



SOCIETY
for
CLASSICAL
LEARNING

THE JOURNAL

Volume VII

SPRING 2014

A conversation on education in the classical tradition



3 Education and the Recovery of the Non-modern Mind

Ken Myers explores the mindset which gave birth to classical education.

7 The Elements of Classical Education

Andrew Kern discusses the four foundational elements underlying classical education.

12 Classical Education and the Special Nature of Inquiry

Peter Vande Brake explains the importance of teaching students to ask the right kind of questions.

16 Latin is Essential

E. Christian Kopff argues that learning Latin is a necessity and delineates the benefits of doing so.

19 The Formula Heard 'Round the World

Jason R. Edwards explains the centrality of the Trivium in classical schooling and lays out its many applications in today's classical schools.

23 Transmitting the Knowledge of the Past

Jill Bergin McKinsey promotes teaching history and great books, not as isolated subjects, but as the unifying element of the curriculum.

Conference Edition: The *Sine Qua Nons* of Christian Classical Education

26 The *Sine Qua Non* is Christ

Bethany Laursen shows how a uniquely Christian classical pedagogy can lead to educational excellence and human flourishing.

29 Classical Education as an Education of Judgment, Part I

Laura Berquist describes how classical education develops habits of thought which enable students to make right judgments.

33 Book Review: *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works*

Stephen Richard Turley reviews the second book in James K.A. Smith's trilogy on cultural liturgies.



LINDA DEY, EDITOR

Can there be universal agreement on what constitutes Christian classical education? It seems an impossibility to develop a definitive list of the essential elements of classical education which satisfies all proponents and practitioners of this type of schooling. Classical education is a diamond with many facets, and most of those who speak and write on the subject come at it with their focus on one particular facet. Nonetheless, it is a valuable exercise to try to develop a list of those elements on which there is a broad consensus among those of us attempting the classical way.

In preparing for this edition of *The Journal*, I asked the members of the board of the Society for Classical Learning to make and send me lists of what they considered to be the *sine qua nons* of Christian classical education. Even in this small sample there was quite a bit of diversity. Some focused on the principles undergirding classical education. Others submitted lists which combined the content to be taught with the pedagogical practices used to teach classically. Some included the goals or ends desired of such an education; there's good precedent for this approach in the oft-quoted line of Isocrates: we aim for "good men speaking well." Several also stressed the kind of community needed to make this happen. It is no wonder that reducing this to a list is so difficult given there is so much to consider. It's the questions we ask, not the list that results, which matter most. We must ask what view of reality informs this type of education, what skills should be developed and what content transmitted, what are the methods best suited to how humans are made for doing this, and toward what end is all this being done. This exercise is a worthwhile one for anyone involved in an educational endeavor. It helps one choose from all that *could* be done that which *should* be done, and it helps a school stay on course amid all the current, constantly changing trends.

Here are the results of my small survey, not a definitive list, but the top eight principles and practices from the lists submitted:

Principles: 1) a commitment to the pursuit of truth; 2) a supernaturalist view of reality in which all truth is harmonized in Christ; 3) rejection of the utilitarian view and belief in the idea that education is primarily formative; 4) cultivation of virtue as a primary end;

Content/Pedagogy: 5) teaching students to use language well through use of the Trivium; 6) passing on a tradition: valuing the learning of the past; 7) teaching classical languages; 8) use of good questions and dialogue in seeking truth.

The articles in this issue address some of these essential elements. They can best serve as a catalyst for you to ask the questions and develop your own list of *sine qua nons*.

Linda Dey

Editor

THE JOURNAL

A publication of the
Society for Classical Learning

Editor:
Linda Dey

Copy Editor:
Beverly Aronson

Design:
Jamie Robinson

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

W. Keith Nix, Chairman Veritas School	Rim Hinckley The Geneva School of Manhattan
Christopher Perrin, Ph.D., Vice Chairman Institute for Classical Schools	Robert F. Ingram The Geneva School
Eric Cook, Secretary Covenant Classical School	Andrew Kern CIRCE Institute
Brad Ryden, Treasurer Geneva School of Boerne	Bryan Lynch Veritas School of Newberg
Kay Belknap Veritas Christian Academy	Alison Moffatt Live Oak Classical School
Jason Edwards, Ph.D. Grove City College	George Sanker The Covenant School
Rod Gilbert Regents School of Austin	Peter Vande Brake, Ph.D. The Potter's House
Russ Gregg Hope Academy	Jim Van Eerden Free Think U
	Debra Sugiyama Executive Assistant

EDITORIAL BOARD

Ken Myers Mars Hill Audio	Gene Edward Veith, Ph.D. Patrick Henry College
	John Seel, Ph.D. nCore Media

ABOUT THE SOCIETY

The Society for Classical Learning is a professional society committed to promoting the cultural benefits of the classical, Christian tradition by providing leadership and support, opportunities for the exchange of ideas, and standards of excellence for educators and schools.

The Society for Classical Learning is a non-profit organization. Gifts to the society are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.

The Journal welcomes unsolicited manuscripts of 2,000 words or less on topics of relevance to professional Christian educators. *The Journal of the Society for Classical Learning* is published three times annually and is available by subscription.

Email inquiries regarding advertising to
deb@societyforclassicallearning.org.

CONTACT

The Society for Classical Learning
122 Fleetwood Drive | Lynchburg, VA 24501
Website: societyforclassicallearning.org
Email:
deb@societyforclassicallearning.org

Education and the Recovery of the Non-modern Mind

by Ken Myers

“Bless me, what *do* they teach them at these schools!”

—Digory Kirke, in C. S. Lewis’s *The Last Battle*

The movement to recover the insights of classical pedagogy is one of the most encouraging cultural phenomena of our time. While many parents may choose classical schools because they provide a wholesome moral environment and seem to equip students well to take standardized tests, teachers and administrators realize that there is something much deeper at stake in this approach to education.

In *Desiring the Kingdom*, James K. A. Smith asserts that “Behind every constellation of educational practices is a set of assumptions about the nature of human persons — about the kinds of creatures we are.” *Pedagogy reveals anthropology*. But we can extend Smith’s observation further: educational institutions (the structure of curriculum, the form of classroom practice, the expectations and training of teachers, even the design of buildings) reveal a lot about our understanding of the nature of the cosmos — about the kind of world we inhabit and about the ultimate origins of its order. How we teach — how we approach the conveying of knowledge — is shaped by assumptions about the nature of human knowing and the shape and source of human well-being.

The assumptions that typically animate the lives of most of our contemporaries are a product of living in what we carelessly (and sometimes arrogantly) call “the modern world.” The whole world may not be as modern as this phrase suggests. But it is accurate to say that we live in a society that is shaped by assumptions properly distinguished as “modern.” To be *modern* is not just to be up-to-date; it is to *care deeply* about being up-to-date. Michael Gillespie has observed that “to think of oneself as modern is to define one’s being in terms of time. This is remarkable. In previous ages and other places, people have defined themselves in terms of their land or place, their race or ethnic group, their traditions or their gods, but not explicitly in terms of time.”

Contemporary Christians who are serious about their faith necessarily struggle (sometimes without

understanding the nature of the struggle) with the conflict between being fully *Christian* and being fully *modern*. Many Christians — failing to understand the consequences of being fully modern — believe that there must be a way to reconcile being a *modern Christian*. But surely we must be people who define ourselves in terms of our God, not in terms of time.

The preoccupation with being new that defines the modern goes hand in hand with a radical view of freedom. The modern *mentality* or *posture* (words more descriptive than *worldview* in this context) eagerly anticipates the new, often at the expense of traditions and in denial of claims of “permanent things.” To be modern, writes Gillespie, “is to be self-liberating and self-making, and thus not merely to be in a history or tradition, but to *make* history.”

Christians affirm that our God is the Lord of history and the Maker of meaning. The modern mentality, by contrast, asserts that meaning is whatever we want it to be, and history is no more than the sum total of projects generated by sheer human willing. There is a stark and consequential contrast between belief in a cosmos ordered and given meaning by God and a universe devoid of meaning — a mass of raw material awaiting human ingenuity to confer purpose. That contrast is at the heart of C. S. Lewis’s most important book, *The Abolition of Man* — a book about two models of education and the radically different visions of human nature and cosmic order they represent. Near the end of the book he contrasts the ancient way of wisdom as seeking “how to conform the soul to reality,” and the modern preoccupation — sustained by an obsession to technological advances — with “how to subdue reality to the wishes of men.”

In insisting on a conflict between a Christian mentality and a modern one, I may be criticized by some for “wanting to turn the clock back.” But what assumptions are embedded in that metaphor? An inexorable and demanding clock is not a neutral image adequate to adjudicate the conflict between the modern mentality and its critics.

Fear of being behind the times is a valid fear only if one is preoccupied with being new and up-to-date. This is a posture that presupposes the non-existence of permanent and timeless realities by which our lives might be ordered. I've adopted "non-modern" as a term to describe the character of the Christian mind, rather than anti-modern, post-modern or pre-modern. These latter terms have their uses, but they tend to reinforce that biased temporal metaphor.

Can we imagine the contrast between the Modern and Non-modern *spatially* rather than *temporally*? Think of a land (rather than an era) in which, by habit, citizens glibly forget the past and compulsively hatch plans for A Better Future, a land in which people move with aggressive speed and confidence, despite the sense that they have

no idea where they are going. In the neighboring land, by habit, the residents evaluate their actions in accord with a beautiful pattern of meaning known by their ancestors and conveyed to their children, a land in which past, present, and future are understood in terms of fulfillment rather than displacement and disposal.

Christians in modern societies need to think of themselves and their children as aliens from one land living in another, not as people pining for a lost past. The recovery of a non-modern mentality may be difficult, but it is not improper (unless one is already biased in favor of the modern mentality).

The difference between the modern and the non-modern concerns more than how we situate ourselves in time. More fundamentally it involves questions of



Join the conversation ...

in **AUSTIN
TEXAS
SUMMER
2014**

We are expecting a large turn-out to both the Pre-conference and regular Conference at the Sheraton Hotel in downtown Austin!

Confirmed plenary speakers for the regular conference include Louis Markos and Michael Lindsay.

Visit our website for more conference details.



Louis Markos



Michael Lindsay

PRE-CONFERENCE: JUNE 25 | CONFERENCE: JUNE 26-28

SHERATON AUSTIN HOTEL AT THE CAPITAL | 701 EAST 11TH STREET, AUSTIN, TX

how to live well. Music historian Quentin Faulkner has summarized two different mentalities that answer in radically different ways the question of how to live a good and meaningful life. According to one view:

An inherently mysterious, awesome power has created me to be part of the world, a world I can never hope to understand or control. Following the teachings or laws revealed to my people will enable me to remain pleasing to that creating force and at one with my family and tribe, and thus will provide my life with meaning because it is integrated with theirs. Following the teachings or laws requires me to fulfill certain duties and obligations, and I am fulfilled in doing these the best I can. Indeed I am compelled to do them: since living is an everlasting struggle between life and death, good and evil, blessing and curse, growth and decay, unfaithfulness to my duties and obligations will lead to my destruction.

The second view situates individuals quite differently:

I am significant because it is a matter of common knowledge and observation that our species is superior and in control on this planet. The democratic ideal guarantees me freedom and the right to pursue my happiness. Therefore I am free to follow my own personal goals and to pursue comfort, satisfaction and personal pleasure. That which I do not now understand about the universe will eventually be explained by science, so that things which now seem mysterious will ultimately be provided with rational explanations. I am not compelled to be faithful to any higher order of existence, since there is none.

The first of these views fits the non-modern mentality quite well. It is communal, it affirms permanent realities that guide personal and corporate decisions, it recognizes the smallness of human efforts to achieve comprehensive knowledge, and it is essentially humble and reverent in the face of mystery. The second view bows before nothing (hence my preference for *posture* over *worldview* in this discussion), it enshrines the isolated, autonomous individual and can imagine no limits, it values knowledge for the sake of power and control, not for the savoring of wisdom, it knows no duties or obligations. This

paragraph offers a good summary of the ethos embedded in all truly modern institutions — including modern education. The falseness of this mentality prevents modern educational structures from fulfilling aims of education that are humane and liberal in the best sense.

More than differing about explicit moral or religious matters, the modern and the non-modern mentalities disagree about the very nature of reality. C. S. Lewis makes this quite clear near the beginning of *The Abolition of Man* when he talks about the loss of belief in “objective value.” This phrase may cause some to stumble because the vocabulary of “values” has become so thoroughly subjective in our time. Lewis held the venerable if now unfashionable belief that some things are truly, *really* valuable, objectively worthy of valuing, “that certain attitudes are really true, and others really false, to the kind of thing the universe is and the kind of things we are.” The universe has a *givenness* to it, human nature — including the purpose of human existence — has a *givenness* to it, and the challenge of living well is to learn to honor that givenness in our hearts as well as our heads.

Education is thus the training of the affections, the moral imagination, the mind, the intuitions, even the bodily disciplines of young people to be in synch, in harmony with that givenness. As Luigi Giussani has summarized it, “to educate means to help the human soul enter into the totality of the real.” To educate is to train in the essential task of giving *form* to objective value: education involves the imparting of habits of mind and body that *incarnate* the true value of things. Our lives must have some shape to them; our convictions will take form in personal habits and practices, as well as in public institutions and artifacts. And the task of education — understood classically and by Christians not under the sway of modern assumptions (what people in that other land believe) — is to train the young in how to give form to value.

If I had to isolate a single priority for Christians in educating their children, it would be to convey to them a deep and abiding confidence that there is a givenness to the universe and to human nature, a confidence that is the foundation of ordered desire to spend one’s life learning to fit into that givenness. The classical model of education — as opposed to modern models — is a great boon to Christians precisely because it assumes a prescriptive understanding of human nature and the cosmos. It assumes that human beings, individually and socially, have an objective purpose that calls us to certain

ways of life. Education is vocational, not principally in the sense of career training, but in the root sense of vocation: that God has called humanity to a purpose rooted in divine love and truth, a vocation that fits us for life in a world God has made with our flourishing in view. The pedagogical strategy of classical education establishes and is shaped by an affirmation of this givenness to things, and part of that givenness is the unity of head and heart. Classical thought and Christian thought (before it was contaminated by alien preoccupations) was confident that truth was something to be loved, not just understood analytically. Just as language is a gift enabling loving communication and not just a tool to accomplish practical tasks, so reason is a gift enabling our understanding — a valid if incomplete understanding — of the world, of each other, and of the divine.

James S. Taylor, in his book, *Poetic Knowledge: The Recovery of Education*, notes that “An important point of the ancient, classical, medieval tradition on man as knower was the consistent view that it was the whole person who experienced the world — not just the eyes or just the mind, but the composite being, body and soul, man.” This understanding of human nature and human knowing gave rise to the Western model of education in the liberal arts, a model that originated in pre-Christian antiquity and was adapted and deepened by Christians, finally giving rise to the invention of the university.

The end of that knowledge was assumed to be more than the achieving of useful facts. In *The Logic of the Heart: Augustine, Pascal, and the Rationality of Faith*, philosopher James Peters, confronts “modernity’s unfortunate legacy of a deep and ugly divide between reason and affection.” As he explains, “Despite the legacy of modernity that pervades our lives today, I believe that we can reasonably embrace the following radical claims: first, that the proper function of reason in human life is to enable us truthfully to locate ourselves in our world and to live wisely by recognizing who we are and what our proper place is in this world; and second, that reason cannot function apart from the guidance of the human heart.”

