belief, behavior, and association in the United States since the Founding. It's a magisterial work, and I encourage readers to download the report here¹ and peruse it for themselves.

Stone's research helps us to understand the decline of religious faith in America over the past 60 years. Secularization is, to be sure, a hugely overdetermined development in American history, and just about everyone has a theory about how it's happened and why. Religious conservatives would probably cite the loosening of the country's morals that began in the '60s and '70s. Secular progressives might mutter something about the onward march of "Science" and "Reason" over time. But the data seems to show that the main driver of secularization in the United States has been the acceleration of government spending on education and government control over the curricular content taught in schools.

Here our secular progressive might raise his head again, perhaps feeling a bit smug about this finding. "See!" he says. "Children used to be deprived of

education and the life of the mind! They were stuck in the doldrums of ignorance and squalor before the benevolent hand of the state reached down and lifted them up into the world of literacy and critical thought. All that was needed was a little education to free them from hokey superstitions."

It's a simple theory, befitting the minds of those who have historically espoused it. But it's falsified by the data. Stone cites the seminal work of Raphael Franck and Laurence Iannaccone on this point, who meticulously tracked religious behavior over time in their own work. According to Franck and Iannaccone, "higher educational attainment did not predict lower religiosity: More and less educated people are similarly religious."² Nor did they "find that industrialized, urban life reduces religiosity: A more urban and industrialized population was associated with *greater* religiosity." The link between intellectual progression/modernization and secularization is non-existent. As Stone summarizes:

Theories that religion has declined because urbanization is hostile to religiosity—or because modern, educated people are inherently skeptical of religion—get no support in the actual historic record.

Cameron Hilditch was a 2020–2021 William F. Buckley Fellow in political journalism at National Review Institute. Contact him on Twitter @CameronHilditch. This article was originally published at <https://www.nationalreview.com/2020/12/why-american-children-stopped-believing-in-god/> and is reprinted by permission.

It turns out that religiosity is usually determined very early in life. All the data suggest that, by and large, kids brought up in religious households stay religious and kids who aren't, don't. Consequently, childhood religiosity has been, and remains, the most important indicator of America's religious trajectory. The story of religious decline in America is not the story of adults consciously rejecting the faith of their forefathers: it's the story of each generation receiving a more secular upbringing than the generation preceding it. What accounts for this secularization of childhood over time? Taxpayer dollars.



Childhood religiosity was heavily affected by government spending on education and, to a lesser degree, government spending on old-age pensions. Thus, while more educated people were not less religious, societies that spent more public money on education were less religious. It is not educational attainment per se that reduces religiosity, but government control of education and, to a lesser extent, government support for retirement.

Researchers originally tried to explain the relationship between government control of education and secularization by putting it down to the state's increasing willingness to care for the needs and wants of its citizens in a comprehensive way—a task traditionally carried out by religious institutions. Once people are no longer beholden to a church/synagogue/mosque for their material well-being—or so the theory goes—they see little reason to stay.

But this theory just doesn't account for the data we have. As Stone observes, it's belied by the fact "that the vast majority of declining religiosity can be attributed to changes in educational policy, rather than welfare

generally."

So how do we explain this link between education policy and religious belief given that academic attainment itself isn't a factor? It's quite simple, really. Children learn more at school than reading, writing, and arithmetic. They imbibe a whole set of implied assumptions about what's important in life. By excluding religious instruction from public schools, the government-run education system tacitly teaches students that religious commitments are not a first-order priority in life. Faith in God becomes a sort of optional weekend hobby akin to playing tennis or video games. Christ and Moses are treated by teachers and administrators like weapons or drugs—confiscated upon discovery.

In this way, the hierarchy of values communicated both explicitly and implicitly to students in American high schools excludes religious claims from the outset. College, career, and popularity become the existential targets toward which the arrow of each student's soul is aimed by bow-wielding commissars across the country. In a context such as this, secularization becomes ineluctable. The New Testament itself says that religious belief is shaped more by the places we look for praise and validation than by naked ratiocinations: "How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another, and you're not looking for the glory which comes from the

one and only God?” (John 5:44). But the secular public high school dispenses validation and praise according to different criteria than any of the major faiths. This is why government control of education has resulted in religious decline. As Stone writes:

. . . the content of education matters. Evidence that education reduces religiosity is fairly weak: American religiosity rose considerably from 1800 until the 1970s, despite rapidly rising educational attainment. But the evidence that specifically secular education might reduce religiosity is more compelling. Indeed, statistically, most researchers who have explored long-run change in religiosity find that education-related variables, which I have argued are a proxy for secular education, can explain nearly the totality of change in religiosity.

That last point bears repeating. Most researchers have found that “education-related variables . . . can explain nearly the totality of change in religiosity.” For religious conservatives who care about the fate of American culture, it cannot be emphasized enough that education is the whole ball game. All other policy areas amount to little more than tinkering around the edges. How we got to a place where this is the case is a sad story in and of itself (and one that I told in part here).² Nevertheless, it remains the case that public schools often are not a smooth fit for conservative families, especially religious ones. Even worse than that, we can now see signs that the ideology imposed upon government-educated children is changing. What used to be the state-imposed orthodoxy of benign agnosticism is being replaced by a full-blown intersectional pseudo-religion with its own priests, prophets, saints, and martyrs.

The time has come for religious parents to take their children back from the state. It simply will not do anymore for faithful Americans to drop their sons and daughters off at the curbside every morning for the government to collect as if they were taking out the

trash. As I’ve written before,⁴ a broader reconsideration of public schooling will not be cheap. It will require, among other things, the establishment of charitable private education co-operatives if we’re to heed the dictates of the world’s great faiths by keeping the interests of the poor at the forefront of our minds. But the only real road to religious revival is the one that begins with each parent’s first step out of the public school’s doors.

