A NEW LESSON in RWANDA

A war, a teacher, and a story

ALSO...
- One Student’s Road to Russia
- A Dinner of Biblical Proportions
- Star Wars: The Surprise Source
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COVER PHOTO: By Val MacMahon. Student Leah March visits Rwanda with Jenny Rallens (not pictured—see story page 8).

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Letters
We welcome letters from our readers! Visit www.ClassicalDifference.com/letters.

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Corrections
VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1, FALL 2015
• The SAT Chart on page 12 was printed with permission from The College Board (www.collegeboard.org).
• The article on page 7 final sentence should have read: “Classical Christian schools around the country work daily to repair the damage.”
A Little Cultural Snobbery, Please
How other cultures help us recover our own

"Well, … I don’t know. That, you’d have to convince me of."

This wry and skeptical reaction from a teen working on her senior thesis said volumes. What statement of mine could have elicited such a challenge?

“There are better cultures and worse cultures.”

Christians believe in good and evil. Beauty and ugliness. Truth and falsehood. But, here in the U.S., why do we struggle if these standards are applied to a culture? Americans might turn a blind eye to cultural differences, but our Christian brothers and sisters overseas do not. I hope this issue of The Classical Difference will illuminate that which we struggle to see.

Some time ago, a group of Chinese scholars was asked to “look into what accounted for the … pre-eminence of the West all over the world.” Their answer: The “heart” of the West’s pre-eminent culture—Christianity. (See ClassicalDifference.com/LinksforSpring2016 for this “Breakpoint” from Chuck Colson.) Why does democracy struggle in the Middle East? Class equity in India? Religious liberty in Southeast Asia? These questions all come down to culture, or what used to be called “a people.”

Early in the fifth century, St. Augustine wrote what is probably the second most influential work after the Bible, City of God. He wrote about the kingdom of God and the impact its people had on culture. He defines “a people”—or culture—as “an assemblage of reasonable beings bound together by a common agreement as to the objects of their love.”

“Objects of their love?” What does this have to do with culture? What does it have to do with your family? In a word: everything. This is why classical Christian education seeks to cultivate rightly ordered loves in our students. We want students to love to worship God, to love others as themselves, to love virtue and hate evil, and to love and enjoy beauty. These are why we educate.

Augustine continues his commentary on culture: “To discover the character of any people, we have only to observe what they love. It will be a superior people in proportion as it is bound together by higher interests, and inferior as it is bound together by lower.” Clearly, Augustine believed cultures should be judged.

Now, before we start asking Indonesian people to wear wool suits, we need to heed Augustine’s words about cultural customs and habits. “It is a matter of no moment … whether he who adopts the faith … adopts it in one dress and manner of life or another, so long only as he lives in conformity with the commandments of God.” People with various customs need not throw them out, but they will be blessed as they conform them to Christ. This is how a pagan solstice feast became Christmas!

Several years ago, a Rwandan pastor visited the classical Christian school in our area. [See page 8]. He was taken by the idea that education could be Christian in every subject throughout the day. He said that, had classical Christian education been widely practiced in Rwanda, the 1994 genocide in his country might not have happened. At first, I thought this statement too bold. But as he explained, I realized that he instinctively understood the importance of paideia [for more on paideia, visit classicaldifference.com/about]. He simply observed that the way we are educated influences who we become and what we love. This is a key contribution of Christianity to the nations—rightly ordered loves.

From Indonesia to Iraq, from Africa to Seoul, from Haiti to the Bahamas, people worldwide see the value of classical Christian education in forming souls, and shaping them to love Christ. Our Christian brothers around the world want to see God bless their cultures, not with the kingdom of the West or America, but with the kingdom of Christianity. It just so happens that, for over 1000 years, the West embraced Christianity. So, it’s a good place to start.

David Goodwin
President, ACCS

Quotes taken from Augustine’s City of God, Book 14, chapters 23, 24, 25.
DIY Parenting
The good, the bad, and the obedient

When the time rolls around for us to talk to the teachers about how our kids have been doing at school, there are only two things we really want to hear: 1) they have been obedient, and 2) they have been cheerful about it. Don't get me wrong—we love to hear that they are excelling academically or making great improvement in a particular subject. It is just that we care a lot more about how they are behaving at school than we do about what grades they are getting.

There are a few reasons for this. The first and most important is obviously that it honors God. A great education is a gift. But it is a gift that comes with a corresponding gift for sanctification. Accepting new challenges thankfully, doing your best as unto the Lord, and even rejoicing when you fail are all things that shape a person. We want our children to prioritize honoring God and obedience to Him. Thankfully that is something that can still be done when the human authority over you is not perfect. Even when that authority has gone so far as to be downright annoying, our children can still thrive through obedience—not blind obedience, but a conscious and deliberate obedience to God.

[Continues on page 6...]

Through the Looking Glass

“After his senior year at Ad Fontes Academy, Michael Fitts chose to enter the Marines as an enlisted member so he could have a voice with the foot soldiers. As his former church history teacher, I was delighted to hear that on his first deployment, he asked his mom to send him two books, one of which was Eusebius’ Church History!” —Ad Fontes Academy, Centreville, VA

HISTORY, FOURTH-GRADE STYLE

“Augustine just wanted to party in high school, but everyone in high school wants to party.”