Later in the book, Peters summarizes the Augustinian view of Reason, displaying how stark the contrast is between Augustine’s understanding of rationality and that defended or assumed by most modern thinkers, an understanding which is embedded in many modern institutions, from education to politics to journalism to the arts. Following Augustine, Peters insists that the proper function of reason is not merely to make true judgments concerning a world of neutral, nonmoral facts, but to enable

the rational individual to make proper contact with reality, a state of being that requires not only ‘true belief,’ but the transformation of the will and affections needed to put us in touch with — to align us fully with — reality. Assisted by divine charity, the proper function of reason is thus both cognitive and unitive. The perfection of reason requires our being transformed into the kind of persons we are designed to be — persons who are able not only to describe but also to affirm and become united with the God of love.

The methods and goals of modern education — along with the shape of much of modern culture — are rooted in the assumption that reason is a mechanism of heartless technology, just a matter of calculation. Reason has been constricted in modern usage and in modern culture to refer only to those things that can be established by science, by empirical verification. So the matter of cultivating the mind is commonly assumed to be no more than training in mechanical reasoning skills, the sorts of things that computers can do. Since all speech about value and values, about purpose and providence, is assumed to be subjective, personal, and private, it is outside the realm of reason, and hence, not properly within the jurisdiction of educators.

These are all assumptions that most of us need to unlearn if we are striving to be faithful to the givenness of things. Children who have been schooled in the tradition of classical education (along with their parents and teachers) need to be more confident that their education will help them truthfully to locate themselves in the world and thus live wisely.

The structure of teaching in classical Christian schools is rooted in the assumption that the universe has meaning and purpose, that human nature has meaning and purpose, and that reason itself is a capacity that is fulfilled as human beings come to know and honor the objective value present in Creation. The most urgent educative priority of parents is to enable their children to acquire a confidence in the givenness of things, a confidence which I believe classical Christian schools are uniquely equipped to convey. At this time in the history of the world and of the Church, it is crucial that the education of our children be fully Christian; we should pray not simply that our kids will keep their faith, but that they will grow to surpass us in faithfulness and godly maturity, pursuing all of the ramifications of the Kingdom.

Ken Myers is the host and producer of Mars Hill Audio and a contributing editor to Touchstone magazine for which he writes a regular column on music.

The Elements of Classical Education

by Andrew Kern

Classical education cultivates wisdom and virtue by nourishing the soul on truth, goodness, and beauty. For the ancient Greeks and Romans, free citizens required an education that enlarged the mind and cultivated the soul. They believed that the cultivation of virtue, knowledge of the world and of human nature, active citizenship, and practical action required this purpose-driven education. When Christianity was planted in the soil of the classical world, it found what was good and true in classical thought, purged out the dross, and handed on the rest to her heirs.

As the classical renewal has matured, we have sought to understand its nature and secrets and to discover its essential ingredients. This essay proposes four elements that define classical education, and on which we must establish ourselves for the coming trials:

1. A high view of man
2. Logocentrism
3. Responsibility for the Western tradition
4. A pedagogy that sustains these commitments

In the heart of classical education beats the conviction that the human being is a creature of timeless significance. The Christian goes so far as to see him as the Image of God, the lord-steward of the creation (on whose virtue the well-being of the earth and its inhabitants depends), and as a priest, offering the creation to God for the sake of its flourishing and his own blessedness.

The purpose of classical education, therefore, is to cultivate human excellence, or virtue.

Yet this high view of man is no self-indulgent fantasy, for it carries with it the duty of nobility that the classical educator perceives in every person. Human flourishing depends, not on one's material well-being or adjustment to society, but on one's relation to the true, the good, and the beautiful.

In *Norms & Nobility*, David Hicks argues that a fully rendered image of man includes three domains: the social, the individual, and the religious. Students will be involved in their communities, both as voters and as leaders. Furthermore, they have their own spiritual lives on which their citizenship and their economic life depend.

A wise and virtuous citizenry not only supports the economy through entrepreneurship and innovation, it also challenges the powerful with well-reasoned arguments rooted in a love for liberty and virtue. A classical education cultivates the creativity and spiritual lives of students so that the much-celebrated (and much neglected) "whole child" is truly prepared for real life without losing touch with his deepest and most intimate self. Thus all three dimensions are honored, and society benefits from the membership and quiet influence of well-rounded, healthy persons.

According to the classical tradition the true, the good, and the beautiful are the soul's nourishment. Furthermore, as Image of God, the human soul is able to know them. To fulfill his role, a person's human faculties to perceive truth, to love and reproduce the beautiful, and to reverence and act on the good must be cultivated. When a faculty is refined to a pitch of excellence, it becomes a virtue, such as wisdom or kindness. Christian classical education cultivates the human capacity to know and act on this holy triumvirate, thus nurturing wise and virtuous souls.

Furthermore, the classical educator lives in a knowable and harmonious cosmos that makes ultimate sense. A system can make sense only if it possesses a unifying principle, or *Logos*. Without such a *logos*, true knowledge is impossible.

Christians recognize that Christ is that *Logos*. He makes reason possible, harmonizes everything, and creates the conditions for ordered, knowable truth. He is the unifying principle of thought, the key in which the music of the spheres is played, the archetype of every virtue.

The commitment to a *logos* that makes ultimate sense of the cosmos and makes knowledge possible is expressed in the much-maligned word, "Logocentrism." According to a logocentric view of the universe, organized knowledge can be discovered, arranged, and even taught. This is the first principle of the Christian classical curriculum.

As everything is ordered by a *logos*, so each particular thing has its own *logos*, or nature - in Latin, "species." The power to see truth is the ability to see the nature of particular things and to see each of them in their relations to each other. The tools of learning enable a learner to

identify the nature of a thing and to relate to that thing in a manner suited to its nature. Without this knowledge, the human cannot bless what he is interacting with, whether it be a horse, a farm, or a child's soul.

Perceiving that humans live in a cosmos that makes ultimate sense and that they share it with other members of that cosmos each of which can be known according to their natures, the Christian classical educator is reminded of his responsibility as a steward and priest. The knowledge available to us is not for tyranny, but to cultivate and guard the earth. The whole creation groans and travails when creation's lord shirks his duties.

Classical educators take responsibility for Western civilization. The West is unique in its view of mankind as the Image of a transcendent God and in its acceptance of the view that both truth and the world can be known. These commitments are the hinges for much that defines Western civilization.

Western civilization is the property of all who live in America. Our national roots have grown deep in the customs, traditions, discoveries, and conversations that make up American, British, European, Greek, Roman, and Hebrew history. It is our privilege to receive and to share this heritage, and it is just as immoral to keep it from others as it is to despise their heritage.

It was Christ who formulated the essential political doctrine of the West: "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." But this idea permeated Western thought from the time Moses freed the Israelites from their Pharaoh-worshipping masters and when Aristotle developed his politics and ethics.

Truth alone, the tradition tells us, can sustain the political ideals of liberty and human rights. If the truth cannot be known and does not govern human societies, then there is nothing to restrain the rulers. If rights are not derived from truth, then they are granted by the ever-changing state. Liberty and knowable truth are interdependent.

Because truth is needed to be healthy and free, classical educators believe that to empower the powerless, prepare students for a job, and enable future citizens to play their role in society, every child needs a classical education: deliberate training in perceiving the true, the good, and the beautiful through the tools of learning.

The classical educator understands that Western civilization is as full of vice as it is of virtue. He does not "privilege" or even idealize Western civilization; he

assumes responsibility for it. While the conventional educator seems to see Western civilization as something to escape, the classical educator sees it as the locus of his vocation.

He demands a conversation that challenges his culture and himself with the standards of the true, the good, and the beautiful. He insists that survival and power are not their own justifications. Agreeing with the oracle that, "The unexamined life is not worth living," he continues the Western habit of perpetual self-examination.

He appreciates that the Western tradition contains elements of restless idealism, non-conformity, and self-examination. These have always threatened the status quo while also discovering new springs of cultural nourishment. One of the goals of classical education is to establish the appropriate manner by which the mistreated and oppressed can challenge their oppressors without destroying their civilization.

While the classical educator recognizes the West's recent achievements, especially in technology, he fears that, having lost its moorings in knowable truth, the West has become deaf to challenges from within its own tradition. The modern West, to the classical educator, is the prodigal son, energetically spending his inheritance, perhaps far from "coming to himself."

Nevertheless, while he may agree with those who contend that the West is in decline, his sense of responsibility prohibits despair. Instead, he diagnoses the decline as the loss of confidence in the true, the good, and the beautiful, and offers a cure in the renewed quest for that truth, goodness, and beauty. To this end, he offers a classical education.

Western civilization, the classical educator believes, offers its children a rich heritage on which they can feed their own souls and those of their neighbors. The classical curriculum provides the means to do so.

The classical curriculum can be divided into two stages. First, the student masters the arts of learning. Then he uses the skills and tools mastered to enter the Great Conversation, which is another way to say, to study the sciences.

The classical curriculum begins with an apprenticeship in what have come to be known as the "tools of learning," a term coined by Aristotle when he developed his elementary handbooks. He called them *The Organon*, which is Greek for "tool." The Organon became the Trivium of the Medieval school and was combined with the Quadrivium to form the

seven liberal arts.

These arts of learning comprise the form of the classical curriculum prior to a higher education. Those who master them gain access to a realm of unified knowledge that includes the natural and moral sciences, philosophy, and theology.

The seven liberal arts are not subjects *per se*, nor do they comprise a “general education.” Instead, they are the arts of learning that enable one to move from subject to subject, text to text, or idea to idea knowing how to handle the particular subject, text, or idea. More than that, they introduce the student to the arts and convictions needed for a community and its members to remain free. They are the trunk of the tree of learning, of which the various sciences are branches.

Probably the term with which classical education is most closely associated in the popular mind is the word “trivium,” a paradigm for the mastery of language. But it applies to far more than language. Every subject has its grammar, logic, and rhetoric. To be educated in any discipline, you must: 1) know its basic facts (grammar); 2) be able to reason clearly about it (logic); and 3) communicate its ideas and apply it effectively (rhetoric). Nevertheless, the trivium of grammar, logic, and rhetoric is fundamentally a collection of language arts.

The priority he places on language turns the classical educator’s attention to the classical languages: Latin and Greek. Tracy Lee Simmons proposes in *Climbing Parnassus* that classical education is “a curriculum grounded upon... Greek, Latin and the study of the civilization from which they arose.” In *The Liberal Arts: A Philosophy of Christian Classical Education* Ravi Jain and Kevin Clarke add, “The indispensability of the study of classical languages... is something that our schools will have to realize if they desire faithfully to remain in the classical tradition.”

Classical educators defend Latin and Greek in a number of ways. They are convinced that language studies discipline the mind. Nothing cultivates attentiveness, memory, precision of thought, the ability to think in principles, communication, and overall accuracy like the study of Latin and Greek.

Furthermore, Greek and Latin authors recorded an astounding range and depth of political thought from a wider perspective over a longer period of time covering a wider geography than is embodied in any other language. In literature, Shakespeare, Chaucer, and Milton become isolated from their sources when the student encounters a language barrier between himself and Virgil, Ovid, or

Homer. Most theology has been recorded in, and the church has sung its hymns in, Latin and Greek from the time of the apostles and the first martyrs.

The Great Conversation that is the beating heart of Western civilization took place in Latin and Greek and their offspring. A Western community lacking a roster of citizens versed in Latin and Greek must lose its heritage. It will communicate, vote, work, and think in a manner increasingly isolated from the sources of its own identity. For those who love their heritage and who want to offer the riches of that heritage to others, the classical languages are the *sine qua non*.

Reality is linguistic. It is also mathematical. That is why the classical tradition emphasizes the quadrivium, the four liberal arts of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy.

Jain and Clarke have made an eloquent case for the quadrivium, describing the powers of the four mathematical arts. The ancients believed, “That arithmetic led the soul from wonder to wisdom.” Euclidian geometry “provides the paradigm of certain and airtight reasoning.” Astronomy, the centerpiece of ancient science and the key to profound mysteries, gave birth to modern science. Music, surprisingly to the modern, was a driver of the scientific revolution. “It may,” say Clarke and Jain, “be the chief art of the quadrivium.” Until very recently, a man could not claim to be well-educated until he was grounded in the quadrivium.

Classical educators see the arts of the quadrivium as essential tools that enable us to perceive the reality of the world around us and our relation to it. They also discipline and open the mind. Therefore, say Jain and Clarke, “Classical schools must uphold a high standard for mathematical education precisely for its special role in human formation and developing the virtue of the mind.” It is important to remember, however, that the trivium and quadrivium are not discrete subjects. They are modes of learning. Nor are they ends in themselves. They are tools for learning. The thing learned is knowledge, for which the Latin word is *scientia*, or science. A science, then, is a domain of knowing.

To the classical educator, the word science is much more inclusive than its conventional use. While the modern usually thinks of science as natural science, the classical educator recognizes that there are other kinds of knowledge, much more practical, though less precise, than natural science. These include the moral sciences (history, ethics, politics, etc.), philosophy, and theology.

Natural Science deals with knowledge of the material

world. Moral Science considers human flourishing and is driven by the question: “How is virtue cultivated in the soul and in community?” Philosophical Science explores first causes and theories of knowledge. Theological Science is the knowledge of God and His revelation that disclosed the first principles which undergird all truth. Each science gains its own kind of knowledge, responding to its own set of inquiries, and developing its own tools to gain the kind of knowledge it seeks.

The experimentation and calculation used in the natural sciences can contribute to discussions over ethical matters, but these tools are not adequate to answer either the daily questions that make up human life or the large socio-political issues that determine the destinies of human society. For this, what Socrates called dialectic, and what has come to be called the Great Conversation, is necessary.

Russell Kirk argued that, “The end of liberal education is the disciplining of free minds.” The means to that end is the Great Conversation, an exploration of the human soul and the quest for the best way to live the truth in present circumstances. It draws the students’ attention to soul-fortifying ideas that reflect permanently relevant truths. Contemplating the great books and great works of art and music draws the student out of himself and his own age into those permanent and powerful tools for living and to

the truths that transcend the practical.

The classical curriculum is a formidable and comprehensive theory of education. Surely it is one of the great creations of Western thought. By mastering the tools of the seven liberal arts and participating in the great conversation, the student is nourished in all his faculties and equipped for the never-ending battle (internal and external) for liberty rooted in truth, where virtue can be cultivated and beauty can be incarnated in art, action, custom, and thought.

In closing it must be added that this course cannot be properly run if the pedagogy does not match it in goal and means. Only dialectical engagement with the truth can lead to the soul’s apprehension of that truth. Only a true apprenticeship in the tools of truth-seeking can set a person free. There can be no guarantees.

Can classical education be adapted to the needs and culture of the twenty-first century? Yes, it can. It is neither of one time nor one culture, but is grounded in human nature and in the nature of learning. Classical education offers an intellectual framework that is disciplined and liberating, open to the past and to new knowledge.

*Andrew Kern is the founder and President of The Circe Institute and the author of **The Lost Tools of Writing™**.*

COURAGE

to think deeply to act justly to live fully

“

To be a Christian intellectual is to not be afraid ... is to be able to ask the hard questions—and to engage the questions and critically study things.”

Daniel Camacho '13
philosophy major

You're onto something, a new idea. For diabetes treatment, for education reform, for the way we build our cities, for ending poverty. The only way to make your idea a reality is to test it, change it, share it. It takes courage to do that, something you'll build in every class, every late-night conversation—every moment you spend at Calvin.