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2. Franck, Raphael and Laurence R. Iannaccone. 2014. “Religious Decline in the 20th Century West: Testing Alternative Explanations.” *Public Choice* 159 (3-4):385-414.
3. <https://www.nationalreview.com/2020/11/classroom-busybodies-ban-a-jesus-loves-me-mask/>
4. <https://www.nationalreview.com/2020/09/case-for-private-education-co-operatives/>

WHY WORRY ABOUT WORLDVIEW?

by Katherine Schultz, Schaeffer Academy



Of all that goes into building a classical Christian school, one thing that sometimes is overlooked is a deliberate plan for developing a Christian worldview in the students. Perhaps it has just gone out of fashion in Christian schools. Perhaps it is because grammar, logic, and rhetoric can be explained and implemented by apprentice-level teachers. Perhaps it is because the requirement that all teachers be Christians makes it seem redundant. Perhaps it is because it is difficult to measure success. Perhaps there is just not enough time in the school day. Perhaps teachers don't really know what it is themselves. Perhaps it is time to revisit the idea.

For those new to classical Christian education, there is the excitement of being in a Christian school, combined with being overwhelmed learning the new things with daily urgency. For those who have been involved in classical Christian education for a longer time, there is probably some sense that this education should help students develop a Christian worldview. The mission of

ACCS shows it is central: "ACCS is organized to promote, establish, and equip member schools that are committed to a classical approach in the light of a Christian worldview,"¹ and ACCS accreditation requires schools to "have a well-conceived program committed to a classical approach to education in light of a Christian worldview grounded in the Old and New Testament Scriptures."²

Definition. What if teachers don't really know what a Christian worldview is? James W. Sire says, "A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true, or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being."³ So a worldview is more than a framework of assumptions. In fact, Sire concluded that while a worldview is propositional, it is also deeply entwined with a person's behaviors, and with what Sire called "heart-orientation."⁴ Worldview is, in fact, a 3-dimensional concept that involves beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes.

Christian staff. Maybe if all the teachers are Christians it's redundant. Though ACCS schools hire Christians

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as their teachers, it is not a certainty that those teachers themselves consistently have the knowledge, behavior, nor attitudes of mature Christians. Christian maturity develops over time, and it is important that Christian school teachers are deliberately developing their own understanding of worldview in order to be able to transfer it to their students—which is John Milton Gregory’s first law of teaching.⁵ Several books and other resources are noted at the end of this article.

A tempo. Has worldview teaching just gone out of fashion? In his prologue to Clark and Jain’s *Liberal Arts Tradition*, Peter Kreeft says, “the educational establishment . . . offers at least eight silly objections to [CCE] that are really advertisements for it. . . . [The second says] It’s old, outdated, unfashionable. Yes, it is, like honor, courage, integrity, and honesty. It doesn’t try to tell the truth with a clock; it doesn’t practice chronological snobbery.”⁶ Developing a Christian worldview in students is likewise a critical, longstanding, essential component of a classical Christian education, whether it’s currently “on trend” or not. “According to Pew Research, four in ten Americans between the ages of 23 and 38 now say they are religiously unaffiliated. This is the biggest drop in religiosity between generations ever recorded.”⁷ Only by challenging students to think, behave, and have attitudes of wisdom will students in classical Christian schools have an impact for the long term.

Complexity. At least “grammar, logic, and rhetoric” can be explained and implemented by apprentice-level teachers. Or can they? Clark and Jain argue that an overly simplistic approach that doesn’t address the full development of a child from pre-reading to graduation in all the liberal arts is not truly classical.

Measuring success. Perhaps it is because it is difficult to measure success. According to 2 Corinthians 10:12, “We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.” We want to be wise, so we should consider

using some means of measuring our success. While it is true that no human test can do what only God can do, it does make sense to check our progress in developing a Christian worldview in students in a manner similar to our checking for academic progress with standardized tests, assignments, grades, and interactions with students. A few resources are listed at the end of this article.

Limited time. Perhaps there is just not enough time in the school day. The rigor of a classical Christian education demands full, effective use of the whole school day, but neglecting students’ spiritual development in order to focus on academics is inconsistent with the ACCS mission, and the declared purpose of classical Christian schools individually. Integrating Scripture into all instruction is a starting place, and holding ourselves to deliberate worldview development will also build it in our students. After all, Luke 6:40 reminds us that “everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.”

Think again. Perhaps it is time to revisit the idea. “We now know with even greater clarity the difference parents make, and we can apply that with members of Generation Z. Parents who prioritize church as a central part of their family life, who teach their children to take Christianity seriously, and who encourage them to marry fellow believers, have the best chance of seeing not only their children but also their grandchildren in the pews beside them.”⁸ Classical Christian education that teaches a Christian worldview—beliefs, behaviors and attitudes—will help parents to raise children who love the Lord their God with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength, and love their neighbor as themselves.⁹ It will make disciples of Jesus who love learning, and who know how to speak the truth in love.¹⁰

HELPFUL RESOURCES

1. ACCS Repairing the Ruins Conference, <https://repairingtheruins.org/>
2. ACCS Colleagues, including the Member Resource

Center

3. Christian worldview assessment tools
 - a. 3-D Worldview Survey, <https://3dworldviewsurvey.com/>
 - b. Nehemiah Institute, <https://www.nehemiahinstitute.com/>
 - c. Renew a Nation, <https://www.renewanation.org/viewfinder>
4. Organizations that help develop a Christian worldview
 - a. BreakPoint, <https://breakpoint.org/>
 - b. Colson Center for Christian Worldview, <https://www.colsoncenter.org/>
 - c. Summit Ministries, <https://www.summit.org/>

BOOKS

- a. Kevin Clark & Ravi Jain, *Liberal Arts Tradition: A Philosophy of Christian Education*
- b. Rob Lindemann, *Setting a Sustainable Trajectory: A Pedagogical Theory for Christian Worldview Formation*
- c. David Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept*
- d. David A. Noebel, *Understanding the Times: The Collision of Today's Competing Worldviews*
- e. Nancy R. Pearcey, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity*
- f. James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*
- g. James W. Sire, *Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept*
- h. James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit*
- i. James K. A. Smith and Glen Stassen, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*
- j. Donald S. Whitney, *Ten Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health*
- k. Steve Wilkens & Mark L. Sanford, *Hidden Worldviews: Eight Cultural Stories That Shape Our Lives*