“Justinian gathered up old Roman laws, dusted them off, and used them again.”

“Elijah was taken to heaven by a twister.”

“St. Jerome translated the Bible into Latin because he thought it was fun.” —Covenant Classical School, Fort Worth, TX

Logos School, Moscow, ID
Century Watch
This year in history: 1816

IDEAS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES: THE UNFORTUNATE LEGACY OF A WELL-INTENTIONED PRINCETON PRESIDENT

Two hundred years ago this year, in 1816, John Maclean graduated from Princeton (then College of New Jersey). He dedicated his life to Princeton as a professor and then as its president.

Founded by the New Light Presbyterians in 1746 to train ministers, Princeton was arguably among the most prestigious and conservative Christian colleges at the time.

A mathematician turned ancient language professor, Maclean was the first and only bachelor president. A devout Presbyterian, he gave his time and energy to the students through the principle of in loco parentis. This centuries-old ideal in education recognizes that God gives fathers the responsibility to educate their children (Ephesians 6), not the government. Maclean watched over those students entrusted to his college and followed their lives even after their time at the school.

[Continues on page 7...]

Great & Small
The classical art of archery

David Jacks is right on target for archery success. As part of the USA Compound Junior Dream Team (CJDT), Jacks is one of only 30 young compound archers nationwide who were selected for the competitive, traveling team. CJDT works to develop the archers’ technical and mental skills to train them for success at the World Championship and World Cup levels. In 2015 Jacks won 1st place at the USA Archery Aggie Invitational at Texas A&M University.

“I ... enjoy the challenge. The great thing about archery is that you can always do better. No matter how good you shoot, you can always put one more arrow closer to the bull's-eye.”

David Jacks is a 9th grade student at Covenant Classical School in Fort Worth, TX.

Submissions
To submit a story or quote, go to www.ClassicalDifference.com/submissions. Published submissions in the “Set Apart” section are worth $25 in lunch money.
Another reason is that our children are in an academically rigorous school. There is so much work to be done, so many things to practice, so many new concepts to master. If they are not cheerfully disposed towards their work and towards their teacher, it is far more likely that they will struggle with academic burnout—being overwhelmed by all the work they have to do, and consequently discouraged and tired. Or, if they are a naturally gifted student, they may slip into a prideful and performance-oriented approach to everything. Neither is what we hope for in our children.

We tell our kids that the first step to being good at something is to be good at being bad at it. If you can do that, when you finally master the subject or skill, you will be good at being good at it. On the other hand, if you start out bad at being bad at it, you will (through much work and trouble) become bad at being good at it.

This is what we hope for most in our children—that they will be good at being bad at things, be good at mastering things, be good at failing unexpectedly, and be good at learning to do better.

RACHEL JANKOVIC is a wife, homemaker, and mother of seven. She graduated from New Saint Andrews College, but mostly reads cookbooks now to avoid story grip (being highly susceptible). Rachel's books Loving the Little Years and Fit to Burst continue to be parenting favorites. She is also a contributor to the Desiring God blog and is featured in their book Mom Enough.

If they are not cheerfully disposed towards their work and towards their teacher, it is far more likely they will struggle.

But what if this line of thinking gets off on the wrong foot? What if education ... is not primarily about the absorption of ideas and information, but about the formation of hearts and desires? What if we began by appreciating how education not only gets into our head but also (and more fundamentally) grabs us by the gut? What if education was primarily concerned with shaping our hopes and passions—our visions of 'the good life'—and not merely about the dissemination of data and information as inputs to our thinking? What if the primary work of education was the transforming of our imagination rather than the saturation of our intellect? ...

What if education wasn’t first and foremost about what we know, but about what we love?”

—James K.A. Smith,
Desiring the Kingdom
Maclean would certainly have seen things differently, had he foreseen the consequences.

What happens when we violate biblical principles for seemingly good reasons? The answer can be summed up in Richard Weaver’s now famous quote: “Ideas have consequences.” Maclean could hardly have foreseen the cultural shift that would come about over the next 200 years. God’s word often calls us to principles that seem impractical or unnecessary when we are immersed in the routines of our time. As we now know looking back through the decades, times changed.

The ideas are bearing fruit. Parents in New Jersey are marginalized. Recently, a New Jersey government worker knocked on the door of a homeschooling family and questioned them for hours based on an unsubstantiated tip about “improper” homeschooling. In another New Jersey case, parents have been unsuccessful in preventing a law forcing their children to use the restroom unsupervised with students of the opposite sex to accommodate gender identity rights. Maclean would certainly have seen things differently, had he foreseen the consequences. That is why we should seek wisdom. As God reminds us in Proverbs 4:5, “Get wisdom … do not turn away from the words of my mouth.” God’s word is full of good ideas. And, we can enjoy the good consequences if we have the faith to believe that God’s ways are always above man’s ways.

Wisdom from the front

It is easy for any educator to mistake the trappings of education for education itself.


Old books are not great because they are old, but because they contain life-changing ideas.

—The Ambrose School

Imagine the joy I get from understanding that my gifts and talents are best used to help our students find their gifts and talents. Of all the vocations I can think of, I am blessed beyond belief to be called to be a teacher.