Explore what it means to think deeply, act justly and live fully
at www.calvin.edu/go/courage.

CALVIN
College

www.calvin.edu

Calvin College admits students of any race, color and national or ethnic origin.

Classical Education and the Special Nature of Inquiry

by Peter H. Vande Brake, Ph.D.

Education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make man a more clever devil. C.S. Lewis

At its core, classical education is about asking questions. David Hicks in, *Norms and Nobility*, states:

Classical education is not, preeminently, of a specific time or place. It stands instead for a *spirit of inquiry* and a form of instruction concerned with the *development of style through language* and of *conscience through myth*. The key word here is inquiry. Everything springs from the special nature of the inquiry (18).

The Spirit of Inquiry

The *special nature* of the inquiry is fundamental to classical education. Every educational methodology known to humankind touts inquiry as an essential element, but it is the *nature* of the inquiry that makes all the difference. In classical education, the order and method of inquiry are crucial. The classical educator asks **normative questions first**; everything else follows from that.

Hicks divides questions into two basic categories: normative and analytical. Normative questions are questions that direct the inquiry and render value. Hicks offers some examples of normative questions as follows: “What is the meaning and purpose of man’s existence? What are man’s absolute rights and duties? What form of government and what way of life is best? What is good, and what is evil?” These are the kinds of questions that must “**precede and sustain analysis**” if a student is going to learn anything from his or her experience (Hicks, 64). Normative questions reveal the essence or nature of things and are especially concerned with human nature.

Analytical questions, on the other hand, provide information, but they don’t determine moral value or dictate order for inquiry. Some examples of analytical questions would be questions such as: What color is it? What are the results of the experiment? Who is the main

character? What is the theme of the book? What is the sum of 2 + 2? Which army won the war? and What can human beings do? If analytical questions are allowed to lead the inquiry, then education inevitably devolves into relativism and subjectivism. Asking analytical questions may allow people to talk *about* values, but this line of questioning does not make any binding or absolute claims. Analytical questions are not bad or unimportant questions. In fact, they are necessary, but they do not force students to wrestle with issues that are of ultimate or absolute importance.

Thus, to properly implement classical pedagogy, normative questions need to come first in terms of chronological order and in terms of their importance for inquiry. When normative questions lead the search for learning, then the answers to those questions will guide our analysis of literature, art, math, politics, science, or whatever it is that we are trying to understand. The information that we gain from analytical questions then falls into place and is useful to us in our learning.

The Development of Conscience through Myth

Classical education, then, is a special kind of inquiry in which we ask the right kinds of questions in the right order. So, once we have the right questions, where do we go for the answers? Hicks tells us that we find the best answers in the great myths¹ because it is in myths that we find the Ideal Type. The Ideal Type offers the best prescription for how we should live.

The record of man’s study of himself suggests answers falling into two broad categories: the prescriptive and the descriptive. The early record favored a prescriptive understanding of man embodied in myths . . . Myths whether they sang of the exploits of demigods or of heroes, caught in their perpetual flames a unifying vision and standard of man, an Ideal Type striding between the poles of human strength and human frailty (Hicks, 4).

The human condition, as it is described in myths, gives a picture of humans and demigods that are often heroic and courageous, but imperfect. The characters of interest are always flawed and frail in some way. They all have their “Achilles’ heel.” This manifestation of the Ideal Type found in ancient and modern myths provides an ideal that no human being can match and yet an example to which all people can relate. The Ideal Type is resolute in its expression and yet always requires improvement. It is prescriptive rather than merely descriptive. It provides a *pattern*, an example, a way of living that is desirable for all people in all times and all places. Hicks explains this concept and offers some illustrations of the Ideal Type in this way:

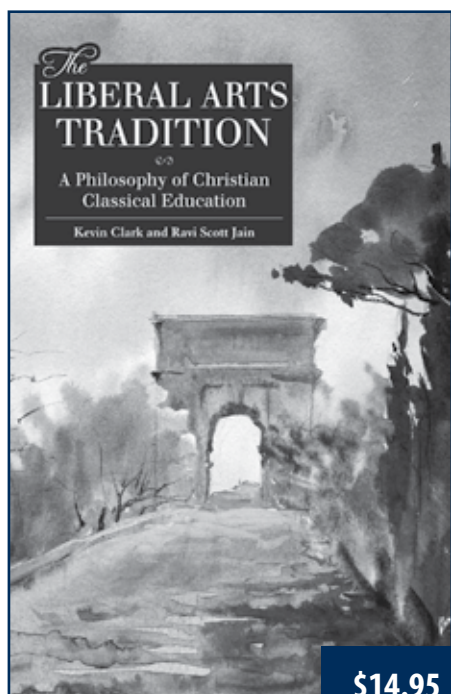
This Ideal Type was at once immutable yet ever in need of refinement. It was the metaphorical incarnation of wisdom and truth, empowered by education to metamorphose the diligent student. Both an elaborate dogma and a man, it defied comparison with any man, yet all men discovered

themselves in it. The Ideal Type embraced Gilgamesh’s love for Enkidu and David’s love for Jonathon, Odysseus risking his precarious safety to hurl gratuitous insults at the Cyclops, and Achilles deciding at the dawn of human history to die at the supreme moment of glory rather than to live through the long, wizening, connubial years. What made these stories valuable was not their historical authenticity or experimental demonstrability, but their allegiance to a pattern of truth. Whatever fit this pattern was retained and added to the education of future generations. What fell outside this pattern was judged superfluous to the education of the young (Hicks 4).

Thus, the characters in art and literature that embody this Ideal Type provide a pattern for education because it conforms to the more comprehensive and more important *pattern of truth*. Their lives, actions, and attitudes provide a template for living that is worthy of imitation.

Classical Academic Press

Classical Subjects Creatively Taught™



\$14.95

“Just look at this book’s table of contents to see how much is included in this. It’s more than the old ‘seven liberal arts,’ but it builds on them. It is an education of the whole person, not just the calculating intellect. But it is not less ‘intellectual’ for that, but more so. . . . This little book is a description of that educational program. It’s precious—because children are precious.” —from the foreword by Peter Kreeft, Boston College

“We needed this book and now it’s here. . . . Once you’ve read a book or two to introduce you to classical education and have started to ask the deeper questions about its history and nature, get this book and use it as a permanent reference.”

—Andrew Kern, Circe Institute

“Jain and Clark’s work moves the conversation about the liberal arts in the modern school to a new level of sophistication and practicality.”

—Charles T. Evans, co-author, *Wisdom and Eloquence*

They show us our potential for greatness and our penchant for weakness and self-indulgence. We are better people when we emulate their strengths, and when we learn from their mistakes and flaws, we avoid trouble and calamity. This pattern of truth is regarded as the **heart of classical education**. The central concern is how we should live and what we need to know in order to have a good life. In this way, art and literature become the conduit for learning and true education. Hicks describes this phenomenon as follows:

By insisting upon descriptions conforming to a *prescriptive pattern of truth*, our cultural forebears made art and language the midwives of sound learning, while behaving, to our enlightened eyes, like tribal doctors intent on making the disease match their cure. They never hesitated to prescribe good manners and proscribe bad taste by falsifying the infallible proofs of their five senses. Fabricated descriptions, mere imaginative inventions in homage to the Ideal Type, served the chief aim of their education: *imitatio Christi*, the incarnation of a metaphor (Hicks, 4-5).

So, we answer normative questions by appealing to myth. We point to the incarnation of a metaphor as an answer to the most important questions that we can ask—questions about the meaning of life, the nature of a human being, the best way to live, and what is good and what is evil. We find answers to the most important questions we can ask by reading Homer and Vergil and Dante and Dostoyevsky, but our greatest and most definitive resource for answers to these questions is the Bible. It is in Christ, the hero of the Bible, that we find the incarnation of the Logos, who gives our lives new meaning and provides us with perfect concepts of righteousness and justice and humanity. *The highest form of education is to imitate Christ*, the true Ideal Type, who shows us perfect humanity without the flaws of hubris or self-interest or a vengeful spirit.

This is how classical education is done. We begin with the normative questions. We find answers to these questions in studying, analyzing, and imitating the Ideal Type because this is where normative questions find their best and strongest answers. Then we can go on to ask and answer analytical questions so that our experience may become valuable to us. Once we have rightly answered the first questions, we can fulfill the true purpose of education:

The purpose of education is not the assimilation

of facts or the retention of information, but the habituation of the mind and body to will and act in accordance with what one knows (Hicks 20).

True education helps us to make the connection between knowledge and action. It goes beyond teaching us what we *can* do to teaching us what we *ought* to do. True education is not merely descriptive but prescriptive. It insistently and adamantly points us toward imitation of the Ideal Type.

The single greatest problem of modern education is that the hierarchy of questions has been reversed. The analytical questions have been given precedence in progressive education, and they guide how normative questions are answered. The prescriptive understanding of man, the Ideal Type, is dismissed and tossed aside. The aim of education becomes descriptive, but not prescriptive. Hicks states:

Now, the modern educator is apt to dismiss prevarications told in deference to an Ideal Type, while he condemns the arbitrariness of a prescriptive understanding of man. He presumes to have found a method for replacing it, at least initially, with a descriptive understanding. . . . So without much sober reflection, the early record is quietly dismissed as unscientific—therefore, error-ridden and useless. In its place, the educator erects a sort of science without reason, random induction predicated upon gnomic utterances like those of Marshall McLuhan: ‘Data accumulation leads to pattern recognition’ (Hicks, 5).

The accumulation of information does not constitute a real education. As C.S. Lewis once said, this practice of educating people without prescribing values may have the undesirable effect of creating more clever devils instead of producing people of substance and virtue. The primary problem here is that the link between knowledge and action is severed. There are no guiding principles, no virtues. Information alone does not lead us anywhere without the help of normative inquiry to instill value and to guide our journey. Without knowing where we are starting from and going to, a map does us no good regardless of the level of its detail and accuracy. Only normative inquiry can give us a sense of direction and purpose.

The Development of Style through Language (in the Context of Relationship)

Finally, there is much that can be said about how a classical education can develop a student's style through language that has to do with the study of language itself—Latin, Greek, Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric and all the rest. However, I will conclude by highlighting a different aspect of this development—personal engagement in the correction and formation of the language of a student. When we are teaching a student how to wisely and eloquently articulate his or her thoughts, whether it is in speech or in writing or in a work of art, it is always most effectively done in the context of a relationship.

Each student brings his or her own unique challenges to a teacher. They do not all share the same favorite story. They do not all enjoy poetry. They do not all see the beauty of math. They do not all find illustrations from sports insightful or revealing. They do not all respond the same way to correction and constructive criticism. For some, lots of red ink on a page challenges them to work harder and dig deeper, for others it makes them want to give up. It is part of the job for a teacher to be judicious in his or her critique and encouragement to bring each student, as much as possible, in line with the Ideal Type.

In a classical education, the special nature of inquiry takes place within a relationship between teacher and student that goes beyond superficiality or perfunctory mechanical delivery. A teacher who is trying to develop style in a student through language will know something about how to motivate and direct that student in the most effective way. The point of common interest, the heart of that relationship between teacher and student, is the inquiry itself and the maieutic process by which a teacher brings a student to a maturity of style and expression as he or she engages the mythology of the Ideal Type.

Classical education is not tied to any particular historical era; its methods are timeless. It is a spirit of inquiry that is concerned first and foremost with normative questions that lead us to wrestle with truths about human nature and virtue. In this quest for meaning, we look to heroes who teach us how best to live our lives. The ultimate and best answers for life are found in Jesus Christ who most completely and prescriptively manifests to us the perfection of our fallen but redeemable selves. It is through the archetype of Christ that we learn how to effectively connect our knowledge to our actions and live with integrity and purpose.

Peter Vande Brake attended Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan where he was an All-American decathlete and philosophy major. He attended seminary at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, and then did his doctoral work at Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He taught, coached, and was headmaster at North Hills Classical Academy from 1996-2010. He is a leadership consultant for the CiRCE Institute and the curriculum director and track coach at The Potter's House School in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He is married and has two daughters.

Endnotes

¹ "For our purposes a myth is not the untruth or fanciful exaggeration of popular expression. A myth, as Joseph Campbell was fond of saying, is a metaphor for a mystery beyond human comprehension. It is a comparison that helps us understand, by analogy, some aspect of our mysterious selves. A myth, in this way of thinking, is not an untruth but a way of reaching a profound truth." Taken from Christopher Vogler, *The Writer's Journey* (Studio City, California: Michael Wiese Productions, 1992), p. vii.

Latin is Essential

by E. Christian Kopff

A number of years ago at a meeting of Classical Lutheran educators a pastor spoke up. He was clearly somewhat overwhelmed by the discussions of theory and curriculum we were presenting to our audience, most of whom were newcomers to the movement. His question was quite simple. “At my school we use Saxon Math and the *Writing Road to Reading*. What else do we need to be classical?” As I remember, Dr. Veith gave a low-key and helpful response. I refrained from blurting out my answer: “Pastor, Pastor, you are anxious and troubled about many subjects. Only one is necessary: Latin!”

Hyperbole has its place in classical rhetoric. Although I believe that Latin is necessary for a classical curriculum, I do not hold it the *unum necessarium*, “the one thing needful” (William Tyndale’s translation of Luke 10:42, which was kept by the King James revisers). The place of Latin in classical Christian education has been blessed with stout defenders from Tracy Lee Simmons’ winsome eloquence in *Climbing Parnassus* to Andrew Campbell’s clear and detailed *The Latin Centered Curriculum* and Cheryl Swope’s straightforward and moving *Simply Classical*.

A recent addition to the cohort of defenders of Latin appeared last year in the unlikely site of *Education Week* 33.10 (October 30, 2013), p. 22. *Ed Week* tends to devote its pages and webpage to educational progressivism and sympathetic appreciation of the Common Core and the Teachers’ Unions. Jacob Weiss, a senior at Edgemont High School in Scarsdale, NY, undertook the Herculean task of explaining to its readers “Why Latin should be part of the ELA standards.” The young man’s essay deserves to be read on its own, but it may be worthwhile to mention a few of his points.

Mr. Weiss cites the Common Core’s claim that its standards “are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers.” He then confronts some common objections to Latin.

(1) *Latin is a “dead” language.* Latin survives in the Romance languages (French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Rumanian and their dialects) and knowledge of Latin is a

good introduction to all of them. More than that, studying Latin teaches a surer command of one’s first language. Mr. Weiss throws down a challenge to the proponents of “living” languages:

Because Latin will help anyone gain a solid understanding of English, I would pose this question: In this day and age, which is more important—a firm and comprehensive grasp of English or moderate ability in many tongues? Personally, I would rather have the mastery of English and be able to persuade and communicate with my command of English diction and rhetoric rather than be able to merely get by in several other languages.

(2) *Latin is not just irrelevant; it is a waste of time.*

Studying STEM subjects prepares students to succeed in a world of science, technology and social media. Mr. Weiss makes two points. (a) If Latin is so irrelevant to our world, how come Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg loves Latin and praises the *Aeneid* as one of his favorite books?

(b) There is a highly logical aspect to Latin. Reading or writing a line of Latin is fundamentally no different from reading or writing a line of Java or C++. Each activity requires the same process of determining the role played by each separate part of the line and then piecing together the separate parts to create a coherent and functional statement. Latin teaches you how to think strategically and use reason to produce a desired outcome. Similarly, computer programming teaches you how to ‘problem-solve,’ a popular phrase in the discipline.