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1. ACCS website, <https://classicalchristian.org/the-mission-of-the-accs/>
2. ACCS Accreditation Handbook, p. 7
3. James W. Sire, *Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept* (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 122.
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5. John Milton Gregory, *The Seven Laws of Teaching* (Veritas Press, 2004).
6. Kevin W. Clark and Ravi S. Jain, *The Liberal Arts Tradition: A Philosophy of Christian Classical Education*, 3rd ed. (Camp Hill, PA: Classical Academic Press, 2021), xv-xvi.
7. John Stonestreet and Shane Morris, "Why Young People Leave the Church, and Why They Stay," *Breakpoint*, Jan 7, 2020, <https://breakpoint.org/why-young-people-leave-the-church/#>
8. Ibid.
9. Matthew 22:36-40
10. Ephesians 4:15

INTEGRATION—THE NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE

by Dell Cook, Sandhills Classical Christian School

“... all knowledge is a kind of rapture prompted by a longing that cannot be exhausted by any finite object.”¹

—David Bentley Hart

“I love to see the light come on.” Thus is the continuing refrain heard in initial interview sessions around the country during the spring months of teacher recruitment. This, the favorite anthem to let the potential employer know the potential teacher’s passion for pouring knowledge into the minds and hearts of students. But is that really the best and proper aim of an education? Is that the point?

EDUCATION IS . . . WHAT?

Any attempt to educate is motivated, implicitly or explicitly, by a vision for the project. And any sort of philosophy of education—what it is and what it is for—will, in the end, settle down basically to this: education is a passing along of a way of life. G.K. Chesterton described it as, “truth in the state of transmission.”² This transmission of truth, this formation of a way of life, comes in a variety of shapes and forms but ultimately coalesces around three main areas of development.

A way of living will first involve a content of some sort. There will be a sense of a set of fundamental, axiomatic truths, either assumed or inferred, that

describe reality. What is all this? How and why is all this? An education will pass along certain truths to be known.

A way of living will also involve a certain set of capacities or abilities. There will be a set of activities that are part and parcel of a way of life that are necessary to inhabit that life. How do I do this? How does this operate or function? An education will pass along certain skills to be practiced.

Finally, a way of living will involve a certain set of values. The activities of a way of living will consistently come under some scrutiny as to whether or not it is good, proper, or right toward an end or purpose that is judged to be good, proper, or right. What is the good? What is the greatest good? How should I behave? An education will pass along a knowledge of and capacity in those values.

This triumvirate of knowledge, skill, and virtue animates the Seven Liberal Arts that lie at the heart of the classical Christian educational tradition. The arts of the free man (grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music) are all grounded in an understanding of the nature of things, a capacity in the



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nature of things, and valuing within the nature of things.

KNOWLEDGE IS . . . WHAT?

The first leg of the stool, knowledge, tends to be the region where pedagogues love to hang out. Breathing the air of the Enlightenment and armed with Nietzsche's dictum, our educational magisterium trace out endless theories, methodologies, and curricula that are various rhapsodies on a theme of "knowledge is power." But Schoolhouse Rock's capturing mantra notwithstanding, this concept doesn't suffice.

Ultimately, for all the theories of knowledge that are bantered about (logical positivism, relativism, ontological realism, post modernism, social constructivism, scientific realism, et al.), it would seem that Genesis captures the nature of knowledge best when we are told that, ". . . Adam knew Eve . . ." (Genesis. 4:1).

Knowledge is an encounter with reality. To know is to come in contact with, to perceive, to conceive, to receive. All of these terms commonly associated with the act of knowing have, at their heart, the notion of grasping, taking hold of, or apprehending. They are an encounter with something or someone other than oneself.

The encounter can be direct and tangible. In a physical, empirical experience through the senses, something can be known perceptually. The encounter can be indirect and abstract. By an act of reasoning through mental acuity, something can be known conceptually. The encounter can be mediated and personal. Through an act of disclosure or testimony from one person to another, something can be known receptively.

For example, the known proposition—"The fire is hot"—can be felt through empirical experience, it can be inferred through rational deduction, or it can be taught through personal testimony.

But regardless of the manner in which the encounter occurs, the knowledge is not mine. It is not inherent to

me. It comes to me from outside of me. I experience the heat of the fire that is other than me. I deduce the heat of the fire through the laws of logic that are not the physio-chemical functioning of my brain. I hear the logical, rational declaration of someone other than me regarding the heat of the fire.

All these avenues of knowledge, be it empirical, rational, or testimonial, occur within the context of receiving something from outside of me. The encounter that is knowledge occurs under the canopy of, on the ground of, and is animated by revelation. Any knowledge that one possesses is a gift of disclosure to us from that which is other than us. This means something significant for how and why we educate.

REVELATION IS . . . WHAT?

A small pet peeve of mine is when the last book of the Bible is called "Revelations." I cringe a little inside every time I hear that final "s" that shouldn't be there. The title of the book is *The Apocalypse* to John, the revelation from God that was given to John, a disclosure of that which was previously unknown. In point of fact, though, there are "Revelations" of a sort. *The Apocalypse* to John is one of two ways that God makes Himself known to man.

In a general, universal sense, God discloses Himself in every niche of reality through all that has been created (Romans 1:19–20) such that all of creation declares His nature and glory (Psalm 19:1–2). Then, in a more specific sense, God verbalizes Himself through the prophets (Hebrews 1:1) and most completely in the person, life, work, and words of Jesus of Nazareth (Hebrews 1:2, John 1:14, Colossians 1:15).

In both instances of general and special revelation, through world and word, God is teaching. He is revealing and unveiling a way of life:

"Day to day pours out speech, and night

to night reveals knowledge” (Psalm 19:2).