—Harrison Ross
Annapolis Christian Academy

Do you know a quote-worthy headmaster or teacher? Share their wisdom at www.ClassicalDifference.com/submissions.
A WAR, A TEACHER, A LESSON, and A Story
On my first afternoon visiting Bright Future School in Nyagatare, Rwanda, the 6th grade teacher waves me into his room. “Teacher from America,” he says, “they have asked that you will lead them.” He pushes his white stub of chalk into my hand and disappears into the back row.

The sudden request takes me by surprise. I am scheduled to teach English classes later this week, but today I am the learner, studying this Rwandan school which hopes to import classical methods into its country of terraced green hills, silvery eucalyptus forests, and recent genocide scars.

I step from red dust sunlight into the concrete cool of this classroom, halfway across the world from my own. Forty Rwandan students press forward on their benches. Automatic reflex takes over and I find myself doing what I almost always do when I’m not prepared, or when I want my students to taste goodness beyond any explanation I could prepare. I read them a story.

_The Hobbit_ happens to be one of the books on my iPhone Kindle. I open to chapter 1 and begin, with all the vocal drama I can muster.

_In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort._

Instantly the dear familiar words evaporate the distance between this sweaty, red-dusted concrete classroom and the air-conditioned, carpeted fifth grade room at Ambrose where I read _The Hobbit_ aloud every single year. No matter that my American students have self-flush toilets, smartphones, and organic peanut butter sandwiches while my new Rwandan students have squat ty potties, cracked blackboards, and no lunch at all. 8805 miles away from Idaho, Tolkien’s words are home. Part of my soul dances with the joy of sharing one of my favorite stories with these new friends, my little brothers and sisters, who seem to be devouring it eagerly.

But another part of me wrestles doubt. What am I doing reading a challenging Western book to African students who struggle to track with my American accent in simple conversation? What was I thinking, plunging students straight into dwarves, dragons, wizards, and a fat, pipe-smoking reluctant hero—with no previous introduction to the mechanics of literature? What could classical Christian education from Idaho have to offer these children who are already much richer in faith and community than my American companions and me?

Of course, I don’t really expect Rwandan sixth graders to understand _The Hobbit_. The most I can reasonably hope is that they will be entertained by my animated facial expressions and the distinct voices I’ve developed for each of the 13 dwarves.

But, somehow, they are getting more. I pause now and then to ask comprehension questions, and their answers come at first in hesitant whispers, but reveal an understanding that astonishes me. When the class period ends, more than a dozen students linger hopefully in the classroom.

_Do you want me to keep reading?_

When the class period ends, more than a dozen students linger hopefully in the classroom.

Teacher Jenny Rallens wishes her American students could see what Rwandans already know.
I’ve spent the past eight years teaching some of the most delightful, faithful people in the world, and yet I’ve never encountered children so hungry to learn.

As they sang the hobbit felt the love of beautiful things made by hands and by cunning and by magic moving through him, a fierce and jealous love, the desire of the hearts of the dwarves. Then something Tookish woke up inside him, and he wished to go and see the great mountains, and hear the pine-trees and the waterfalls, and explore the caves . . .

Why do they stay? I still wonder. Is it their unending fascination with my white skin and straight hair? My theatrical reading? Does their culture’s generous tradition of hospitality insist they maintain polite interest? Or is it possible that they have been captivated by this fat, frightened hobbit and want to follow his adventure? We read until the headmaster comes to tell me school was dismissed a half hour ago, and I must leave the classroom or the students will never go home.

They squeeze me goodbye and scatter down footpaths through cornfields and the red dirt road that winds through the village. Several of these children will walk two hours or more on tattered shoes, through glowing fields of banana trees and lush rice paddies, and up and down some of Rwanda’s “thousand hills” before they reach their homes. There they might collect jerry cans and walk another mile or two to bring water back to their family, eat supper, do more chores, sleep on a mat over a dirt floor, and get up well before dawn to walk the two hours back to school.

And those are the lucky ones. How will I ever forget the little huddle of yearning faces outside every classroom window, where the village’s uneducated children stood straining to catch fragments of the stories we read in classroom after classroom? Though public schooling is nearly free for Rwandans, many families must choose between food and paying the miniscule monthly fee for education supplies. And then there are the mothers who buy schooling for their children by selling their own bodies.

I get on the bus and cry all the way back to our hotel. I’ve spent the past eight years teaching some of the most delightful, faithful people in the world, and yet I’ve never encountered children so hungry to learn.

Starving African children with toothpick limbs and bloated bellies so regularly haunt my Facebook news feed that I subconsciously expected to find them around every corner in Rwanda. In reality we met very few underfed children on this trip. Instead, we were welcomed by the most joyful, hospitable Christians I have ever met, whole communities who seem astonishingly free from the particularly Western temptation to control life rather than offer it as a holy sacrifice.

What I would consider heroic faith—a fatherless young woman taking a year off to serve a church instead of pursuing her career “just to say thank you to the Lord;” a large family opening their small home to a half-dozen orphaned children; a poor village pastor providing a lavish meal for me, a stranger before that moment, when I appeared on his porch; a high school student sharing his own two shirts and one bar of soap with a struggling classmate—these are mundane habits among the Rwandans I met.

But still, the word that kept coming to mind was hunger. This love is the natural embodiment of their hunger to follow a God, I realized, they somehow believe is more real, more present, and more good than I do. And hunger was again the desire I sensed at Bright Future School: a hunger for Christ and for education in His truth, a hunger fueled in part by their recent history, a hunger I wish I and my Idahoan students tasted more often.