In addition, studying Latin gives students what learning computer languages cannot: the vocabulary of law, politics, philosophy, theology and science itself; a command of grammar that affects every serious document you read and write and even, as Mark Zuckerberg might remind us, access to Virgil’s *Aeneid* and other great shaping works of literature and thought from Catullus, Cicero and Ovid to

Thomas Aquinas, the Augsburg Confession and Calvin's *Institutes*.

This is a lot to get from one subject in a world in which there is limited time. Many classical educators will be inclined to echo Shylock's exclamation after hearing Weiss:

A Daniel come to judgment! yea, a Daniel!
O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!

Progressive educators are always telling us that we cannot "turn back the clock," although they often fail to see how true this is of our shared culture. We can teach children the languages that provided the vocabulary of consensual institutions, science, politics and theology, or we can leave them stranded without the words to talk meaningfully about these and many other important institutions and traditions. It is too late, however, to start again from scratch and try to develop a new civilization on the basis of the Epic of Gilgamesh, let's say, and Hammurabi's Code. As T. S. Eliot's Sweeney put it, "I gotta use words when I talk to you." Latin permeates our language. When we choose a leader, we *elect* a *president*. We also *elect representatives* and *senators* to *Congress*. As philosopher Josef Pieper reminded his classical high school in Germany, we all speak Latin every day. "It may be permissible to ask whether it is really proper to call people educated who only half understand the words they are using."

Some readers may be thinking about now, "This is just preaching to the choir." Do not all classical Christian educators agree on the importance of Latin in their schools or homeschooling curricula? *Magari!* as the Italians say. If it were only so!

At the 2012 SCL conference in Charleston a principled objection to Latin as a necessary and even, perhaps, as a good part of a classical Christian curriculum was made by Susan Wise Bauer during the Q&A period that followed her plenary address. (It had been implicit but unstated during her pre-conference event the day before.) Someone from the audience asked about foreign languages—it is about 55 minutes into the hour-long recording on the SCL URL. Dr. Bauer did not avoid the hard part of the question. (1) "For practical reasons" she grudgingly acknowledged that a K-12 curriculum should include two years of a foreign language to satisfy state requirements for graduation from high school and because many colleges and universities have a two-year language entrance requirement. This, of course, is not about classical education, but about outside requirements.

(2) She confronted head on the issue of Latin. I

quote from her comments, I hope fairly, but you can check out what she said on the SCL webpage. "You noticed that for me Latin is not really a huge part of this," i.e. "the central elements of classical education," the topic of her clear and informative address. "Unless you study a language for probably eight or ten years, you are not going to read in it at a level that will be comfortable. You are much better off reading in translation." Therefore studying Latin is "a little bit of a pointless effort" because (a) it does not lead to "reading comfortably" and (b) does not leave time for what she called "the ability to specialize".

These comments seem to me to misunderstand the goals of any possible curriculum, not just a classical one. A curriculum does not aim at producing experts in each subject studied, but encouraging students to think critically and respond creatively in many areas, including topics not formally studied. A colleague in our Mathematics department told me that he felt students could not follow the math in Kurt Gödel's classic 1931 essay where he presented the "incompleteness theorem" until they had moved beyond the M.A. level. Students with an aptitude for math would need not ten but almost twenty years of study before understanding the most important mathematical text of the twentieth century. If so, is mathematics "a little bit of a pointless effort?" Decidedly not! There are educational goals and advantages from studying mathematics from arithmetic to geometry and onward that have been understood and achieved since Plato's arguments for a mathematics intensive curriculum in Republic VII, which was composed in the fourth century BC.

The situation with Latin is parallel. One year of Latin gives an introduction to grammar that is superior to relevant alternatives. Millennia of experience show that there is a profound difference between the way we learn a first language and a second one. Most people only truly master grammar when they have studied a second language consciously and attentively. For historical reasons Latin has been taught to achieve this end for so long that it functions better for this goal than trying to re-circuit other language texts to imitate Latin. Dr. Bauer praised diagramming sentences in her pre-conference presentation. Diagramming sentences is a useful exercise at a certain stage of language instruction because it forces us to think of English as a dead language. It is a good alternative for teachers who do not know Latin. It was, however, always intended as a crutch for those who did not know grammar from studying a foreign language. There are disadvantages to it as a replacement for Latin, though it is a useful supplement,

because it encourages teachers and students to privilege diagram-able sentences over more complex ones. This is often useful and helpful for expository prose, but expository prose is only one use of language and the rhetoric stage should open up students to the range of creative language use, a goal that is best achieved by learning a real language, beginning with its grammar and proceeding to real texts. Experience shows that Latin is the best language for this purpose for members of our society.

Dr. Bauer, whose mother had her study Latin for six years, says, “unless you study a language for perhaps eight or ten years, you are not going to read in it at a level that will be comfortable. You are much better off reading in translation.” The advantages of Latin begin long before 10 years.

(1) In his little book *Learn Latin* Peter Jones showed that with twelve *weeks* of Latin, you can read passages from the Bible, the text of the Bayeux Tapestry and Catullus 84, which begins “odi et amo.” If you never read another line of Latin after Catullus’ couplet, you will have read one of the great poems of the Western tradition and confronted unforgettably one aspect of love. If from a Latin Bible you read the parable of the “Prodigal Son,” you can begin from these two texts to understand some of the deepest mysteries and most immediate truths of the Christian faith.

(2) Four years of Latin in the usual HS curriculum involves studying Cicero and Virgil. Virgil influenced profoundly people who studied Latin for their whole lives, such as Martin Luther and C. S. Lewis. He also influenced people who, whatever their personal faults, were objectively successful in very different ways, although they did not study Virgil after high school: poet John Keats, football coach Joe Paterno, and Facebook billionaire Mark Zuckerberg. These men, personally flawed but very successful in their chosen areas, never forgot Virgil and quoted him again and again though they only studied him in high school.

(3) Maybe by “reading comfortably” Dr. Bauer meant that most of us never read Latin texts with the speed and fluency with which we read English ones. To Friedrich Nietzsche this was precisely the point. “A philologist,” he wrote, is “a teacher of slow reading.” (*Philologe...das will sagen, ein Lehrer des langsamen Lesens, Morgenröte* “Vorrede”) It is too easy to read English “comfortably.” People who learn to read easily and rapidly texts that are suitable for such reading, newspaper stories or popular fiction, may apply that skill to texts that require a much different style of reading. Studying Latin teaches a student to read slowly and carefully, word by word, phrase by phrase, sentence by sentence. This is the way educated people read great, life-transforming texts. Reading them should never be comfortable. They should excite your mind and break your heart. Nietzsche was right.

Classical education is the most successful curriculum ever developed, if measured by its influence in literature, art, music, science, philosophy, law or politics. Latin and Greek provided the vocabulary for these areas of thought and accomplishment. Studying the ancient tongues trained the minds of the modern masters of these fields and transmitted the cultural legacy that was the soil in which they flourished. Latin is the language of such central modern works as More’s *Utopia*, the Augsburg Confession and Newton’s *Principia*. It formed the styles and shaped the writings of America’s Founders. So I wrote, “We need to know Latin if we want to think like the Founders” and published a book whose subtitle I still subscribe to: *America needs the Classical Tradition*. And this includes Latin.

E. Christian Kopff is Associate Director of the Honors Program of the University of Colorado, Boulder. He is the author of The Devil Knows Latin: Why America Needs the Classical Tradition (Wilmington DE, 1999) and the Introductions to Herbert Jordan’s translations of Homer, The Iliad (Norman OK, 2008) and The Odyssey (Norman OK, 2014).

The Formula Heard 'Round the World

by Jason R. Edwards

Revolutions tend to be noted for radical breaks with tradition and bold new courses set. However, the term “revolution” can also mean a return to an earlier position. Perhaps then, the most radical of revolutions combine elements of both by rejecting the cult of the new, spurning assumed progress, and breaking from the path not for new frontiers but a wise reclaiming of older customs and timeworn wisdom. Revolutionary or not, at the very least, if one finds himself on the wrong path, the only wise course is to simply turn around. The Christian Classical school movement is just such an example. American schooling has been on the wrong road for a very long time, and classical and Christian educators are attempting to turn around and return to wiser approaches to education. In this effort, a formula known as the *Trivium* has played, and continues to play, an essential part.

Surveying the physical and cultural destruction of Europe in 1947, popular author Dorothy Sayers composed and presented at Oxford her essay “The Lost Tools of Learning,” which shockingly argued that for Western Civilization to truly advance in education, it needed to return to the Medieval Age.¹ Her essay emphasized the failings of modern education in preparing people to think and to learn. The abandoned tools of education to Sayers were encapsulated by the medieval commitment to the *Trivium*. Comprised of grammar, logic/dialectic, and rhetoric, Sayers believed the *Trivium* held the key for reviving an effective and proven form of learning. Though powerful and persuasive, Sayers’ essay and revolutionary formula would require several more decades before her advocated return gained much traction.

In 1991, Douglas Wilson published the book *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning* and thereby effectively launched the contemporary Classical-Christian school movement.² At the time of its publishing, Wilson had already worked to apply insights from Sayers’ essay into the private Logos School in Moscow, Idaho. With the publication of his book, many more would look to advance their own children’s education by returning to “old ways.” The *Trivium* as a formula for education was about to start a

revolution.

Revolutions depend on revolutionaries; and, both Sayers and Wilson are essential to this revolution’s success. However, true revolutions are not ultimately defined, controlled, or contained by even crucial individuals and the Classical-Christian school movement is no exception, so it must be understood at the outset that Classical-Christian schooling is not restricted to the thoughts of Sayers or Wilson.³ Likewise, revolutions rarely respect history, even ones inspired by it. Here again, the Classical-Christian school movement follows this revolutionary law. Consequently, exactly how “classical” or “medieval” the movement actually is historically is up for significant debate. Socrates and Aquinas, just to name a few, would not necessarily recognize all that goes on at “classical” schools or even claim them as their own. Nevertheless, history, through the modern interpretation of Sayers and Wilson and others, has provided a very attractive formula for education, which has been enthusiastically adopted in a large and growing number of private schools. And so, to understand what is taking place at these classical academies, one should be aware of how the *Trivium* is being applied for it arguably remains the distinguishing mark of the contemporary classical school.

Interestingly, the *Trivium* as applied by schools today has actually taken three main forms. The most obvious and least surprising way is their embrace of the three official subjects of the *Trivium*. While it would be rare to find a modern public school labeling a course, or perhaps even a lesson, as grammar or logic or rhetoric, one will find all three at contemporary classical schools. Mastering the construction of sentences, memorizing logical fallacies, and effectively using words orally are not only skills emphasized within familiar classes on history or science, they are entire stand-alone courses, oftentimes taken at multiple grade levels, at classical schools.

The second way the *Trivium* is typically applied at a classical school is far more interpretive. Here, the *Trivium* is used as a formula for learning any subject. In other words, mastery of a topic will always need to move through three ascending stages of mastery represented by the subjects

that comprise the *Trivium*. If one is to master U.S. history or biology for instance, one must begin by learning the “grammar” of the subject. This grammar is the basic facts, terms, formulas, and language needed to ultimately understand and converse on the topic. Once students have mastered the basic facts, they move to the “dialectic” phase that concentrates on grasping how these facts interrelate. Ideally then, the student moves from a base, or even rote, knowledge to understanding. Finally, mastery requires a concluding step, rhetoric. Here, students progress from understanding a subject for themselves, to being able to effectively communicate the subject to others. For anyone who has ever taught even the most rudimentary of skills, it is obvious that it is one thing to “know” something for yourself, but quite another to be able to explain it effectively to another. The rhetoric phase is an acknowledgement that true mastery of a subject requires that final step of ability. Furthermore, rhetoric at this level also means applying the knowledge (grammar) and understanding (dialectic) already gained across disciplines into practical life. Thereby, the *Trivium*, applied to any subject, can mark the crucial transitions from ignorance to knowledge, from knowledge to understanding, and finally from understanding to wisdom.

The final way the *Trivium* is regularly interpreted in contemporary classical schools is as a formula for child development. Simply put, this belief holds that the typical child goes through grammar, dialectic, and rhetorical stages on the road to adulthood. Implicit in this application is that both the teacher and school ought to work with, rather than against, these natural stages of life and learning.

In this child development interpretation, the child begins in a grammar stage that roughly corresponds to the elementary school years. The fact that elementary school used to be widely called “grammar school” is not considered coincidental. As noted above, to master subjects students need to know basic facts about the subject. Conveniently, young children have proven to be outstanding at memorization. Even more remarkable, young children like memorization. Even nonsense words can be mastered with ease and enjoyment by elementary age children, particularly if put to music or chants. For the modern classical educator then, such an opportunity is not to be missed. In contrast, the typical contemporary school philosophy assumes that elementary school students will have plenty of time to learn basic facts in the future or will just naturally learn them through time. Consequently, most

elementary schools embrace “play” as the activity *de jure* for their charges. The classical school instead capitalizes on the young child’s affinity for memorization and gives him a solid diet of significant material on which to work. While unfairly and inaccurately derided as “drill and kill” by advocates of the “play” approach, classical educators seek to have students leave elementary school with a substantial amount of invaluable knowledge stored in their memories. Both history and now contemporary classical schools have more than proven that this knowledge can be mastered in an effective and even pleasurable way especially since the elementary years are the ideal times in which to do it.

In considering the dialectic phase, it perhaps helps to start with a cultural fact: junior high kids are insufferable little wisenheimers. Put more generously, one notes middle schoolers’ propensity for argumentation, contradiction, and verbal gaffes. While educators throughout time have frequently been tempted to deal with this phase by locking them in their rooms until humans can stand to be around them, the contemporary classical educator takes a different course. Though an obviously dangerous act, the classical educator insists that if one wants to argue, then at least one should argue well. So, this “dialectic” stage at the classical school is characterized by instruction in logic, reasoning, and argumentation. While undoubtedly parents must at times regret the arming of these young madmen with more effective verbal weapons, the child’s personality merely demonstrates that the time is developmentally right to do so. Not incidentally, if these young debaters have been brought up with the *Trivium*, they already have a vast store of valuable knowledge to consider, which makes their verbal wrangling much more palatable and productive. In contrast, their public school peers, who have played their way through elementary school, while still determined to verbally joust, have nothing to tilt but pop culture windmills.

Finally, according to the developmental approach to the *Trivium*, after passing through the challenging dialectic phase, young adults arrive at the “rhetorical” phase. In sum, the mark of teenagers is their desire to “express” themselves. However, as one can sadly witness in every mall in America, they are not very good at it. This truth remains despite the fact there are few items that fire the hearts of the typical American public school teacher more than self-expression. However, to paraphrase C.S. Lewis, most high school instructors, though enthusiastic, are unknowingly urging the geldings to be fruitful.

Having never given or demanded knowledge of their charges, much less clear thinking in earlier years, most youth, have, like, you know, little to say. In contrast, the classical educator is not left with empty pleas to “express yourself,” since the student brought up in the *Trivium* has been given the knowledge and understanding along the way necessary for the development of wisdom worth professing. And, here again, the classical educator looks to work with, rather than against, the grain. With students eager to communicate, instruction at classical schools in these teen years focuses on effective expression through, among other things, the spoken and written word. As with the dialectic phase, if a student has been educated throughout in this *Trivium* model, this focus on expression is potentially delightful because the child actually has a vast array of knowledge and understanding to articulate. While the modern’s obsession with self-expression reflects the fact that essentially all educators desire to produce rhetoricians – wise, eloquent adults – it is the classical *Trivium* model that actually provides a workable and proven formula to produce them.