“No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known” (John 1:18).

“. . . I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).

The Word of God, in nature and in Scripture is educational. It passes along a way of life. It passes along the way, the truth, and the life through encounter with The Way, The Truth, and The Life.

So, the work of education, if it is to be a genuine thoroughgoing work, must be carried out under the canopy of, on the ground of, and animated by the revelation of God in Scripture. Every subject, every bit of knowledge, every encounter with reality must be integrated with, and into, the Word of God written and the Word of God incarnated.

But how is that done thoroughly and effectively? In

future issues, we’ll look at some tangible and practical ways that all subjects can become a revelatory encounter as they are integrated with God’s special disclosure of himself.

ENDNOTES

1. David Bentley Hart, *The Experience of God* (Yale University Press, 2013), 241.
2. G.K. Chesterton, *What’s Wrong with the World*, (Simon and Brown, 2018).



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ON FUNDRAISING

by Melody Congdon, Cair Paravel Latin School



Have you ever been given an assignment that you neither wanted, nor felt qualified to do? Have you ever argued in despair with the Lord and wished you could run away from the assignment? Have you ever stared into the flames of your own personal burning bush and felt like Moses?

I felt this way in the spring of 2016. The enrollment at our classical Christian school had been steadily increasing for several years and we desperately needed additional classroom space. The board announced plans for a \$1 million capital campaign to fund the addition of a third floor to our existing building. And, since we didn't have a development director, the board announced that I would be responsible for leading the campaign.

I vividly remember leaving that meeting and mumbling to myself, "I can't ask people for money. This isn't a part of my job description. I didn't sign up

for this!"

Our small school had never raised anything close to a million dollars in its 35-year history. Such an audacious ask had never even been considered. A miracle comparable to parting the Red Sea would be required to generate the donations this campaign would require. The dire need for more classroom space was evident, but I was reluctant to put myself out front leading the effort to fund the solution.

I fervently argued with the Lord about this assignment, but kept hearing the plea of Moses in the book of Exodus, "*But Lord, who am I? I don't speak so well! What if they do not believe me or listen to me? Choose Aaron!*"

I remember talking with my husband and going through my long list of objections before he calmly responded, "If you don't do it, who will?" That wasn't what I wanted to hear, but it marked the beginning of a great journey of faith, both for me personally and for the school.

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GETTING STARTED

An outside expert completed a feasibility study and his research indicated that we could raise the money, although it would be beneficial to stretch the donation period over three years. We needed one big donation to kick off the effort. However, as we reviewed previous donations, no one showed signs of having the ability to make the kind of large donation we needed. I was totally discouraged.

I next met with one of the original founding fathers of our school. I shared our need, told him about the project, and asked for his prayers. Without hesitation he said, “let me start you off with your first gift” and he unceremoniously handed me a check for \$100,000. God’s words to Moses, “I will be with you” rang in my ears.

I’d love to tell you that we received more donations of that size, but we didn’t. Instead, there were many small checks along the line of \$500, \$1,000, \$5,000, \$10,000, and one \$25,000 check. People committed to give monthly over the next three years. Within just a few months, the board felt we had collected enough between donations and pledges to begin construction.

I’d love to tell you that the project went smoothly. It did not! There was an additional \$100,000 needed to add a second elevator because our present elevator was six

inches shy of meeting building codes. The contractors discovered that the original building was missing (read that—MISSING!) a major structural beam that now had to be installed for another \$100,000 to bring everything up to code. I dreaded answering my phone during the summer of 2017 as each call seemed to announce another challenge with an expensive solution.

The completed project eventually cost \$1.9 million, almost twice what we had originally planned. Yet the donations kept coming. None were as large as the first check from our founding father, but we were constantly reminded of God’s faithfulness. We collected 99.8% of the three-year pledges and the project was completed without the school acquiring any debt.

I share my story to encourage leaders of small schools who face similar tasks that appear formidable. I have walked in your shoes, felt your panic, and suffered your painful setbacks. I also experienced pure joy when the ceremonial ribbon was cut in the fall of 2017, and excited students spilled into those fresh new classrooms.

I can confidently tell you that God isn’t constrained by traditional methods of flashy fund raising! He is faithful and can move mountains. In our case, He used a small-minded head of school and a team of dedicated volunteers to show that He still leads his people through adversity and into the promised lands.

LEADING TEACHER TRAINING FROM THE BACK OF THE ROOM

by Bryan Lynch, Veritas School



One of the chief responsibilities of the school administration—perhaps second only to ensuring overall fidelity to the mission of the school—is the training

and development of teachers. It is the teachers who must carry out the mission every day in their classrooms, so they need to be equipped with a clear understanding of the philosophy of classical Christian education, the curriculum they are teaching, the students in their classrooms, and the tools of effectively teaching that curriculum to those students.

Helping teachers grow in their classroom practice is an indispensable role of the administrator. Teachers in classical Christian schools are generally readers and learners, and will typically grow in their chosen art, though at different rates and in different areas, and they will tend to gravitate toward those areas that most interest them. Some will be drawn to philosophical books, old and new, others to methods gleaned at a conference. These are all good and necessary. But for the school to carry out its mission the faculty as a whole will need to develop certain understandings, common assumptions, habits, and even

vocabulary about excellent classroom teaching. It will be up to the administrator to see that these are learned and consistently applied. It is a task that is never finished, but it is critical.

Too often, however, this training is neglected, and even when done it may be through methods we would discourage our teachers from using—lectures, “discussion” involving just a few people, and other largely passive means. Instead, administrators should design training time so that teachers actively participate, not only for their benefit, but also to model the kind of engaged teaching that should be the norm in teachers’ classrooms. Administrators rightly expect teachers to have their students actively engaged in their learning—teacher training should model this.