The reason our group of students, teachers, and parents from The Ambrose School traveled to Rwanda for two weeks...
was to better understand this hunger. We had also been asked to share a few classical methods with teachers and students at Africa Bright Future School in Nyagatare and to try to understand the vision for classical Christian education in this small country healing from centuries of colonialism and ethnic violence.

In the spring of 1994, I was 8 years old, chasing fireflies in Maryland woods, feeding earthworms to box turtles in my bathtub, and watching purple East Coast lightning with my newborn baby sister's fist curled around my thumb.

On the other side of the world in the spring of 1994, genocide was choking the streets of Rwanda, Africa, with dead bodies, babies' heads smashed systematically against a killing wall, a country crippled by the slaughter of a seventh of its people, many of whom were now orphans and HIV-infected widows. In 100 days between April and June in 1994, the Rwandan majority ethnic group, the Hutus, executed a secretly planned extermination of one million Tutsis, the minority ethnic group.

“Most people who participated in the genocide were young people who couldn't read or write,” Pastor Patrick Twagirayesu explains. “Most were impoverished. Many were hungry.” They had not been taught to think critically, to ask questions, to feel wisely, and they were led by a handful of immoral but highly educated masterminds who exploited them. “Lack of education made these young people vulnerable, believing what their leaders told them to do was right, led by the promise of a better life if they killed their neighbor.” So when the genocide masterminds told them that God wanted the Tutsis dead, they obeyed unquestioningly.

Rwandans were slaughtered at nearly three times the daily rate of Jewish deaths in the Holocaust, despite a lack of sophisticated extermination machinery. The murders, designed to humiliate and torture as well as kill, were performed mostly by machete, and where machete was unavailable, by club.

I stand in this slaughter house church only 21 years later. Of a family of 10, our guide Rachel whispers, she is the only one who survived. When someone from our team asks her to tell her story, she shakes her head, presses her lips together and lowers her eyes.

45,000 of those who died in the genocide are buried here in three mass graves. Fresh flowers left on the white stone testify to living hearts that still ache for the dead. In a shaft below the church neat piles of bones are sorted by kind and heaped on shelves. Rows of skulls are stacked on others, many of them pierced or dented from blunt weapon trauma. The shelves are a few stories high, row upon row, bone upon bone. The bones are too many to count. The shadow of an enormous cockroach, illuminated by my flashlight, raises a ghastly antenna over a shelf of skulls. The catacomb smells of dust and bones.

I Corinthians 15 flickers through my mind, and I try to imagine the resurrection, the explosion of life that will burst from these shelves and mass graves when Jesus comes to knit these bones back together and wipe away the tears from the thousands buried here. I want desperately to be comforted by this truth, but hope of a new earth shrivels next to the real horror of broken bones and bloody garments.

God, where were you when this happened to your people, in your church? Christians killing other Christians in your name. I sit down on the steps of one of the mass graves and sob. Our translator, John, takes my hand and pulls me to my feet. “Take heart,” he says, pointing toward heaven. John remembers being six years old in 1994, when he and his family returned from forced exile in a Ugandan refugee camp—in which four of his ten siblings died from malaria—to a Rwanda whose villages, fields, and dirt roads were blocked with brutalized bodies rotting in piles.

How can your people bear it? I ask.

The genocide has taught us the precious worth of every single human
life, John replies, and in valuing persons so deeply there is great joy. We mourn this past, but we take heart because God brings beauty out of ashes. As Pastor Patrick explains later, the passion he and other Rwandan leaders invest in education—and the revelation that Christian education could make the difference, literally, between life and death—was forged in this holocaust.

As our bus bumps along the red Rwandan roads, I can’t stop thinking about a conversation I had with a disgruntled Ambrose student shortly before I left for Africa. All I want to be when I grow up, he said, is a good Christian dad and a park ranger. And all that takes is some science, the three Rs, and God. Why Augustine, poetry, critical thinking, Beowulf, discussions, medieval history? I get that you want us to be virtuous, he added, preempting the usual answer, but why this classical stuff when all we need is Jesus?

How I wish he could hear the Rwandan answer to his question. Because they had Jesus, and they also had a genocide. “I treasure education,” Pastor Patrick Twagirayesu explains one night over steaming mugs of nutmeggy African tea, “because illiteracy hinders your ability to truly comprehend Christ himself.”

Why, we ask, does he—already a prolific evangelist and church planter—consider academics a crucial part of his mission? Why not stick to spreading the gospel? His answer, framed by the backdrop of blood-spattered killing walls and shelves of fractured skulls, takes my breath away. Moral education would have prevented the genocide. Education that is Christian and thoughtful, cut along the grain of God’s own nature and the nature God gave to man, is an antidote to genocidal ideologies and “the key to a better future for Rwanda.”

Consider an illiterate Christian Rwandan peasant, Pastor Patrick goes on to explain, one who might easily have been a killer in the genocide. This peasant believes the gospel and loves Jesus, but embodying the gospel requires the ability to understand how the gospel shapes all parts of life, the eyes to see how genocidal ideology contradicts Christianity—even when the leaders he has been educated to blindly follow tell him God wants him to kill Tutsis. The unschooled person has been prevented from growing the spiritual, intellectual, human capacity for asking moral questions, applying ideals to situations, or contemplating different narratives of action. An uneducated person, Pastor Patrick analogizes, is like a man who cuts down the pillar that is holding up his own house and burns it for warmth, thinking he has done a good deed.