In considering the *Trivium* as a formula for learning and child development, it should be noted that these ought to be understood as broad, general categories not rigidly fixed lines. All courses at all age levels typically would contain grammatical, logical, and rhetorical elements, assignments, and emphases. Again, the *Trivium* approach argues that mastering any subject necessitates going through these three stages of learning so newly introduced subjects will always require grammatical essentials even for adults. The *Trivium* is a useful formula, not an inflexible one. Much of the *Trivium*’s revolutionary power lies in its simplicity and clarity, but also its versatility. Thereby, those seeking to be classical in contemporary times should not feel compelled to follow narrowly a fixed formula to qualify.

When considering accurate labeling, the *Trivium* has also served to justify the very naming of classical schooling. However, while certainly historically rooted, the *Trivium* as an organized system of learning is far more medieval than classical. However, no one needs a marketing department to tell them that calling for a return to medieval times proves a much more difficult sales job, so “classical” was, not surprisingly, adopted instead. Since the overwhelming percentage of classical schools are first and foremost Christian schools, this accommodation to modern sensibilities is at least mildly lamentable for it is the medievals who attempted to build a civilization infused

with Christianity rather than the ancient pagans of Greece and Rome. Furthermore, while all truth is God’s truth, there is nothing inherently Christian *per se* in the *Trivium* especially if your emphasis is on its classical origins which again would mark it as the product of pagans. Nevertheless, because almost all classical schools in the United States are Christian, the terms “Classical-Christian,” or now the more appropriate “Christian-classical,” have become so conjoined that they easily roll off the tongue. Thereby, perhaps our Christian brothers and sisters of medieval times will forgive our snub, if our efforts to provide a truly Christian education to our children run true. And, applying the medieval *Trivium* to the specifically Christian nature of Christian-classical schools offers one final area of potential application.

Author Stratford Caldecott’s 2012 book *Beauty in the Word: Rethinking the Foundations of Education* argues that the *Trivium* actually reflects the triune nature of God, and he challenges Christian, and particularly Catholic, schools to incorporate this understanding into their schools’ organization and curriculum. Caldecott implicitly criticizes the “tools” metaphor both Sayers and Wilson associated with the *Trivium* by making the “central idea” of his book “that education is not primarily about the acquisition of information. It is not even about the acquisition of ‘skills’ in the conventional sense.... It is about how we become more human (and therefore more free, in the truest sense of the word).”⁴ Caldecott’s work suggests the *Trivium*’s value as a formula could easily surpass the three primary ways described above by helping students and adults alike understand the nature of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Caldecott, in fact, offers the following “eight threes” inspired from the *Trivium* for educators to consider and apply:

Mythos	Logos	Ethos
Grammar	Dialectic	Rhetoric
Remembering	Thinking	Speaking
Music/Dance	Visual Arts	Drama
One	True	Good
True	Good	Beautiful
Given	Received	Shared
Father	Son	Spirit ⁵

A detailed account of Caldecott’s argument for these “eight threes” is beyond the scope of this brief essay, but

at a minimum Caldecott's work demonstrates that the revolutionary power of this "simple" formula known as the *Trivium* shows no sign of losing its potency or applicability. As committed Christians continue to mine the wisdom of the past and the *Trivium's* formulaic potential, the prospects for truly Christian education to flourish only brighten.⁶ As a productive revolution, the Christian-classical movement, with the help of authors such as Dorothy Sayers and Douglas Wilson, has helped many parents and concerned citizens recognize that American education is hurtling down the wrong path. Thankfully, the Trivium has served as a simple but powerful formula of return to a better and more proven course. Through the insights of Caldecott and others, the Trivium should continue to provide an even more robust vision of an education worthy of creatures made in the image of God.

Viva la Revolucion!

Jason R. Edwards is Professor of History at Grove City College in Grove City, PA, where he is also a fellow at The Center for Vision and Values.

Endnotes

¹ Available online and reprinted regularly including in Douglas Wilson's *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning: An Approach to Distinctively Christian Education*. Wheaton,

Illinois: Crossway Books, 1991 and Richard Gamble's *The Great Tradition: Classic Readings on What it Means to be an Educated Human Being*. Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2007.

² Wilson, Douglas. *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning*.

³ For instance, in interviews I have done over the years with headmasters, I would guess that the book I have heard recommended the most in encapsulating "Classical-Christian" education is *Wisdom and Eloquence* by Robert Littlejohn and Charles T. Evans.

⁴ Caldecott, Stratford. *Beauty in the Word: Rethinking the Foundations of Education*. Tacoma, WA: Angelico Press, 2012. p. 11.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.16.

⁶ I highly recommend for instance *The Liberal Arts Tradition: A Philosophy of Christian Classical Education* by Ravi Jain and Kevin Clark as an excellent place to start for a more robust understanding of both the Trivium and Quadrivium and how the seven original liberal arts can be used fruitfully in Christian schools today.

Transmitting the Knowledge of the Past

by Jill Bergen McKinsey

A common problem of education in postmodernity is that of “fragmented knowledge.”¹ In most schools today, subjects are taught as discreet units. Literature, history, science, and philosophy (when it is taught at all) are treated as disciplines that can be studied nearly in a vacuum. Some reference might be made to complementary subjects, but the active study of, for example, history and literature together is often absent, as the school system, with its tidy system of periods, shuffles students off to different teachers for each subject.

The history of ideas, however, is not neatly divided into subjects. Ideas in science, literature, and philosophy, for instance, are tied together with history by innumerable interwoven strands. One cannot thoroughly understand modern scientific practice unless one knows the history of the Enlightenment, one cannot fully understand our modern political system unless one understands Hobbes’ *Leviathan*, and one cannot understand Stoker’s *Dracula* unless one knows a bit about Queen Victoria and her England. As John Henry Newman says, “[The various subjects] are necessary mutually to explain and interpret each other.”² Thus, the postmodern problem of “fragmented knowledge” is that while students may know things about subjects, they often do not fully understand them because they have not been trained to think of knowledge as a unified whole.

The idea of knowledge being a unified whole is ancient and Christian; thinkers from Socrates to Montaigne to J.P. Moreland have asserted that no subjects can be properly understood in isolation from one another. Indeed, Newman says, “A University, I should lay down, by its very name professes to teach universal knowledge.”³ The same standard can be applied to any institution claiming to teach general knowledge, including high schools. Though one may go on to specialize later in life, it has traditionally been foundational to first get a “liberal” education: one that gives students a broad understanding of the history of ideas.

An additional problem of the fragmented method is the way that the subjects are taught; not only are students not making connections between areas of study, they are often not actually learning anything of value within subjects. Literature, and to an even greater extent, history,

are often taught using anthologies, textbooks, and lectures. Facts are often emphasized over ideas. Certainly learning facts is important; Sayers emphasized the acquisition of a great deal of facts, formulae, and skills in her articulation of the grammar stage of education.⁴ The problem occurs when this emphasis on facts extends beyond elementary school when students ought to be learning logic and rhetoric.

Classical teachers believe that students are not receptacles to be filled by the transmission of facts. The purpose of education, according to Sayers is to teach students to think.⁵ She says, “Is not the great defect of our education today—a defect traceable through all the disquieting symptoms of trouble that I have mentioned—that 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.” In short, students know facts but fail to know what to do with them. Opening up the disciplines to inform each other provides dissonant content that will help students move from mere consumption of facts to dealing with conflicting ideas and come to a deeper understanding of them.

Going beyond the goals of teaching students to think and to re-integrate knowledge, learning about the past, specifically, does something particularly important. G. K. Chesterton, in his column in the *Illustrated London News* once said, “Education is simply the soul of society as it passes from one generation to another.”⁶ The article in which this quotation is found is urging the readers to maintain good traditions that are worthy of being passed down to future generations. As he says in the same column, “...we cannot give what we have not got, and cannot teach to other people what we do not know ourselves.” Chesterton believed that education, when done well, will maintain civilization and inspire virtue in students. The modern focus on science, however, cannot do this alone, because it has little to say about society’s “soul.” He argues that without a thoroughly good “soul” society can only hope to produce barbarians.

What then does this passing on of the Western “soul” look like? Robert Hutchins argues that, “The tradition of the West is embodied in the Great Conversation

that began in the dawn of history and that continues to this present day.”⁷ The Great Conversation, according to a classical philosophy of education, is the dialectic between the authors and artists who produced or recorded ideas. It is St. Thomas’ dependence on the Philosopher Aristotle; it is T. S. Eliot’s allusions to Dante; it is W. H. Auden’s poem “Musée des Beaux Arts” in which he comments upon the painting *The Fall of Icarus*. If these writers and artists are dependent on each other, it would be difficult to understand any of them without looking at the books that, as Hutchins says, “... are the means of understanding our society and ourselves. They contain the great ideas that dominate us without our knowing it. There is no comparable repository of our tradition.”⁸ This tradition is similar to Chesterton’s idea of a “soul”; one could say the “soul” is passed on through participation in the Great Conversation. We could certainly chuck the entire thing and choose to pass on a very recent iteration of that soul, but we would be the poorer for it. The historic soul is hard to escape, at any rate, when new television shows about outlaw bikers are a retelling of Hamlet, popular science fiction writers use Dante’s *Inferno* as direct inspiration, and our basic beliefs about our current economic system are rooted in authors from the 18th century.

What do we look to when looking to pass on the historic soul of our society? In the West, at least, the Great Conversation can be traced from Athens, through Jerusalem, and on to Rome, Paris, London, New York, and beyond. Students ought to read the important works from each time period and place. In addition to looking at the facts (who did what and when), and in addition to learning about the craft of authors, we ought to be looking at what those in the past knew and how that knowledge informed what they did. We must honestly assess this knowledge; it is far too easy to dismiss older beliefs. In fact, it is quite popular to discredit, for example, anything to do with Christianity and its “uninformed” adherents. While it may be true that we know more things about how the world works, about ancient history, or about psychology, it is not true that those in the past were unlearned. The rich history of ideas in the Great Conversation still ought to inform our beliefs; as Chesterton would say, our ancestors ought to have a voice in our current society.

The past is also often treated as fodder for ridicule. We mine it for examples of what not to do.⁹ How often have you heard sermons treating the disciples as prideful and hot-headed? Surely none of us in the modern age would

ask St. Thomas’s questions! Surely none of us would deny Christ! We would never be backwards enough to accept something like slavery. We would never step aside as Hitler overran Europe. Aside from the obvious misunderstanding of human nature, this view of the past keeps us from a very great opportunity to look to those who did do well, and whom we should emulate. Certainly we want to be as courageous as Joan of Arc, we want to be as good as St. Edmund, and we want to be as self-sacrificial as the clergy during the fall of Constantinople. In looking at honest failures and triumphs, we also see God’s work in the world and truth about human nature.

Given that we want students to have access to the knowledge of the past, we must look at everything that contains this knowledge. It is certainly contained in real history books. It is also contained in the literature of the time period, as well as its philosophy and theology.¹⁰ Literature, in particular, can add a depth of understanding to history because a society’s literature shows the outworking of its beliefs in a meaningful way. A few examples will show this.

If students are studying Tudor England, we not only want them to look at political and military history, we want them to understand what the English believed about God, themselves, and their world. We want them immersed in the “soul” of Tudor England. This is not to say that we want to pass on Tudor beliefs wholesale; rather, we want them to understand the knowledge of the past in order to better understand God, themselves, and their world, as well as understand the interconnectivity of ideas in the Great Conversation. Thus, in addition to reading a good history text, they will need to read philosophy and theology from the time period, and they will need to read literature. Shakespeare’s works are an obvious necessity. However, we cannot look at these things separately and think we know about the Tudor era. The transition from the Wars of the Roses to the Tudor dynasty has serious implications for the future of the monarchy in England. When reading Shakespeare’s *Richard III*, we not only want to look at it as a work of literature, we want to look at it as a way of understanding Elizabethan attitudes toward the Plantagenets and the legitimacy of the Tudor dynasty. Shakespeare played an important role in the demonization of Richard III in favor of the favored Henry Tudor. The play is, in part, a commentary on the English Crown and legitimate government. This raises interesting questions about the nature of monarchy and government, and

Richard III, being literature, is as much a part of the Great Conversation of these topics as political philosophy.

Likewise, if students are studying Soviet Russia, an appropriate literary choice would be *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Though it is a fictional account of life in a Soviet gulag, it contributes a first-person perspective on the harshness of Soviet punishment. Solzhenitsyn's commentary, and even the circumstances surrounding the book's publication, contribute to the Conversation in ways that a "purely historical" study cannot.

In conclusion, classical educators have a unique opportunity to teach about the past using several genres of text, an opportunity not afforded to most teachers. We need to keep in mind the totality of the Great Conversation, and not be tempted to treat different kinds of texts as isolated from each other. Though history and literature are often not studied together, when taught holistically, they can help students understand knowledge of the past in ways a study of each alone cannot. We ought to make sure that our questions help students make connections between texts, so that, as Chesterton says, they can inherit the soul of society, not in pieces, but as a unified whole.

Jill Bergen McKinsey holds a BA in European History and an MA in Philosophy of Education. She began her experience with classical education as a member of the first class of Biola University's Torrey Honors Institute. (THI). After graduation, she began working for the high school sister program of THI, Torrey Academy, where she taught for several years before becoming the Senior Academic Administrator.

Endnotes

¹ Dickstein, Klein, and Turk. "Mingling 'Fact' with 'Fiction':

Strategies for Integrating Literature in History and Social Studies Classrooms." *The History Teacher*: May 2007: 397-406.

² Newman, John. *The Idea of a University*. South Bend: Notre Dame, 1982.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Sayers, Dorothy. "The Lost Tools of Learning." Oxford University, 1947.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Chesterton, G.K. "Our Note Book" *Illustrated London News*, 5 July 1924: 6.

⁷ Hutchins, Robert. *The Great Conversation*. London: Encyclopedia Britannica Inc., 1952.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Edmund Burke is often credited with saying something of the sort, but it appears that George Santayana is the main perpetrator of the idea that we are doomed to repeat the history we do not know.

¹⁰ I want to clarify here that, in general, when looking at literature proper, we should be looking at literature actually written in the age we are studying. Modern historical fiction, while potentially useful, is not the first thing to look for when choosing texts. We want to see what people of the time believed and were thinking, not what someone from a later time thought about it. Of course, historical fiction can be a commentary upon the time period of the author, in which case it is entirely appropriate. See my *Richard III* example.

The *Sine Qua Non* is Christ

by Bethany Laursen

Christian classical education is, we believe, the most excellent form of education. But why? What makes our theory and practice good, true, and beautiful? At its heart, Christian classical education both mimics and evokes God's intended purpose for human flourishing. We are guided in our quest by two books: the laws of general and special revelation. Thus, our pedagogical uniqueness in fact emerges as a summary of all that is good, true, and beautiful in other educational systems, unified in submission to the glory of God in Christ.

The Sine Qua Non in Theory

The purpose of education generally is to teach students to pursue and achieve excellence in their chosen field of study. Excellence, or virtue, according to Aristotle, is doing things in the right way, at the right time, and for the right reasons, all of which are determined by the way the world is designed to function.¹ Thus, excellence has intellectual, technical and ethical dimensions, and these must be learned and practiced for students to flourish as human beings.² Many educational systems recognize this holism.