Administrators need to think about how to lead teacher training from the “back of the room”—that is, designing faculty meetings and other teacher training times to provide opportunities for (that is, require) teachers to be fully engaged in the learning, to actually do most of the thinking and talking. Administrators must move teachers from passive spectators to fully active participants in their learning.

In order to make a lasting impact on teachers’ thinking and classroom practice, training should engage teachers in the thinking and activity, be a frequent and regular element of faculty meetings, and be as realistic as possible. The goal

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is to establish a faculty cultural norm with the expectation that all teachers will be constantly learning to improve their understanding of classical Christian education, as well as their classroom practice.

ENGAGING

Teacher training will often have a classroom aspect. Books like *The Seven Laws of Teaching* deserve to be read and re-read by teachers and discussed by faculties. Other books and articles on teaching, school culture, and the philosophy of classical Christian education in general are worthy of our time and attention as an element of training.

But it is critical that administrators make this discussion time as engaging as possible. The work of thinking and even presenting information should be shifted to teachers as much as possible, in small groups or individually. Administrators need to resist the temptation to lecture or make presentations, and instead have teachers fully engaged. Here are just a few ideas:

- Small group work and presentation
- Use of sticky notes—with small groups, revise with full group
- Discussion centers
- Graphic organizers
- Group chart creation and presentation (curated discussion)
- Fill-in blanks for prediction and/or review
- Card carousel—using 3x5 cards with quotations or ideas, circulate and add to, then discuss
- “Exit Pass” with personal application
- Analysis of classroom video using observation form
- Role-plays (see below)

- Scenario discussion (see below)
- Live lessons with teachers as “class” (see below)

However it is done, the main idea is to find ways to have teachers fully engaged in the presenting and discussing of the ideas. The last two items on the list—scenarios and live lessons—will be discussed more fully below. They represent the most engaging as well as realistic means of teacher training available to us.

ON-GOING

To be most effective, teacher training needs to be done on a consistent basis. Lasting growth is not generally accomplished by one-time presentations, guest speakers, or even reading books for ACCS teacher certification, as valuable as those may be. Learning that sticks and has impact on practice is done slowly over a long period of time. Think about a drip-system, not a fire-hose. Therefore, nearly every faculty meeting should have some time given to it for teacher development. I contend that at least one-half of all faculty meeting time should be devoted to some aspect of engaged teacher training. Since faculties need to meet regularly for ongoing training, administrators should take advantage of those few times when teachers are together and make the most of them. This will necessarily mean that as much business as possible will be shifted to email or quick announcements. Administrators need to maximize a school’s most limited resource—a teacher’s time.

An important element of consistency is the reinforcement of the ideas learned in the training. This can only be done by frequent (even if brief) observations of individual classrooms, with specific feedback to teachers about the elements previously or currently learned. This is an ongoing, indeed never-ending, task, but lasting growth in a faculty will not occur without an administrator making sure that what is being learned in teacher training is being done in classrooms. To be sure, this is a cooperative

endeavor, but someone must make sure it is implemented broadly throughout the school's classrooms. Only the administrator is in a position to do this.

REALISTIC

Like all training, the more realistic teacher training is the better. Realistic training develops among other things situational awareness, that is, a recognition of what is working and what isn't, and why, and a sense of what is happening and what is likely to happen in the classroom. This awareness gives teachers the ability to anticipate and adjust accordingly. Realistic training develops skills and gives teachers tools in a situation where they can practice and debrief when the stakes are low.

Ideally, teacher training would involve live student classrooms. Because this isn't usually practical, administrators should build into meetings opportunities for teachers to deal with situations that simulate what they will face in the classroom. These situations provide opportunities to practice those principles that are being focused on in the faculty meetings.

Asking teachers to think through various **scenarios*** is one way to do this. These can range from very brief, typical situations (e.g., "About a third of the class has completed the assigned task, but the others are still working quietly and diligently. What will you do?"), to more complex situations requiring more analysis and discussion (e.g., "critical incidents"; see note below). These scenarios may be a warm-up activity for a teacher meeting, or they may be the featured item, depending on time available, the type of scenario, and the goals of ongoing training. And as much as some teachers may resist, **role-playing** interactions with parents or students in common situations can be very instructive, and will lead to engaging and practical discussions.

While short scenario discussions are a regular element of our faculty meeting, in our experience the most fruitful of realistic training exercises has been the **live**

mini-lessons presented by teachers to a class of teachers acting as students. The goal of these lessons is to make the situation as realistic as possible, as teachers practice implementing excellent teaching practice. The teacher creates an abbreviated lesson plan (generally twenty minutes, although we have had good success with the first five minutes, as well) in which they begin the lesson and carry it through for about fifteen minutes, and then skip to the wrap-up at the end of lesson. Some teachers play the role of students, others are observers. After the lesson, teachers engage in a discussion of what went well and what could be improved on.

While there are limitations to this (such as the short time frame and limited subject context), live lessons present a rare opportunity to experience and then analyze together as a faculty the same lesson. This leads to a deeper common understanding of the elements of excellent teaching, a common vocabulary for discussing teaching, as well as witnessing and discussing together the missed opportunities in a lesson. And, of course, the presenting teacher benefits from the admittedly more stressful situation by having to carefully think through a lesson and then receive feedback from other teachers. The additional element of having to perform under real but benign pressure can help develop a more trained response to situations that might otherwise cause a teacher difficulty. Along with increased understanding of principles, teachers will develop habits through repeated practice and participation.

Presenting and discussing in this way requires a high degree of trust among the faculty. In order for the discussion to be fruitful for all, that is, to make an impact on their classroom practice, both what went well and what did not must be discussed, and teachers can't shy away from offering suggestions, as well as friendly critique. Presenters need to be able to welcome all comments, because the point is improvement, both personally and corporately. In addition, for discussion to be most productive teachers should have at least the beginning of a shared

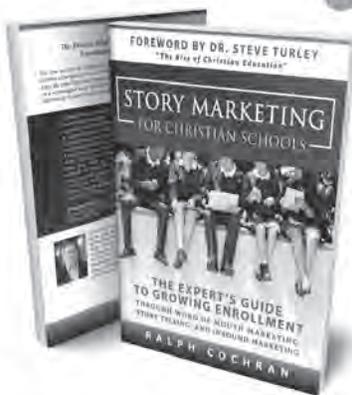
understanding of what makes good classroom practice. Depending on the school's situation, administrators may want to at first significantly lead the feedback for these mini-lessons in order to identify, reinforce, or even introduce those practices.