Later that week we return to Bright Future School to teach literature lessons. Pastor Patrick has asked that we model specific practices for his teachers in Nyagatare that he has seen at Ambrose: integration of biblical truth in every lesson rather than only in Bible class, critical and creative thinking instead of mindless “cram-work,” how students can be discipled not just disciplined, pedagogy that forms what a student loves and not just what he knows.

Once again my Rwandan students eagerly eat up the story of Aslan’s sacrifice from The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe. They listen breathlessly, spellbound by the great Lion’s death on the Stone Table under the glittering knife of the White Witch, Susan and Lucy’s long bitter night, the nibbling mice, and the deeper magic of that bright dawn.

Divided into small groups led by students from Ambrose, the Bright Future students narrate the story back, timidly at first but then with increasing flair and relish. Eventually a few groups reenact the story while their classmates cheer. They grasp, with some struggle at first, the idea

Why this classical stuff when all we need is Jesus?
of allegory: how Aslan’s sacrifice is an image of the gospel, and they begin to articulate their own insights about the story.

This is better than Christmas, I write in my journal from an overflowing heart, after spending a few more days reading *Frog and Toad*, *The Hobbit*, and *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* all over the Bright Future School grounds with students, not only during class, but before, after, during every break. They can’t seem to get enough of stories, appearing in pairs or dozens at my elbow, a book in hand, grinning up invitingly. We sit down on curbs, or in the dust, or grassy hillocks, open the book, and read a little bit more about four Pevensies, who somehow belong in Rwanda as much as they do in Britain or Narnia or Idaho.

To be sure, nothing about simply reading Tolkien, Lewis, or Arnold Lobel—whether in Boise or Nyagatare—feels like the antidote to genocide. But then I remember Irving Babbit’s insistence, echoing moral educators through the centuries, that literature is “emancipating,” because it presents us with universal ideas and questions and “leads him who studies it out and away from himself … and servitude to the present” illuminating the demands of the here and with the holiest, wisest of thens and thers.

When my future park ranger asked me back in Idaho why an Ambrose education was worth it, *to prevent a genocide* was not the answer I gave him. But now I wonder if perhaps Pastor Patrick’s answer is the most honest one. We classical educators speak of instilling virtues, ordering loves, *imitatio Christi*, passing the (healthy) soul of society from generation to generation. But Augustine, Charlemagne, Alfred the Great, the medieval monastic tradition, and Pastor Patrick know all too well the dark antithesis to a culture without moral education: churches full of barbarized bodies, small children forced to slaughter their own parents, shelves of battered skulls and bones.

Later that week I hear Bright Future students dramatically retelling the story of Aslan’s sacrifice to each other, to other members of my team, to younger students. I imagine them trekking home to share the story over pots of beans and roasted plantains that night with their siblings who yearn for stories, as much as they hunger for their evening meal. I imagine them finding and devouring the rest of the Narnian Chronicles and other great books, where we left them at Bright Future School. As Rwanda’s thousand hills ripple away under my airplane window, I pray that the heart-stirring hunger—for worship, for a life poured out, for Jesus—we experienced in this community is both fed and deepened as they read these books, and I beg God that after tasting the keen longing for His presence here, I will learn from my Rwandan friends how to always be this hungry.

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**JENNY RALLENS** is a former teacher at The Ambrose School in Meridian, ID. She attended New Saint Andrews College and Oxford University, and is currently pursuing her doctoral degree at Oxford University. She speaks at various events around the world, and is a guest speaker at the 2016 annual ACCS “Repairing the Ruins” Conference. Her practical application of classical methods and ideas with examples from her years in the 5th to 12th grade classroom make her a popular speaker at our conferences.
The Path from an ACCS School to Notre Dame to Russia
Katie Bascom at the top of the world

There’s no telling where a classical Christian education can land you. It landed Katie Bascom three degrees from the Arctic Circle in Ukhta, Russia. However, because she has been fascinated with Russia since childhood, this is exactly where she wants to be.

She was introduced to the culture by family friends who adopted two Russian girls. She came to love Russian fairy tales and stories of Russian history. As a high school student at New Covenant Christian School (NCCS) in Maryland, she was captivated by the writings of Dostoevsky, Chekhov, and Tolstoy. She knew that one day she would learn Russian, so she could read the stories in the original language.

Her progression through the Great Books taught Katie that literature doesn’t exist in a vacuum; to understand modern literature, one has to understand all that came before it. “I could recognize and understand forms because my middle and high school teachers gave me an understanding of biblical allusions and allusions from earlier cultures. I appreciated epics, historical chronicles, and fairy tales. Literature goes in a continuum. It doesn’t come out of nowhere,” Katie explains.

After becoming one of the first New Covenant graduates, Katie went on to major in Russian language and literature, and minor in medieval studies at Notre Dame University. Dr. David Gasperetti, Chair of the Department of German and Russian at Notre Dame, said of Katie, “She is an extremely perceptive reader of literature. Katie has also built an impressive résumé.”