Christian education, as practiced in a Christian school or university, adds to this general aim for excellence a specific submission of all excellence to the glory of God (Col. 3:23).³ Christian education for excellence trains students and faculty to submit every thought, word and deed to Christ *in addition* to the laws of nature by which He established the creation. This requires a depth of life-and-learning integration "piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). As Calvin puts it near the beginning of his *Institutes*, "Nearly all of the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves."⁴ Such personal formation extends human flourishing to our communities and society at large (Matt. 5:13-16).⁵

Many have pursued excellence in the field of teaching, or pedagogy, and collectively discovered several "natural laws" of learning that together form a coherent theoretical

narrative with a beginning, middle and end: learning begins with engagement, develops in stages, and culminates in excellence. As general truths of the created world, they apply equally to all educators.

Students become engaged in a subject when their curiosity is sparked—for students are more like fires to be lit than buckets to be filled.⁶ The spark comes from the sudden strike of a student's own concerns against the hardness of the world, be it an intellectual, technical, ethical or any other kind of difficulty.⁷ The spark of curiosity must be sheltered from the harsh winds of fear and anxiety—fear of being wrong, anxiety over unknown consequences—so that students can take the risks that learning will require of them to satisfy their curiosity. A spirit, or *pneumos* (breath), of levity or playfulness fans the flame at any stage but especially at the beginning.⁸ As the psalmist wrote, "Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who delight in them" (Ps. 111:2).

Just as one builds a fire from a spark by adding sequentially larger pieces of wood, learning also develops in hierarchical stages. Many educational theorists have noticed this truth and posited their own version of these stages. For instance, John Dewey observed the Five Steps of Good Thinking;⁹ Gregory articulated the Seven Laws of Teaching;¹⁰ Sayers popularized the Trivium as Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric;¹¹ Bloom and colleagues built the Taxonomy of Cognitive Learning;¹² Vygotsky argued for a Zone of Proximal Development between the stages of Dependence and Independence;¹³ and Wenger narrated the social learning journey from Novice to Expert.¹⁴ All of these paradigms have their various uses in the life cycle of the classroom, from curriculum development through implementation and assessment, depending on whether the theory is phrased in terms of the teacher, learner, classroom, intellect, emotions, actions, or social relationships. Nevertheless, they share an emphasis on sequential development of increasingly complex, independent problem-solving skills.

To simplify this discussion, I focus on the central cognitive outcome of each stage for the individual student, which

together are summarized best by the Trivium model as Grammar, Logic and Rhetoric, often used in Christian, classical education.¹⁵ Grammar consists of the basic vocabulary of a subject, such as “atoms,” “reactions,” and “compounds” in chemistry. Logic details the rules or theories governing a valid argument in a subject, that is, its peculiar form of reasoning (which must also accord with the general laws of logic). Chemical logic, for instance, includes atomic orbital theory and stoichiometry. Rhetoric is the original, self-authentic expression of new questions and persuasive arguments in the field. There is an aspect of individuality, beauty and elegance that is produced in the rhetorical stage, the mark of what many would call “mastery” of the subject as it echoes the ancient tradition of master craftsmen. Any expert-like activity, no matter how simple, requires rhetorical skill, whether it is calibrating glassware, designing experiments, or developing paradigm-shifting theories.

Therefore, these stages apply to every scope within a field of study. That is, there are stages (depth) to mastering the nested scopes (breadth) of a subject, from its fundamentals to compound concepts to the entire field. To achieve a state of competency and especially mastery at any scope, the student must eventually use a particular knowledge or skill in expert-like situations. An example might be the challenge of using a pipette correctly: this is a fundamental chemistry skill, but it will not be mastered by listening to instructions or watching others do it—it must be practiced by the student in the lab.¹⁶ Moreover, as Wenger notes, much knowledge is tacit, only communicated by mimicking others in the same community of practice until the novice imitates the master so closely he becomes the next master.¹⁷ In developing the stages of learning, then, the task of the teacher is to recreate a series of increasingly complex and independent expert-like events that lead students from fundamentals to comprehension of the entire field under study.¹⁸ These pedagogical principles dictate certain types of teaching practices for each stage of mastery and each scope of study (Table 1).

The Sine Qua Non in Practice

After the students have been engaged with some felt difficulty, the next step is to master fundamentals of the

*1st: create engaging spark, then		Increasing breadth →		
		Fundamentals (Novice)	Compound Concepts (Journeyman)	Entire Field (Master)
Increasing depth ↓	Grammar (Dependent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation • Labeling • Memorization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deduction • Inference • Good guessing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey • Review
	Logic (Developing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categorization • Diagramming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research essays • Debates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy-change • Study design
	Rhetoric (Independent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory • Calibration • Designing alternative taxonomies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hypothesis generation • Error analysis • Report Writing • Presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Novel questions • Inventing new methods • Theory development

Table 1: Examples of educational practices as they instantiate a two-dimensional educational theory for an individual student. The rhetorical practices listed here are examples of expert-like activities from the field of chemistry.

field. These educational practices begin with observations, labeling, and memorization to build vocabulary. Once this mental structure is present, we find the weak spots through categorizing and diagramming new exemplars. To master the fundamentals, students need an expert-like fundamental activity, for example a simple, real-life taxonomy project like taking inventory of one’s lab equipment.

At the next level, students expand their knowledge of the field by combining fundamentals into compound concepts. Teaching/learning practices here include making predictions, debating positions, and creating written and visual arguments. Every field offers plenty of real-life situations where these skills are practiced, and most can be brought into the classroom, e.g., hypothesis generation, error analysis, report writing, and oral presentations.

At the final, most expansive scope of excellence, teaching/learning practices aim for broad comprehension of the field. The grammar stage involves exposure to surveys that review the field. The transition from analyzing to

synthesizing this vast amount of information can be difficult; the first step should be to copy and yet slightly change a master's work. With this basic example of their own creativity in mind, students can design their own approach to the teacher's chosen object of study or research question. To master creativity at a broad scope, a real-life, expert activity could be to choose a topic at will and then invent new methods or theories for investigating it.

The end of learning is excellence: wisely applying this comprehensive knowledge to real-life situations. Thus, it is paramount that students learn to practice true moral and philosophical principles of human flourishing.¹⁹ In Christian higher education, this is the purpose for integrating our Christian faith and our learning, which requires its own educational practices.

Integration of faith and learning is a competency like any other insofar as it develops in stages of increasing scope. Mastery in this area is marked by the explicit and appropriate consideration of the things of God in every field-specific endeavor. Such consideration always has an ethical or moral dimension, as we are to do all things—including lab experiments—with the integrity commanded by God. But if doctrine and theory make claims about the same things, Christian doctrines may also require a Christian student to modify her understanding of a particular theory in her field. This is the case in the study of origins and much of social science and the humanities, since those fields make claims about biblical subjects such as God, man, and morality. Thus, one of the fundamental skills of integration is recognizing when it is appropriate and when it is not. The subsequent ability to modify and mutually adjust theories requires increasing creativity as the scope in focus increases. Eventually, the real-life learning situations become real life itself, the whole of one's life as lived in community before the Lord. Yet though we aim for this total submission, we will not realize it until Glory.

In summary, the task of Christian, classical education has many dimensions. Here, I have laid out two (cognitive depth and breadth) that apply to the individual. As I strive to implement these educational practices for the individual, I unavoidably run into the other dimensions of learning. I see how social interactions—including my own role modeling—enable or disable independence. I learn which teaching practices create a safe and playful classroom. I discern the difference between experiential learning and

experiential entertainment. I recognize when and how a learning challenge is a spiritual issue. Indeed, teaching is part of my own journey to integrate my own faith and learning. My faith requires that I learn to submit my thoughts, words, and deeds as a teacher to the glory of God and the good of others. Because I am a fallible teacher, I am fundamentally a student in my own classroom, learning to pursue Christian excellence alongside my pupils. In fact, this is the telltale. The *sine qua non* of Christian, classical education is not a disembodied concept of "virtue." Rather, it is Christ Himself. His glory and lordship extends not only to our educational theory and practice, but also to our very selves—for in Christ, "all things hold together" (Col. 1:17).

Bethany Laursen formerly taught at Maine Classical Christian School. She is currently an Evaluation Outreach Specialist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is fascinated by the wonders of God's world and how we can ask and answer wonderful questions about it. bethany@bethanylaursen.com

Endnotes

¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Terence Irwin, Second. (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1985), II.6.11 and I.7.15

² Paul D Spears and Stephen R Loomis, *Education for Human Flourishing: a Christian Perspective*, (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009).

³ "The Shorter Catechism" in *The Westminster Confession of Faith, Together with the Larger Catechism and the Shorter Catechism*, Third ed. (Atlanta, GA: Committee for Christian Education and Publications, 1990), 3, Question 1; Spears and Loomis, *Education for Human Flourishing: a Christian Perspective*.

⁴ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, First ed., (Louisville, MO: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993).

⁵ Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Educating for Shalom: Essays on Christian Higher Education*, (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004).

⁶ John Milton Gregory, *The Seven Laws of Teaching*, Unabridged ed. (Moscow, ID: Charles Nolan Publishers, 2003).

⁷ John Dewey, *How We Think*, (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co, 1910), 72-3; Gregory, *The Seven Laws of Teaching*, 39-55.

⁸ Dewey, *How We Think*.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁰ Gregory, *The Seven Laws of Teaching*, 19-21.

¹¹ Dorothy Leigh Sayers, *The Lost Tools of Learning*, (Oxford: E.T. Heron, 1948).

¹² Benjamin S Bloom et al., *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: the Classification of Educational Goals*, (New York, NY: David McKay Company, 1956).

¹³ L S Vygotsky, *Mind in Society: the Development of Higher Psychological Processes*, ed. Michael Cole et al., (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 86.

¹⁴ Etienne Wenger, *Communities of Practice*, (Cambridge University Press, 1998).

¹⁵ Sayers, *The Lost Tools of Learning*.

¹⁶ However, contrary to many of Dewey's followers, experiential education in this expert-oriented sense will not necessarily involve the body if the know-how is not a physical knowledge. For instance, the most realistic and expert-like way to learn to critique and defend opinions is to debate them, which, though it involves the eyes, ears and mouth, is primarily a minds-on—not a hands-on—learning activity. Nevertheless, there are more hands-on opportunities than most teachers recognize, and we would do well to heed the advice of physically-oriented experiential educators.

¹⁷ Wenger, *Communities of Practice*.

¹⁸ Thus, teachers who also practice in their field have an easier time recognizing and designing expert-like activities.

Classical Education as the Education of Judgment, Part I

by *Laura Berquist*

Classical education provides both information and formation. The latter is primarily about developing habits of thought that make it possible to use information rightly. An intellectually well-formed man is able to think about any subject he chooses, for he can acquire the information necessary when he desires it, and his habit of thought will make it possible for him to follow an argument, as well as make reasonable deductions and right judgments about it. In a certain way, that is what education is for: right judgment.

What is Classical Education?

In a way we who offer classical education are like the monasteries in the so-called Dark Ages. Those ages were dark, in certain ways, much as our time is dark. Civilization was crumbling. Uncivilized hordes were taking over previously civilized nations, and the moral code was being eroded. There were great saints and there were great movements in the Church during this time, just as there are now, but there was chaos in the culture and the monasteries were places where the truth was preserved, the moral order was recognized and lived by, and the love of God ruled. When we teach our students in the classical model we have the opportunity to do likewise. We can pass on to our children the great truths of the Faith, the moral values that accompany those doctrines, and we can model for them how one lives in the love of God.

I homeschooled my six children through high school. I knew that in my homeschool I wanted classical education, as I wanted my children to have the wonderful good I had been given at Thomas Aquinas College. The program at TAC was started by those with great experience, graduates of Laval University, taught in the Aristotelian, Thomistic tradition. They had been involved in the integrated program at St. Mary's in Moraga, CA, and some of them had also, additionally, worked in the honors program at Santa Clara University, in Santa Clara, CA.

My husband was involved in all of those enterprises. He had a wealth of knowledge about classical education in its fullness and a great deal of experience

in seeing which backgrounds best prepared children to undertake this kind of education. So the content of the classical program was never an issue for us. We profited from my husband's experience in our homeschool, though not as much as one might hope, originally, due largely to me, and the fact that there is an appropriate methodology to classical education as well as a content. You see, I always wanted to move my children on to what I regarded as the exciting stuff.

I love analysis, and that is what I wanted them to do. I remember I would say, "So, honey, what is the main point of this story?" to my fourth grader, and she would look at me and say, "Well, mom, first this happens and then this happens, and then this...." I would say, "Yes, yes, that's true, but what is the author trying to tell us in that sequence of events, dear?" My little girl would look at me and say, again, "Um, at the beginning there is a girl who...." I thought to myself, "Poor child, what is she going to do with her life? She can't think!"

Then at about sixth grade, when my child said, spontaneously, "Mom, don't you think this story is pushing a point of view?" I thought, "See what a good teacher can do, if she just persists." I didn't understand the stages of intellectual formation as I now do. It wasn't until the third child did the same thing at the same age that I realized it wasn't me, it was them. Just as there are stages in physical formation, there are stages in intellectual formation. Skill in sequencing is necessary for learning how to order thoughts. One has to be adept at a chronological order of first, second, third, and beginning, middle and end, before he is able to order according to importance, or analyze a whole in the light of one principle.

This information about the stages of formation is important in effective classical formation, because it is not enough to give children classical materials; one also has to keep in mind the right way and time to use those materials. No materials, however good in themselves, will be effective if they are not used properly, in the way the child is naturally inclined at his particular stage of formation.

There is a concrete example of the inefficiency

of doing something children are not ready to do, in Ruth Beechik's book, *You Can Teach Your Child Successfully*. Two groups of children were tracked for four years. The first group concentrated on learning to read in kindergarten. That was the primary focus of their time in the classroom. The second group had no reading instruction at all in kindergarten. There was an alphabet strip around the wall of the classroom, but no mention was made of it. These children did not learn the sounds or names of the letters. The primary focus of the instruction of this group was hands-on projects. They planted beans and watched them come up. They took long walks and observed nature. At the end of the year the two groups were tested. Of course the first group did better, because they could read the questions on the test. For the next three years these children were kept together in their respective groups. They were, from this point on, instructed in much the same way. At the end of first grade the 'reading' group was still ahead of the other group on their standardized tests. At the end of second grade, however, they were at parity. And at the end of third grade the 'non-reading' group had pulled significantly ahead.

This story illustrates two things. The first is that we should concentrate on what children are ready to do at any given point. The 'non-reading' group spent their kindergarten year sharpening their observational skills, which is what they were ready to concentrate on. It wasn't that they couldn't have learned to read, it was that learning to read at that point would have taken so much of their time that they wouldn't also work on the skills more appropriate to their level. Since they worked on those skills at the right time, they were in fact ahead of the game in the long run. Work on the right formation activities at the right time, and you reap the most benefit educationally. Second, we learn that we shouldn't be anxious to move ahead. Moving ahead may actually slow us down in terms of our ultimate goals. So, in determining what to concentrate on in your curriculum, don't be too anxious to move ahead to the next stage.