Teachers are the single most important factor in a school's success in fulfilling its mission. Therefore, the administrator's duty is to plan and implement a realistic and ongoing program of teacher training that requires full engagement from all faculty, and to make sure that what teachers learn is applied in their classrooms.

RESOURCES

*There is a free 72-page pdf booklet with a variety of scenarios for teacher training available at <https://www.classicalteaching.com/p/administrators.html>. Other free teaching and administrator resources are available at www.classicalteaching.com.

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Douglas Wilson

Co-Founder of The Association of Classical Christian Schools, Logos School, and New Saint Andrews College and Minister at Christ Church



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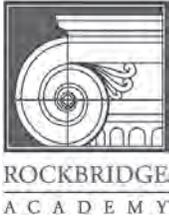


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JUNIOR AND SENIOR SOIREE

by Rockbridge Academy, Crownsville, Maryland



APOLOGY

At Rockbridge Academy, we desire that our young men and women develop into socially gracious and confident Christian adults who are comfortable being in the world but not of the world. We believe it is important to provide opportunities in more formal social environments for our students to cultivate gracious manners and demonstrate brotherly love through Christian social skills and graces. To that end, we plan two special social events, one each for the junior and senior classes which we call *Soirée*. The purpose of both the junior and senior *Soirée* is three-fold. First is to provide a fun and elegant social event for the students, consistent with a Christian worldview. Second, in a culture that often denigrates authority and respect, we want to teach our young men and women etiquette and how to be gracious and polite hosts in a formal setting that will also prepare them for future social occasions in their personal and professional lives. Finally, as our rhetoric students' time at Rockbridge Academy draws to a close, we want to build camaraderie and life-long friendships as brothers and sisters in Christ. In order to build class unity, *Soirée* is meant to be a group social occasion, not a dating event.

Junior *Soirées* central event is a late afternoon, early evening reception where local dignitaries are invited to participate. This event requires the students to practice their

social skills with adults with whom they are unfamiliar. This is followed by an elegant dinner at a local high-end restaurant. Senior *Soirée*, conducted toward the end of senior year, includes the parents. An afternoon reception for the seniors and their parents is followed by an elegant dinner at a high-end restaurant. Following dinner, the seniors and their parents enjoy a cultural event (symphony, opera, theater performance, ballet, etc.) together.

Our purpose in conducting *Soirée* and the training delineated below is that the students would be well equipped to apply the Christian principles of courtesy and respect in any setting. The following Scripture verses provide an excellent foundation upon which to understand these central principles:

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself (Phillipians 2:3)

Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous." (1 Peter 3:8).

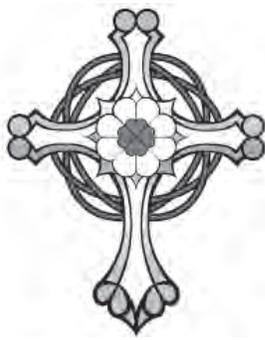
We desire that our students not only know how to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel regardless of the situation, but also that they desire to do so. To these ends, the *Soirée* is to be a fun evening in a formal setting in which the students can apply and become comfortable with principles and skills they have learned.

Rockbridge Academy is an ACCS-accredited school in Crownsville, Maryland. Learn more at <https://www.rockbridge.org/>.

CURRICULUM GUIDES: DIRECTING TEACHERS' PLANNING AND INSTRUCTION

by Covenant Academy, Cypress, Texas

The Purpose of a Curriculum Guide



Covenant Academy's Grammar School Curriculum begins with the end in mind. It is the goal of Covenant to graduate students who have been equipped with the grammar, logic and rhetoric of each subject. Covenant's curriculum starts with what the child knows: himself. In keeping with the *Seven Laws of Teaching*, we must begin with what we know. Starting with the very seed of "me, myself and I," we begin to tell not only the story of our Western heritage, but the story of the East as well. This should not be mistaken as a multicultural curriculum; it is redemptive. Children will be taught to think with a biblical imagination about all subjects and cultures so that they will be successful in bringing the message of the Gospel to the world.

This curriculum guide is written for the teacher. It is to guide them in the path they are setting for their students. We believe that curriculum is a path. Deriving from the Latin definition of course or track, it is the path that our teachers plan for our students each

year. This path must be an amalgamation of goals and objectives, books, experiences, experiments, and great conversations. Our teachers are provided with goals and materials which they skillfully convert into one long range plan for the year. Each week, they cover a portion of this plan. Week-by-week we accomplish our goals and at the year's end, we arrive at the finish line, ready to begin the race anew with the coming school year.

The teacher's role in determining this course cannot be overemphasized. Covenant is proud to be a community of teachers who are seeking to become master teachers. We hold ourselves accountable for pursuing knowledge and growing in our skills so that our students receive far more than book knowledge; we want our students to be transformed by what we are learning together! The role of the teacher is to know the material, the methods, and the Maker of all knowledge and to craft explanations and experiences that will draw their students further up and further into the pursuit of wisdom and virtue.

We believe that the Trivium is a developmental process of young minds opening to the light of knowledge as more and more is made clear. Knowledge is transmitted through language. Our grammar

Covenant Academy is an ACCS member school in Cypress, Texas. Learn more at <https://www.covenantcypress.org/>.



teachers lay the foundations of the language of each subject starting with imitation and rote memorization as a steppingstone to knowledge. They are generalists who must balance each subject and carefully prevent compartmentalization; thus, there are more guidelines and resources to aid them in this endeavor. Our logic teachers utilize the foundation of language as a springboard to elaborate basic understanding by adding a dimension of logic to each subject; helping our students to connect the meanings and the reasoning behind them. The primary process for this is a dialectic approach to teaching; one that challenges students to see opposing sides of concepts, issues, and arguments.