That she has. She studied in St. Petersburg for a semester, wrote an honors thesis on Vladimir Nabokov, served as a Russian tutor, and helped organize Notre Dame’s Russian choir. No doubt all this helped her become a Fulbright Scholar through the State Department, which is why she is now teaching in Russia.

“At first, I was wait-listed. About two weeks after the last day of the waitlist period—and only a few days before I graduated—I got a phone call asking me to step in as an alternate and get ready to teach Russian students in Ukhta!” she recalls.

One might think that New Covenant offered Katie many extra-curricular opportunities to develop such leadership. However, as a new school it offered one choice—Entomology Club. Choir was added after Katie and a classmate started a girls’ ensemble.

Parents often look at a new classical Christian school and assume the lack of extra-curricular programs will limit their child’s success. Katie is one of many students from start-up ACCS schools who found the exact opposite to be the case. In fact, new schools offer students an opportunity to demonstrate creativity and leadership by starting programs; thus, future students stand on the shoulders of entrepreneurs like Katie.

Katie is the kind of scholar who would have excelled with the right books and a park bench for a school. However, she credits her teachers at New Covenant, noting that, “In every subject, learning was through reading, looking for the author’s intent and making inferences. Each teacher developed those processes in my brain.”

She added that her Latin studies taught her how to decline nouns, conjugate verbs, and grow accustomed to learning a language with a different syntax and set of rules. Thus her Latin studies enabled her ability to become conversant in Russian.

One of the first things she noticed at Notre Dame was how her relationship with her high school teachers gave her a unique perspective on college professors. “Many of my public school friends saw professors as givers of information; whereas on day one, I was comfortable...”

The honors thesis experience could have been scary, “but I had already done that twice at New Covenant through my junior and senior theses.”

(Continues on page 23...)
FAST FACTS

- 2,500 students from 42 states across 50 majors
- Beautiful residential campus one hour north of Pittsburgh
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America’s Top Colleges – Forbes
Best National Liberal Arts College – US News
Best Undergraduate Engineering Programs – US News
Top Value Private Liberal Arts – Consumer Digest
Best 379 Colleges – Princeton Review
Best Colleges for your Money – Money Magazine
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Ecclesiastes 4:12

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Handmade cards cover the wooden desks in the bright classroom, and the second grade students read each one carefully, passing them around to their friends. They call out questions about strange-sounding names like “Wynn” and “Caden,” asking if they are boys or girls. They ask if the boy who wrote that he liked “football” meant the American kind of football, or the African kind (soccer). They ask about the favorite foods listed on the cards—some are foods they have only seen in books.

The cards traveled halfway around the world from a second grade class at a classical Christian school in Texas, to this second grade class at a classical Christian school in Tanzania, East Africa. The Tanzanian students quickly get to work on their own construction-paper cards, laughing and talking as they write down their own favorite foods and games, sending back answers to their new pen pals.

When classical Christian education found its rebirth in the U.S. more than 25 years ago, no one would have imagined that this model of education could create a bridge between continents. But from recitations and Scripture memory, to classical literature and critical thinking skills, students at Rafiki schools in 10 countries in Africa share common ground in education with their counterparts in the United States.

The Rafiki Foundation was formed in 1985 with a mission to help Africans know God through Bible study and raise their standard of living in various ways. Over the decades the mission expanded to meet the needs of widows and orphans in 10 African nations, providing loving group homes for children, and marketing of crafts for widows, while continuing to provide Bible study materials for all participants. Originally Rafiki planned to house and care for the children in its Rafiki Villages, and send them to school in their local communities, says Karen Elliott, executive director of the Rafiki Foundation. But it became clear...
that if they really wanted to improve these children’s lives and give them a brighter future, Rafiki would need to provide an education for them as well.

Rafiki’s founders were familiar with classical education because of the Geneva School, a classical Christian school in Orlando, Florida, where Rafiki has its international headquarters. To the founders and Rafiki’s board members, there was no other choice but the classical Christian education model for the Rafiki schools.

“If you are doing Christian education, then the only pedagogy to marry with Christian education is classical pedagogy because it pursues truth,” says Elliott. “You can’t really marry a progressive education with a Christian education.”

Progressive education is the antithesis of what African schools need, Elliott says, because it trains students to be cogs in a wheel by teaching them to check boxes and regurgitate information without weighing and truly examining that information. A liberal arts education, on the other hand, “is the education of free men.” Classical education rooted in biblical truth teaches students to use critical thinking skills, to ask questions, to probe deeply to seek out truth, wisdom and virtue.

Unfortunately, the packaged classical Christian curriculum available for purchase in the U.S. is both cost prohibitive for the ministry and culturally inappropriate for Rafiki schools. So Rafiki hired classical educators to write curriculum for a specifically African context: mangoes and passion fruit instead of apples and blueberries; Dar es Salaam instead of Dallas; Chinua Achebe alongside Charles Dickens.

To prepare Rafiki graduates to succeed in a global marketplace, the Rafiki curriculum maintains much of the foundations of western civilization taught in North American classical Christian schools, but African history and culture are emphasized as well. True to classical education,
Rafiki schools prioritize fine arts education—something generally unheard of in traditional African schools. As a result, they are always looking for music and art teachers from established classical schools to volunteer at Rafiki schools, not only to teach students, but to train national teachers as well.