Over time, then, I began to see what children are ready to do when. My husband, Mark, told me from the beginning to remember St. Thomas' injunction to wait to do philosophy until one had the right experience and preparation. Mark reminded me that St. Thomas said, specifically, that philosophy was an adult activity. But Mark also didn't know what, in particular, would best prepare the children. We knew they needed a foundation, so that they would be able to make the right distinctions at the right time, but it wasn't clear what that meant for the young child

and the high school student in math and science, language arts, and history. My husband also told me from the beginning that the best students he worked with in college were smart children who had read a great deal of history and literature, and he wanted his children to do that.

So I experimented on our guinea pigs. For about ten years I experimented, and by then I had a better idea of what worked. As I said, I always had a clear idea of where we wanted to go, educationally, because I thought then, and I think now, that liberal education is the education for a man as a man, and all men should have it.

Classical education is the education that all educated people in Western civilization once received, and it is an education that is ordered to teaching men how to think well about the highest and noblest objects. It uses the best part of a man, that faculty that distinguishes him from the lower animals, his mind, to think about the highest things, and in thinking about them, become in some measure like them. Classical education allows one to order his life, because it gives him the principles in the light of which such an ordering is possible. It begins in wonder and ends in wisdom, which means it ends in an understanding of the causes of things. That is why it is the education of judgment. The man who knows facts, that certain things are so, knows something about reality, but the man who understands the causes or the principles of those facts can order them, see the relation of each to each, and he can make judgments about them. This is why classical education is properly called liberal education, for it is an education that frees. "Liberal" comes from the Latin "liberare" "to free". In having it, the educated man has acquired an understanding of the universal principles and causes of things, and a knowledge of the end of human life and the right order of human action with respect to that end. He has a knowledge of what is most worth knowing, and he is able to direct his own life and the life of the community.

I saw all of that, and I knew it was important, but I needed experience to see how best to get there with my young and growing family. After the first ten years I had a better idea.

In college classical education includes the liberal arts in their perfection (the Trivium: Grammar, Rhetoric, and Logic and the Quadrivium: Arithmetic, Geometry, Music and Astronomy). Students in a classical program also study the sciences to which the arts are ordered, such as the Physics (the study of nature), the study of the soul (De Anima), the Ethics and Politics, then natural theology (Metaphysics) and ultimately Sacred Theology. This is

classical education as St. Thomas understands it, and as he outlines it in his commentary on Boethius' *De Trinitate*.

Before the student gets to this level, though, he should prepare for these disciplines by doing the beginning of every one of the liberal arts and sciences and by developing his intellectual powers and his habits of thought. Both aspects are important. This is the beginning of classical education, so it is classical education for children in grades one through twelve.

I would like to discuss the beginning of the arts and sciences first, and then talk about developing the students' intellectual powers and habits of thought. All learning is cyclical. We learn first on an introductory level and then we come back to the same objects at a deeper level. This is easiest to see, I think, in mathematics. After one masters counting, the very next step is to learn the four operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division) with respect to whole numbers. The rest of one's mathematical career is spent learning the power of those operations. One adds, subtracts, multiples and divides fractions, then decimals and percents, then algebraic expressions, then trigonometric functions and then he uses them in calculus. This process is clearly a deepening of one's understanding of what is first learned on a very simple level. All of this pertains to the foundation of the liberal art of arithmetic.

We follow the same process in every field. What young children do, if those who direct them are knowledgeable of the ends of classical education, are exercises that will prepare their minds and hearts for the deepest level of natural, and, finally, supernatural, knowledge.

The children learn the basis of all arithmetic, develop an acquaintance with the geometric figures, are exposed to great music, and study God's effects in nature, including in the heavens. These are the beginnings of the arts of the Quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy). They learn the basis of all language arts, reading and writing, which constitutes the beginning of the Trivium (grammar, rhetoric, logic).

As the student matures, he continues to perfect these methods and subjects; he keeps coming back to them at a deeper level, developing his habits of thought. For example, in language arts preparation one is clearly preparing for the Trivium done in its fullness. The Trivium, as we have noted, consists of the arts of grammar, logic and rhetoric. It is worth also noting that all of these have to do with speech in some way or another. Grammar is concerned with the construction of the sentence, and its principles are the ways of signifying that determine the parts of speech.

Logic concerns the common method of procedure in all the sciences, and principally considers definition and reasoning, both of which are carried on through speech. Rhetoric is the art of speaking persuasively. In all of these there is a sort of making: one makes a statement, one makes an argument, and one makes a speech. In every course in our curriculum we work on perfecting these first connections with the arts that will lead to the sciences that will lead to natural and sacred theology.

Further, young students work on argumentation, so that they can eventually use rhetoric in the service of the truly noble. We teach our students to summarize, which is to order items according to importance instead of chronology, we teach them to identify an argument and then construct their own arguments. We teach them to develop their thoughts in paragraphs, so that they can develop them later in essays and papers using the rhetorical modes: exposition, argumentation, description and narration.

We explicitly, with our older children, introduce the ends of rhetoric into their regular assignments. I have found this to be very important for the high school student and I will talk about it later on in more detail. Rhetoric is of three kinds: the political, the forensic and the ceremonial. The political aims at establishing whether a proposed course of action is expedient or inexpedient; the forensic, whether an action done was just or unjust; and the ceremonial, whether someone deserves praise or blame. In our high school program we discuss and write about all three types of actions and characters. In my experience, the student in the rhetorical stage is interested in the high and noble, he cares about what is good and bad, and about what is blameworthy and praiseworthy. So the ends of rhetoric are by nature of interest to the high school student. This is a very real preparation for, and participation in, the Art of Rhetoric.

In the commentary of St. Thomas on Boethius' *De Trinitate*, previously referenced, St. Thomas notes that the arts of the Trivium are used to produce compositions, and discourses, as well as syllogisms. We work on those throughout the curriculum.

We prepare for the sciences I have mentioned, too, such as the Physics, the *De Anima*, the Ethics, the Politics and the Metaphysics. We introduce our children to great literature. Through these works the student gains a sort of experience. The great works of literature appeal to the imagination and move the affections rightly. They present or imply profoundly important views of human life and reality as a whole. Similarly, the great works of history provide vicarious moral experience, a conception of human society,

and an awareness of the greatest issues mankind faces. Such experience is necessary for judgment. All of this prepares the student well to read the more difficult things, such as Plato's *Dialogues*, and then the *Ethics* and the *Politics* of Aristotle, at the right time. We introduce our children to the arguments our Founding Fathers had regarding the nature of the republic, and the particular "incarnation" of the form of mixed government that was appropriate to us, in this new land. This is the beginning of the study of the *Politics*. We have the children study natural science, particularly animal behavior, as a beginning to the study of the soul. For those of us who are consciously aware of the fullness of the classical curriculum, there is an intentional ordering of the parts of our curricula to that curriculum, so that the fullness of the classical curriculum can be achieved as excellently as possible when the time is right.

As regards the highest object of the classical curriculum, God Himself, the end of natural and supernatural theology, we are preparing our children for that knowledge from the moment they are born. We do that by the way we live, by the example we give them of Fatherhood, and of sacrificial love, and by the doctrine we teach them as soon as they are able to reason. All of this is their first introduction to the greatest truths, and to the object they will, with God's grace, contemplate in eternity.

So the first point about classical education for children is that it is an education that prepares students for the content of the classical program in its fullness by giving them the beginning of every one of the disciplines: the Liberal Arts, the sciences, metaphysics and Sacred Theology. We prepare the children to do those arts and sciences fully by giving them the beginning of every one. These arts and sciences are ordered to an understanding of the causes of reality in the different disciplines, and all of it is ordered to an understanding of the Cause, Himself, in so far as that is possible in this life, through the study of metaphysics and ultimately Sacred Theology.

There is another point to consider, however. I have alluded to it already when I talked about intellectual powers and habits. To make this clear I want to talk about the difference between excellence and perfection. I think classical education is not only or even primarily an excellent education, but rather it is a way of perfecting the intellect, and there is an order in that process that has to be observed. Let me explain.

I once heard a speaker at a conference talking about excellence in education – her view was that more is better. More work, more facts, more expectations for the student. She didn't want to hear any talk about flexibility – she

thought that was simply a way of excusing mediocrity.

Listening to her made me think about the word *excellence*, and how it should apply to education. It also made me wonder about the difference between perfection and excellence.

When we say something is excellent, like an excellent apple pie, we are saying that it is very good, but there is room for variation. Your apple pie and my apple pie may both be excellent, even though they are not identical. Or think about student papers. I often receive several excellent papers on the same topic, but they are certainly not the same. There can be different excellences in one order.

Perfection is different. God is perfect, not merely excellent. I can draw an excellent circle, one that is nearly perfect, or I can draw a perfect circle. (Well, I can't, but if I could it would be something more than excellent.) Perfect has the notion of complete in it. When something is perfect, it can't get any better. That means there is no potential in the subject that has not been actualized.

This is an important concept, both in itself and for our discussion of classical education. Potency is the ability to be, either to be simply, or to be in a certain respect. The wood of a tree, for example, has the ability to be a chair. It does not have the ability to be a knife. When the wood becomes a chair, it has been perfected in that respect – that is, its ability to be a chair has been actualized.

Now a student has the ability to learn, and when he actually learns we can say that he has perfected that ability. His intellect has a certain ability, or potency, with regard to knowledge, and as he learns, he perfects, or actualizes, that ability.

So when we talk about excellent education there are two notions we should consider. One is excellence – something that is very good in its order. And by itself, that notion allows for quite a lot of variation. But the other notion is education itself – which is the movement from ignorance to knowledge, the perfecting of the intellect. That seems to me the more important idea. How does one perfect the intellect? What is the best way to move the mind from ignorance to knowledge?

[Part II of this article on Perfecting the Intellect will appear in the next issue of *The Journal*.]

Laura Berquist is a graduate of Thomas Aquinas College and the author of Designing Your Own Classical Curriculum. She is also the founder of Mother of Divine Grace School, a distance learning program serving more than 4000 students.

Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works

By James K.A. Smith

Baker Academic, 2013. 198 pages

Reviewed by Stephen Richard Turley

James K.A. Smith's *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works*, is the second volume in what will be a Cultural Liturgies trilogy, which seeks nothing less than to overturn what Smith perceives as the dominant paradigmatic approach to Christian education. In his first volume, *Desiring the Kingdom*, Smith challenges the notion that education is essentially about "ideas and information" which seek to cultivate "the life of the mind" into a distinctly "Christian perspective, or more commonly now, a Christian *worldview*."¹ For Smith, this line of thinking entails the Cartesian assumption that human beings are essentially minds, "thinking things," and thus places a premium on the cognitive and propositional relative to the practical and aesthetic. Instead, Smith argues that human beings are essentially desiring beings, in that "before we are thinkers, we are believers; before we can offer our rational explanations of the world, we have already assumed a whole constellation of beliefs – a *worldview* – that governs and conditions our perception of the world."² But this precognitive sense of the world is not arbitrary; it is developed by the shaping of our dispositions and habits which inscribe what Smith refers to as a 'social imaginary' within us. And the primary means by which our dispositions and habits are shaped is through social and bodily practices. Thus, Smith proposes that we "re-vision Christian education as a formative rather than just an informative project," paying particular attention to how "Christian education shapes us, forms us, molds us to be a certain kind of people whose hearts and passions and desires are aimed at the kingdom of God."³

With this second volume, Smith supplements the central argument of *Desiring the Kingdom* by developing three interrelated constituents of a liturgical anthropology: first, the centrality of the imagination for our desires and actions; secondly, the role of the body in the formation of the imagination; and thirdly, the role of narrative in the integration of body, mind, and environment. "In short," Smith writes: "the way to the heart is through the body,

and the way into the body is through story."⁴ The focus of the second volume is thus the formation of the kind of *imagination* that is behind the *desire* for the kingdom.

The book is made up of an introduction and two parts, each comprised of two chapters. Part One, "Incarnate Significance: The Body as Background," provides an overview of how the body is the site for its own unique form of knowledge. In Part Two, "Sanctified Perception," Smith develops how such physiognomic knowledge primes the human person to perceive the world through metaphor and narrative.

In his Introduction, "A Sentimental Education: On Christian Action," Smith sets the stage with an inquiry borrowed from political theologian William Cavanaugh: how does a provincial farm boy become persuaded to join the military and travel thousands of miles away to another part of the world to kill people he knows nothing about? The answer is not that he has been convinced by an argument, but rather "he has been conscripted into a mythology: he identifies himself within a story that has seeped into his bones at levels not even he is aware of... He is the product of a sentimental education" (16). Smith observes that the dynamics of inscription operate more at the level of the imagination than the intellect, and that our imaginations are shaped by the cultural ecosystem that we both imbibe and shape by virtue of our bodies. For Smith, the 'imagination' is "a quasi-faculty whereby we construe the world on a precognitive level, on a register that is fundamentally *aesthetic* precisely because it is so closely tied to the *body*" (17). Thus, he notes, becoming a soldier, "takes practice;" it involves innumerable kinaesthetic and poetic reinforcements that persuade by attuning the desires of the provincial farm boy in accordance with frames of reference constitutive of nationalist narratives (19). In the interest of Christian education and formation, Smith intends to account for these desire-shaping dynamics by "recognizing and understanding this intertwining of embodiment and story, of kinaesthetics and poetics" (20).

In Chapter One, “Erotic Comprehension,” Smith draws from research that has foregrounded the role of the body in knowledge acquisition. In as much as the mind exists *in* a body, it has been recognized by scholars that we as humans cannot but experience ourselves simultaneously *in* and *as* our bodies. Smith observes: “My body is not something I have, but something I *am*; it is the ‘me’ that dwells in the world” (49). Statements such as ‘My foot hurts’ and ‘I am in pain’ are in fact synonymous statements that indicate I don’t just have a body, I am my body. We experience things done to our bodies as done to ourselves. This means that there is no such thing as ‘disinterested’ thought; all human *perception* entails an aesthetic *evaluation*, such that our thinking is affected invariably by our affections, the ways in which we feel. This combination of emotion and perception, what Smith links to the imagination, is primed or trained by *narrative*, a “storied pedagogy,” that is inextricably linked to embodiment (36-7). It is this interface between imagination, narrative, and embodiment that serves as the nexus for Smith’s liturgical anthropology.

In order to explicate this kinaesthetic link between story, body, and imagination, Smith turns initially to the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of embodiment, by which Smith disambiguates the nature of bodily knowing, or what Merleau-Ponty calls ‘perception’ (41). For Merleau-Ponty, the world as perceived through the body is not merely the foundation for knowledge of the world, but involves its own unique mechanism of knowledge. He argues that humans are neither solely intellectual nor instinctual, but rather we live *between* instinct and intellect. There is, as it were, an immediate relationship between the perceiver and that which is perceived. For example, in order to reach for a spoon, one need not first search for his hand and then calculate the distance between the hand and spoon. Nor is the act *merely* instinctual, devoid of any meaning or significance. The reaching for the spoon is an act that exists in between our intellect and instinct, and it is this interstice that accounts for the *way* the body knows (44). It is the body that mediates our ‘being-in-the-world’ and inexorably shapes our perceptions of the world; I know what a tree is not by merely analyzing it but by what I do with it (e.g. climb it, decorate it, cut it down, etc). The same goes for tables, chairs, and doorways. Thus, “the body carries a kind of acquired, habituated knowledge or knowhow that is irreducible and inarticulable, and yet fundamentally *orienting* for our being-in-the-world” (45).