Our rhetoric teachers guide our students to pursue wisdom as they delve into conversations made possible by our logic and grammar teachers. Students are challenged to speak well and often and are given a literal and figurative seat at the table. The process of discussion and discovery and deduction is beautiful to behold and only made possible by the teamwork of our teachers. We are dependent upon one another to accomplish our curricular goals.

We are also dependent on the community of parents. We need parental input as fellow image bearers to help us see ourselves more clearly. We need parents' perspective on what is working and what is not. While our objectives firmly set, we need feedback to evaluate how effective we are at achieving them.

BOOK REVIEW: *RESTORING BEAUTY: THE GOOD, THE TRUE, AND THE BEAUTIFUL IN THE WRITINGS OF C. S. LEWIS*

by David Haines, PhD, Bethlehem College and Seminary

The notions of the good, the true, and the beautiful are some of the most debated ideas in the history of human thought. Anyone who takes the time to delve into these subjects to any depth rapidly discovers that they are also interconnected. This has been the testimony of some of the greatest authors throughout the history of human thought. How we think about the good inevitably affects our views of the true and the beautiful, and vice versa. C. S. Lewis is one of those authors who not only saw the relationship between the true, the good, and the beautiful, but discussed these concepts in almost all of his writings. In his 2010 book, *Restoring Beauty*, Louis Markos sets out to discuss these notions using C. S. Lewis's works as both the inspiration and foundation for this discussion. In the preface, Markos explains that "Lewis is the ideal guide for all those who would seek to restore truth and beauty to their proper place and role in our modern world" (*Restoring Beauty*, 1). I will first provide a brief overview of the book, and then provide some thoughts about the relative worth of the book.

Markos notes, in the preface, that the book is divided into two major sections, which are each divided into two parts. In the first section, Markos intends to provide a more theoretical examination of beauty, goodness, and truth, in the works of C. S. Lewis (specifically looking at Lewis's works of fiction, but not restrained

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to those works). In the second section, Markos looks at how Lewis's insights can be applied practically to education. In part 1, Markos looks at how C. S. Lewis works with the notion of beauty in his works of fiction, looking at the *Space Trilogy*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and *Till We Have Faces*. In this section, the reader will find thought-provoking discussions of how our contemporary rejection of a standard of beauty has affected contemporary cinema, of the notion and loss of stock responses, of the role of women in a democratic society, of the importance of fairy tales, of the modern value of egalitarianism, of the consequences of relativizing beauty, and of why ugliness seems to be so appealing to us. I found this first part to be an

*David Haines, PhD is an assistant professor of philosophy and theology at Bethlehem College & Seminary
Learn more at <https://bcsmn.edu/>.*

interesting and fun read, though it was somewhat light on the theoretical side of things. One of the main difficulties of this part was a 58-page discussion of beauty in which there is no discussion of what is meant by the term “beauty,” or any of the elements which might qualify something as beautiful. Also, I would have been interested in seeing Markos develop, in greater detail, the subjects that I mentioned above. Often the subjects are broached somewhat rapidly, and then the author moves on, leaving the reader with a whetted appetite, and nothing more. However, as an exposition of Lewis’s works of fiction with an eye to beauty, it was an excellent and enjoyable read. For a deeper look at some of these subjects (not all), the reader will have to keep reading, as Markos comes back to them in part 3. Of course, to a certain extent, if Markos provided a more in-depth analysis of these subjects, part 1 would become a book in itself. As it is, the reader is given a desire for more.

In part 2, Markos turns to the question of the good, and how good and evil are portrayed in these same works of fiction. The subjects broached by Markos in this section include discussions of how to read and interpret the Chronicles of Narnia, the nature of good and evil (in which Markos, by affirming Lewis’s views, affirms the traditional Christian understanding of evil as a negation and absence of goodness), the sense of the numinous, and how Lewis incarnates goodness and beauty, in different ways, in the characters of his works of fiction. This last subject is used by Markos to introduce, in chapter 12, an interesting discussion about how Lewis embodies the Machiavellian and Nietzschean ethical view, that “might makes right,” into some of his most memorable villains, and allows the reader to “see” the consequences of this approach to morality in the lives of the villains of his books. This was my favourite discussion in part 2, perhaps in the entire book. The same weaknesses and strengths that I mentioned in relation to part 1 apply equally to part 2, though in relation to his discussion of the Good.

In part 3, Markos turns to education, and discusses Lewis’s insights concerning the importance of including the good and the beautiful in education, and the consequences of removing these notions from education. He discusses the notion of Natural Law, using the same term that Lewis uses in *The Abolition of Man: the Tao*. He points out that, for Lewis, this refers to a general moral standard which is common to all men. Markos explains that “On this ethical (as opposed to theological) level, all religions and cultures are more or less at one with Christianity. Indeed, so central has the Tao been to our conception of ourselves as human beings, that it has always played a central role in one of humanity’s most vital and enduring task: the education of the young” (*Real Beauty*, 100). Markos goes on to discuss how postmodern thinkers, following Burke and Kant, have subjectivized beauty (and, how goodness and truth quickly followed suit), and the effect of this trajectory in education. This leads to a very helpful discussion of three ways in which a *Tao*-less education threatens to create a society which is hostile to Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, and how this has been “fore-seen” by three important authors: Charles Dickens, Aristophanes, and Dante. Markos follows this discussion from education to the inevitable impact on society, discussing the idolatry of “ideals,” the effects on individuals and societies who entirely reject the Tao (i.e., becoming slaves to our basest impulses, the decay of language, and the use of language to enslave).