Rafiki schools serve the orphans who live in the Rafiki Villages, as well as day students from the surrounding community on a space-available basis. The school fees for day students are very low compared to other private schools, and their reputation for providing a loving Christian environment and outstanding academics has created high demand. In Rwanda recently, a woman who was 7-months pregnant asked if she could register her unborn child to make sure she had a place at the school. At the school in Tanzania, more than 100 mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles and children waited for hours to interview for only 18 available spots. One 9-year-old girl went home in tears when she was told there was no room in her grade, then she decided to fast and pray, believing in faith that God would open a spot for her. (He did.)

When the handmade cards from Tanzania make their way back to Texas, a similar scene will unfold in a bright, second-grade classroom with construction-paper cards spread across desks, passing from one student to the next. Children will ask questions about strange-sounding names like “Kindness” and “Innocence,” and what this food called “ugali” is like. In a few years, they will all—Tanzanian and American alike—be reading “The Bronze Bow” and reciting long passages from the book of Romans. They will discuss Plato, democracy, and the ethics of slavery. And they will all, Lord willing, become lifelong learners who use the tools of their education to glorify God with their lives.

AMY BURGESS is the Admission and Marketing Director for Covenant Classical School in Fort Worth, Texas. She received her B.A. in Communication from Biola University. Amy and her husband, Josh, have two children who attend Covenant.

“The only pedagogy to marry with Christian education is classical pedagogy because it pursues truth.”
The size and scope of the federal government has ballooned since the early 20th century. The advent of the bureaucratic state erodes the American founders' original idea of constitutional federalism and wages war on principles of self-government. This has direct ramifications on how American children are educated.

In *Democracy in America*, 19th-century Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville famously observed that the maintenance of a democratic republic depends on the manners or customs of the people. He coined these manners the “habits of the heart.” These habits must be preserved at the smallest levels of society. But, he warns that “administrative power” may overtake these associations if we’re not careful. His warning has manifested. But there is hope. The parental choice movement in education seeks to regain federalism in education. Efforts to restore the content of that education—the “habits of the heart”—through classical education models can then return.

The first major intervention of the federal government directly into the k–12 system occurred as one of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s war on poverty initiatives—the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

ESEA was later revived and became the 2002 No Child Left Behind law in its seventh reauthorization, growing the 31-page document into over 600 pages of federal regulations and $25 million in annual spending. Since 1970, the federal government has spent over two trillion dollars on k–12 education. The result? Student achievement in math and reading has flat-lined since the 1970s, American students are still performing in the middle of the pack compared to their international peers, the achievement gap between black and white students has grown by five percentage points in 2014, and recent data from the U.S. Department of Education show that nearly one in three fourth-graders cannot read at a basic level, only 26 percent of high-school seniors are proficient in math, and just 38 percent are proficient in reading.

Adding to this trend of increased centralization, in 2009 the federal government tied $4.35 billion in competitive grants and No Child Left Behind waivers to states who adopted administration approved national education standards (the Common Core).

American education is at a crossroads. One direction continues the trend of centralization. The other direction restores the substance and methods that reinforce Tocquevillian habits of the heart. Parental choice in education is achieved through changes in policy at the state and local level that move accountability in education from Washington back to those closest to the children: the parents. This is the first and necessary step toward the habits needed for a flourishing society.

The choice movement is booming. There are now 59 private school choice programs operating in 28 states and the District of Columbia. Private school choice measures allow parents to use a portion of the funds that would have followed their child to public school, or a scholarship from a charitable donation, to send their child to the schooling option that best meets their educational needs.
Nobel laureate Milton Friedman conceived the original voucher idea in 1955. In his foundational essay “Free to Choose,” he described an education system where every parent, regardless of income, was able to send their child to a school of their choice with their share of public funding. He understood this to be a prerequisite for “a stable and democratic society,” in which there is “widespread acceptance of some common set of values and without a minimum degree of literacy and knowledge on the part of most citizens.”

But while school choice is needed to restore federalism, classical models of education are needed to restore the values, literacy, and knowledge needed for productive citizens.

Classical education provides substance and pedagogy for a functioning, well-ordered society. Its proper role is the development of moral and thoughtful human beings, without which, the American founders and Tocqueville understood, a democratic republic is unsustainable. The public education system has become a product of the administrative state, which is not beholden to virtue, tradition, and character. Classical education, on the other hand, forms the soul of the student in what is true, good, and beautiful.

When Tocqueville visited America he observed that democracy thrived because the nation’s civil associations flourished, by which he meant the schools and churches. It was in those associations that children were taught “habits of the heart.” And it was those habits that, Tocqueville argues, provided for the favorable “maintenance of the political institutions.” America has not yet succumbed to the Leviathan of the federal education system, but it could.

BRITTANY CORONA is a state programs and government relations director for the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice and formerly was an analyst for the Heritage Foundation. She is a John Jay Institute fellow and a Claremont Institute Publius fellow.

EDITOR’S NOTE: The ACCS, as a member standard, does not permit schools to take money directly from the state (vouchers). We guard our independence carefully. We do, however, support efforts that benefit parents directly, as long as they do not have regulatory strings attached.

God bless you, and all our rulers, and give them the wisdom, as I am sure they have the will, to fortify us against the degeneracy of one government, and the concentration of all its powers in the hands of the one, the few, the well-born or the many.