In Chapter Two, “The Social Body,” Smith seeks to answer how such habituation is acquired. Here he enlists the help of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and his theory of *habitus*, defined (somewhat confoundingly) as “systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures...” (81). Human dispositions or inclinations for Bourdieu involve norms, habits, rules, understandings and goals that reflect the constituents of a wider social order. The important insight offered by Bourdieu is that our dispositions and inclinations are not learned abstractly or intellectually but rather through the unconscious inculcation of objective social conditions inherent in bodily postures, gesticulations and rules of etiquette. The social inscription entailed in various reciprocal practices produces dispositions that are homologous to the social conditions through which they are acquired. Thus, the dispositions of human persons are always structured and structuring; they are produced by the rules, understandings, and goals inherent in the practices constitutive of the larger social order on the one hand, while, on the other hand, the socially inscribed dispositions provide a range of options for the actor to choose from that are appropriate to any given situation. In Smith’s words: “I need the community and social body to enable me to perceive the world; however, the social body needs *my* body to instantiate its vision and practice” (82). Again, in a wonderful turn of phrase: “I learn how to constitute my world from others, but I learn how to constitute *my* world. The ‘I’ that perceives is always already a ‘we.’ My perception is communal, a debt I owe” (84).

This practical sense is not so much a formal knowledge *per se*, but more a kind of proficiency or mastery which does not entail necessarily the ability to mentally process such proficiency. As Smith notes: “There are all kinds of virtuoso players who make terrible coaches, precisely because their practical sense and feel for the game does not necessarily translate into the ability to communicate and teach what they know” (87). This practical sense, this *habitus*, is thus a belief, a taken-for-grantedness that arises as the result of the body’s interaction with its culturally conditioned world. “To have acquired a practical sense is to have imbibed embodied beliefs in such a way that I ‘naturally’ relate to my world and my environment on those terms” (88). This imbibing is acquired through various rituals that incorporate or initiate us into a culturally defined *habitus*, such that the social body in effect co-opts my body (94).

In Chapter Three, “We Tell Ourselves Stories in

Order to Live': How Worship Works," Smith develops the concept of the socially invested body by exploring the centrality of stories for our existence. Each of our acts, however mundane, in fact constitute micropractices of larger macrocosmic narratives. "Such orienting narratives are not explicitly 'told' in a 'once-upon-a-time' discursive mode ... We don't memorize the Story as told to us; we imbibe the Story as we perform it in a million little gestures" (109-10). Stories are imbibed by our bodies through gestures that have a semiotic relationship with our environments; that is, each action of the body corresponds to our environment by virtue of human "meaning-making" (110). For example, the act of kneeling does not merely communicate or symbolize subordination but in fact subordinates the kneeler in the act itself; the act of kneeling *is* the site of meaning. "Our bodies, brains, and environments function together as the three-legged stool of our experience; any meaning is generated at the nexus of all three" (111). This nexus entails a 'feel', an aesthetic evaluation inherent in human perception. It is this aesthetic sense that sketches out our neural maps of the world, providing the plausibility structures by which the world is imagined and interpreted.

This tripartite complex of body, brain, and environment accounts for the primacy of metaphor for how we make sense of our world. Citing theologian and musician Jeremy Begbie, metaphors are mechanisms for the enactment of meaning. When someone makes a statement, "This rose is my love for you," the rose is presented not *merely* as a rose, but as a tangible expression, a concrete manifestation, of the person's love. The metaphor represents one thing in relation to another, and in so doing, it transforms the object of representation; the rose in our example is no longer *merely* a rose, it now embodies an idea, an expression that transforms its connotative significance. But metaphor is not merely linguistic; Smith argues that metaphor is in fact "characteristic of the aesthetic aspect of human being-in-the-world" (118). We experience our world *tacitly*, such that our learned tastes and distastes and the cultural shaping of the senses provide the aesthetic lens through which we know our world. For example, when someone points something out with his finger, we see the finger, but we are not looking *at* it but rather *through* it. Our awareness of the finger is the subsidiary means, the instrumentality, by which we may focus on the object to which it points. For embodiment theorists, knowledge obtains primarily through a tacit collection of subsidiaries that constitute a framework through which our

perception of the world is shaped and focused, very much the way sight obtains through the instrumentality of the eyes. It is through this tacit awareness that we know our world, a knowledge that is rooted in the body and sensory experience. The mental, somatic, and ecological constituents of liturgical environments shape the way we see, that is, imagine our world. And it from this imagined world that our desires spring. We simply do not self-generate our desires; rather, "they are *birthed* in us. There are formed in us as habits, as *habitus*." (125) Our desires thus arise from our somatically- and environmentally-shaped imaginations. Smith concludes:

Our incarnate significance, our imaginative being-in-the-world, is governed by the dynamics of metaphor and narrative, poetry and story.... Liturgies – those formative rituals of ultimacy – marshal exactly these dynamics.... [L]iturgies are pedagogies of desire that shape our love because they *picture* the good life for us in ways that resonate with our imaginative nature ... We are conscripted into a Story through those practices that enact and perform and embody a Story about the good life.... [W]e are incorporated into a social body when the stories of a people become the dominant landscape of our imaginative background – when those stories have worked their way into our 'practical sense' in such a way that they now (automatically) govern how we perceive the world.... This is how worship works (136-37).

In Chapter Four, "Restor(y)ing the World: Christian Formation for Mission," Smith applies the previous chapters' explicated liturgical anthropology to distinctively Christian worship practices. Smith writes: "Worship and the practices of Christian formation are first and foremost the way the Spirit invites us into union with the Triune God." The discipleship inherent in worship is thus not merely imitating Christ, but rather being formed in Christ, absorbed in the shared lifeworld of the church which is the body of Christ. This Christocentric formation entails the 'sending', the *missio*, distinctive of Christian worship, since to be incorporated into Christ is to be incorporated into the *story* of God sending his Son, the Son sending the Spirit, and the Spirit sending the church. Thus, Smith argues that if this sending-action is so central to our Christian identity, then Christian missional institutions such as churches, schools, and universities, must form *actors*. Formative education requires "sanctifying our perception" through

“restor(y)ing the imagination” (160). Restor(y)ing the imagination involves, first, foregrounding narrative and art as primary ways in which we know our world and, secondly, ordering our perception in such a way that we take the right things for granted (161). This entails that Christian education must be rooted in Christian worship and liturgical formation, for it is only through such formative practices that we experience a reformation of our habits and dispositions distinctive to a Christian vision of life. Moreover, Christian worship provides the allure or the momentum for such a reformation by virtue of the divine *calling* that initiates our worship. This calling awakens the obligation of my response to that call, and thus orients my body to a liturgical environment reconstituted by such a call. Smith writes: “Christian liturgical practices and spiritual disciplines are not just means of personal renewal; they remake the world because they transform the perception of the people of God who not only inhabit the world differently but inhabit a different world, a world constituted by God’s creation” (167).

Smith’s *Imagining* is an important work for classical educators. It helpfully draws together a number of embodiment and literary theories into a singular coherent paradigm, a synthetic vision, of physiognomic logic indispensable to teaching in accordance with the nature of the student. While the content of *Imagining* is quite dense (a mere four chapters comprising nearly 200 pages of theoretical argumentation), Smith’s writing is lucid, enlivened by nice turns of phrase and inviting prose. There are also a number of sidebars that illustrate richly his points with literature and film, poetry and litany. As Smith himself admits, however, the density of practice and literary theory will likely be a challenge for most readers, especially those not accustomed to the theorists from whom Smith draws. While his Introduction does map out the scope and sequence for his study, it would have been helpful if Smith had delineated his argument at key points within each chapter to guide the reader through what can

be rather bewildering content. Furthermore, the theoretical focus of the study does at times come across as ironically ‘disembodied.’ There are a number of studies on historic Christian educational practices which could have been analyzed illuminatively by Smith’s practice and literary theory. Finally, though a small quibble, Smith’s occasional social, political, and economic comments can come across as sanctimoniously selective, predictable, and sententious.

That being said, Smith’s second volume of the Cultural Liturgies project does not disappoint as a supplement to his already well-received first volume, and has awakened within this reviewer an ardent anticipation, a *desire*, for the third.

Stephen Richard Turley (Ph.D., Durham University) is a faculty member at Tall Oaks Classical School in New Castle, DE, where he teaches Theology, Greek, and Rhetoric, and Professor of Fine Arts at Eastern University. He lectures at universities, conferences, and churches throughout the U.S. and abroad, on such topics as classical Christian education and modern secular education, liturgy and ritual, aesthetics and beauty, and the historic relationship between church and state. His research and writings have appeared in such journals as Christianity and Literature, Calvin Theological Journal, First Things, Touchstone, and The Chesterton Review. He and his wife, Akiko, have four children and live in Newark, DE, where they together enjoy fishing, gardening, and watching Duck Dynasty marathons.

Endnotes

¹ *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 17, emphasis original.

² Smith, *Desiring*, 43, emphasis original.

³ Smith, *Desiring*, 18.

⁴ James K.A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 14. Page numbers hereafter cited in parentheses.



ARETE RETREAT FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, LEADERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

The Arete Fellowship is a group of experienced administrators from classical schools from around the country. This fellowship sponsors an annual retreat for the purpose of gathering, connecting, and training current and future school leaders and also engages in mentoring, coaching and collaboration throughout the year. Several headmasters will make presentations, with ample time for discussion, collaboration and fellowship. At the November retreat we also plan to feature presentations by a professor from Calvin College.

ALCUIN RETREAT FOR CLASSICAL EDUCATORS

The Alcuin Fellowship is a gathering of visionary educators who are either K-12 or college level educators who have thought deeply about the renewal of Christian classicism and classical Christian education for K-12 schools. The Alcuin Fellowship sponsors an annual retreat to address challenges of curriculum and pedagogy and connect educational philosophy to concrete practice in the classroom. Several fellows make presentations on a theme, and an invited guest educator also presents and helps facilitate discussion. At the November retreat we also plan to feature presentations by a professor from Calvin College.

THE ARETE & ALCUIN RETREATS

**Two Retreats in One —
One for Administrators; One for Educators**

**When: October 9-11, 2014
Where: Calvin College**

See the SCL website for details and to register!



Join the conversation ...

in **AUSTIN
TEXAS**
SUMMER
2014

featured
GUESTS

Pre-Conference Speakers

V. Caroline Minicozzi
Bill McGee
Chuck Evans

Plenary Speakers

Louis Markos
Michael Lindsay
Ken Myers

Breakout Speakers

Peter Baur
Kay Belknap
Lilli Benko
Marcus Foster
Eric Cook
David Diener
Trish Detrick
Phil Donnelly
Andrew Elizalde
Bill McGee
Chuck Evans
Kevin Gerber

Rod Gilbert
Lynn Gilpin
Doreen Howell
Ravi Jain
Lori Jill Keeler
Andrew Kern
Arron Kau
Christian Kopff
Bryan Lynch
John Mays
Karen Moore
Ken Myers

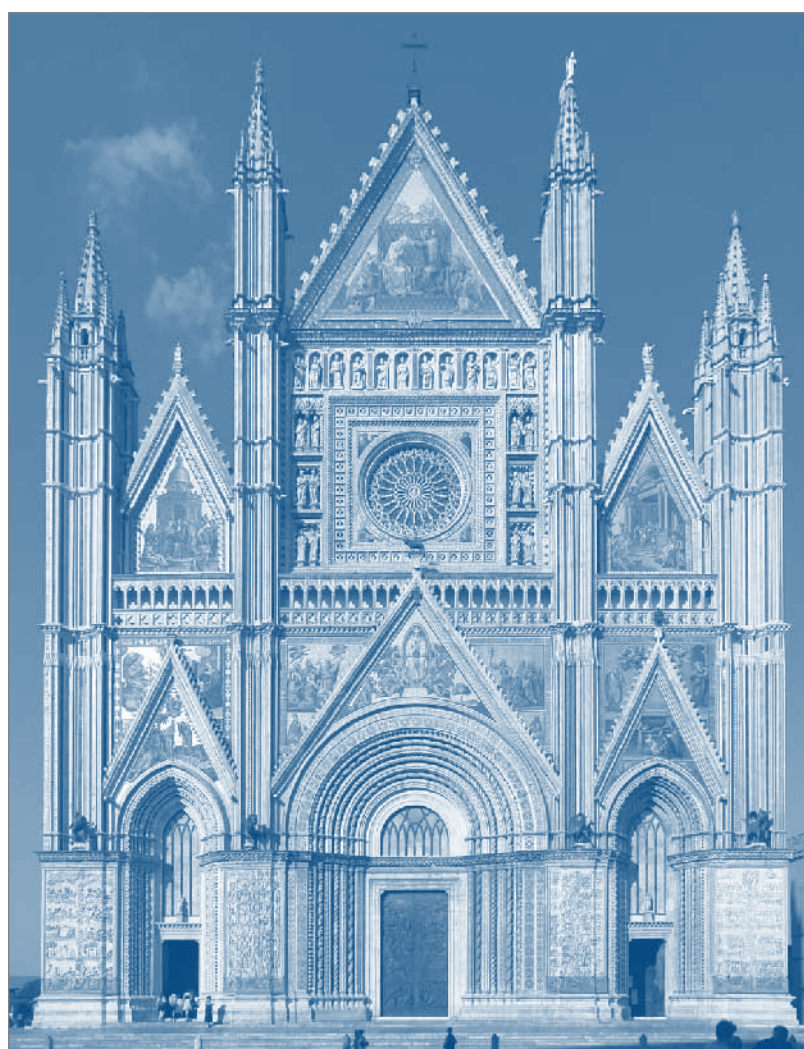
Keith Nix
Christopher Perrin
Christine Perrin
Dan Peterson
Jenny Rallens
Pamela Stanford
George Sanker
Lisa Snyder
Jim Watkins
Josh Wilkerson
Jeff Zweerink

PRE-CONFERENCE: JUNE 25 | CONFERENCE: JUNE 26-28

SHERATON AUSTIN HOTEL AT THE CAPITAL | 701 EAST 11TH STREET, AUSTIN, TX



TWO WEEKS IN *Orvieto, Italy* WITH SCL AND GORDON COLLEGE!



SCL is partnering with Gordon College to offer 20 classical students (who have finished their junior year) two weeks of study in the beautiful medieval city of Orvieto, Italy. Let your juniors know about this great opportunity at a very good price! Here are the details:

- Two Week Program/Seminar in Orvieto for SCL high school students who have just finished their junior year
- Based on the Gordon in Orvieto, semester-long program operated by Gordon College
- When: The last two weeks of July, 2015
- Leadership: Hosted by Gordon College in partnership with SCL as a jointly-sponsored program
- Theme: What Does Jerusalem Have to Do with Athens? Students will explore a related question: "On what terms have educated Christians over the centuries allowed the classical and the Christian – the Greco-Roman and the Judeo-Christian intellectual heritages – to mix it up in the same classroom?"
- Onsite instruction: Students will live and study in a beautiful, restored monastery in Orvieto, and take some trips to nearby cathedrals and Italian cities to study and reflect.
- Staffing: Gordon provides administrative support and logistics
- Teaching: Gordon provides a professor, SCL may provide teachers who assist the professor
- Cost: Approximately \$1400 for two weeks (not including airfare)

See the SCL website for details!

Veritas School
3400 Brook Road
Richmond, VA 23227

SUMMER 2014

Austin
TEXAS

The Society for Classical Learning Summer Conference 2014

PRE-CONFERENCE: JUNE 25 | CONFERENCE: JUNE 26-28

SHERATON AUSTIN HOTEL AT THE CAPITAL | 701 EAST 11TH STREET, AUSTIN, TX