In part 4, Markos outlines seven practical steps that educators can (should?) take, according to C. S. Lewis, to make sure that the good, the true, and the beautiful are present in education and impressed upon their students. The purpose of this section is to provide some clear ideas about how Christian educators can help to change the direction of a generation which is headed towards the annihilation of the good, the true, and the beautiful. This section is one of the most practical and down-to-earth parts of this book, and should be read by all educators,

frequently. It is an excellent compilation, from various works, of some of C. S. Lewis's most important insights concerning education. In my humble opinion, this section alone makes this book a necessary read for all educators. I will refrain from summarizing the steps, with the hopes that it will inspire others to get a copy of the book, read this section, and interact with it for themselves.

I should add that this book also contains two additional sections. The first, a short text titled "Screwtape's Millennial Toast." This is something of a homage to Lewis's well-known book *The Screwtape Letters* and later article "Screwtape Proposes a Toast." This provides an interesting analysis of the temptations and possible advantages of contemporary youth culture, including thoughts on rock music, tolerance, and gender-identity issues. The second is a helpful annotated bibliography to works by and about C. S. Lewis which address education and the arts. This chapter will be helpful to anybody who wishes to further explore the thought of C. S. Lewis, or any of the subjects which Markos addresses in *Restoring Beauty*.

I read this book in a couple of days. It is not a difficult read, but this does not indicate that it is superficial. Rather, though Markos does not go into great depth in treating any of the subjects in particular, the subjects he treats are important and he clearly demonstrates the need for deeper reflection on these subjects (not just at the academic level, but, more importantly, outside of the academy). In fact, I would say that Markos, here, provides a rallying call for Christian educators to take the Good, the True, and the Beautiful seriously. As for the relative worth of this book, I would say it is a must-read for anybody who is involved in education (Christian or otherwise). Also, anybody who has read and appreciated Lewis's works of fiction will enjoy reading this book and discovering a fellow traveller in the lands of Narnia, Malacandra, Perelandra, and Glome. I also think that this book has value for those in

"academic circles," as it will certainly be an inspiration for further reflection on these important subjects, both in relation to how Lewis discusses them, and in general.

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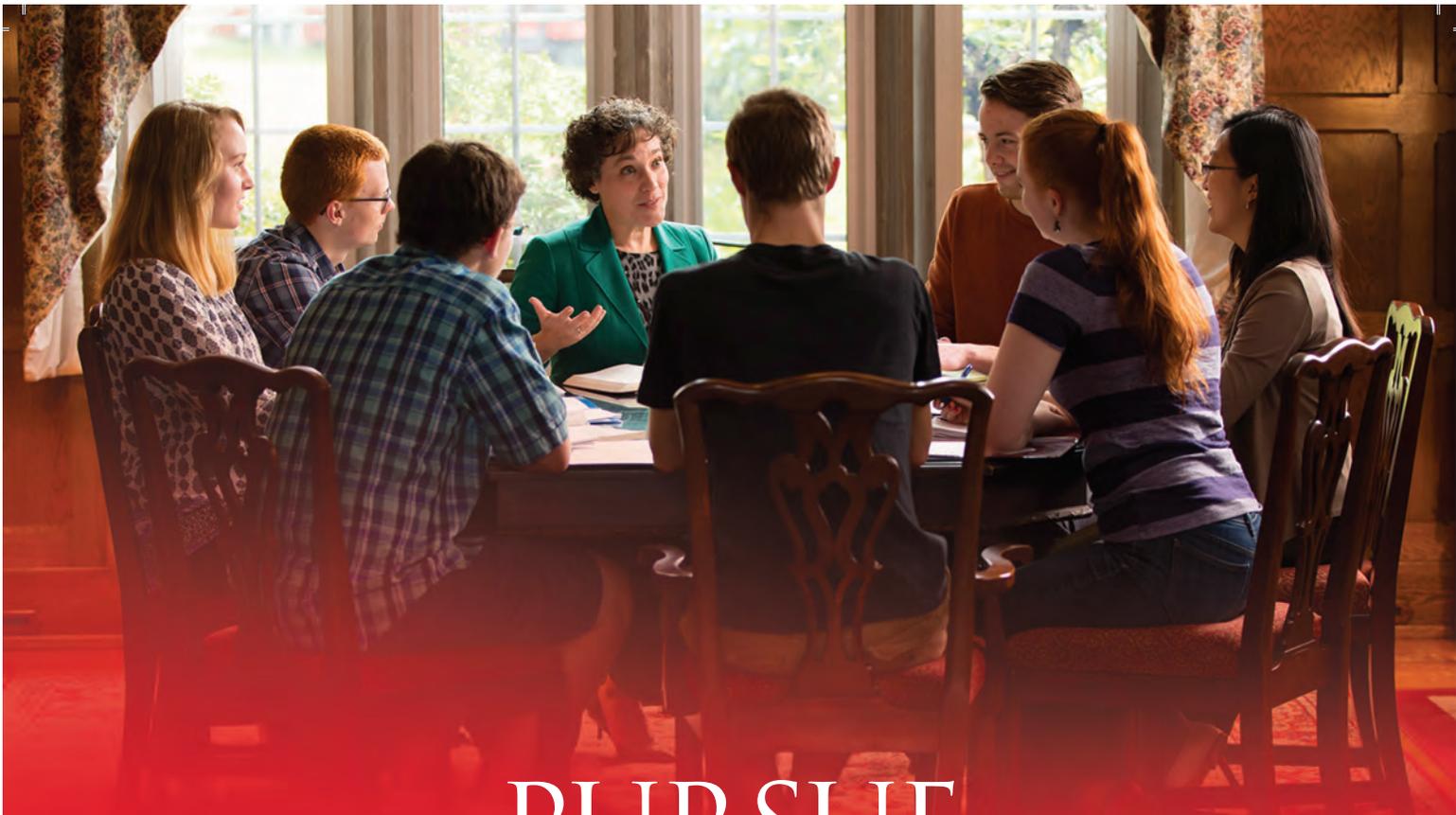
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Stand at the crossroads and look, ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it. – Jeremiah 6:16

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