—Letter of Thomas Jefferson to Joseph C. Cabell
Monticello, February 2, 1816
What do you think?

This month’s poll

Are vacations essential, just another American commercial venture, or somewhere in between? We’d like to know where you stand (or sit, if you’re on vacation).

- The holiest of all holidays are those kept by ourselves in silence and apart, the secret anniversaries of the heart, when the full tide of feeling overflows.
  --Longfellow

- Thanks to the interstate highway system, it is now possible to travel from coast to coast without seeing anything.
  --Charles Kuralt

- If your work requires you to travel, you will understand that there’s no vacation destination like home.
  --Park Chan-wook

It is not more vacation we need—it is more vocation.
  --Eleanor Roosevelt

The ant is knowing and wise, but he doesn’t know enough to take a vacation.
  --Clarence Day

The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only a page.
  --St. Augustine

Poll: Group Projects?

THE RESULTS ARE IN!

Are group projects a worthwhile teaching tool in the classroom? Much to the dismay of the conductor of this poll (a die-hard anti-group-project activist), 100% of respondents were in favor of group projects. The following comment by “J” offers a unique perspective:

Group projects demand many actions similar to those required when committing to following Christ. First and foremost, denying oneself. For a group project to truly succeed, each person must lay aside their own need and desire for recognition and independence. Selflessness is required. Honor is needed. Submission to a will other than one’s own is learned. None of this is done in a forced or evil way, rather in an educational and experiential manner.

—J

Weigh in at www.ClassicalDifference.com/poll

RESULTS PUBLISHED IN THE NEXT ISSUE!

THE PICKUP LINE

An epic from the pickup line as Beowulf’s mom might have seen it

I am mom! Hear ye, I have arrived in the parking lot! Though I am besmirched with lint from the laundry, I am on time! Though I am dreading homework, my car doors do open! Though I lack dinner options, I rejoice!

Ye other staid pilgrims who make harbor in this same parking lot each day, get out of my way, for I have made a long journey from the far North (side of town), yea, even from one county over, while many of ye noble and gentle locals do drive less than 10 minutes to get here.

Amid cheering welcome do I open my gates, my Chevy galleon choked to the very gunwales with choicest tomes, casks of water, and great backpacks of finest canvas. This is your flagship! Enter and be glad.

For I will usurp the cunning artificers who do not pull forward. Before God and my fellow man do I declare that I have the right of way! We make longer journey than most of thou, therefore witness my courage as I cut you off, and then turn left! For the sake of all that is good and for mine cookies which I left in the oven, part and make way! To you who somehow managed to get into the shorter line do I guarantee safe passage, once I am out of here.

Good day, my fellow travelers. To you do I make promise and pledge that I will not again read my student’s copy of “Beowulf” before pickup tomorrow!

—A MOM FROM THE NORTH
I Wish I Had More Time to Read …

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER
The essence of optimism is that it takes no account of the present, but it is a source of inspiration, of vitality and hope where others have resigned; it enables a man to hold his head high, to claim the future for himself and not to abandon it to his enemy.

—Letters and Papers from Prison

JAMES K.A. SMITH
Even the secularist is pressed by a sense of something more—some “fullness” that wells up within (or presses down upon) the managed immanent frame we’ve constructed in modernity.

—How (Not) to Be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor

FRANCIS A. SCHAEFFER
The basic problem of the Christians in this country in the last eighty years or so, in regard to society and in regard to government, is that they have seen things in bits and pieces instead of totals.

—A Christian Manifesto

NANCY PEARCEY
The only basis for genuine human rights and dignity is a fully biblical worldview. Because Christianity begins with a transcendent Creator, it does not idolize any part of creation. And therefore it does not deny or denigrate any other parts. As a result, it has the conceptual resources to provide a holistic, inclusive worldview that is humane and life affirming.

This is good news indeed. It is the only approach capable of healing the split in the Western mind and restoring liberty in Western society.

—Saving Leonardo: A Call to Resist the Secular Assault on Mind, Morals, and Meaning

walking up to my professors and having a conversation with them.”

Furthermore, she realized that the honors thesis experience could have been scary, “but I had already done that twice at New Covenant through my junior and senior theses. I knew how to find information. I knew the scope of a 30-page paper. By trial and error I knew how much info to fit in and how broad or narrow the questions could be. I could handle the questions, the mental prep, and the practice.”

Katie will complete her year of teaching in Russia this summer, then seek a teaching job. Until then, she will keep looking for the northern lights for which Ukhta was nicknamed “The Northern Pearl”—another experience to add to her growing list.

JEANETTE FAULKNER is a former print and broadcast journalist who currently teaches logic, Latin and humanities at Grace Classical Christian Academy in Granbury, Texas.
The students sat outside and drew with charcoal. Gianna has a great eye for details. She is from Australia and just moved to CCA this year. She enjoys drawing and plans to pursue a career in art and design.

Evalyn added her signature to the piece by focusing on light and dark tones. Shading is her favorite part of developing her pieces, and she focuses on items in God’s creation. She is also “thankful for the time of Mr. Sanders” and his weekly art classes.

Christian artists do not need to be threatened by fantasy and imagination, for they have a basis for knowing the difference between them and the real world “out there.” The Christian is the really free person—he is free to have imagination. This too is our heritage. The Christian is the one whose imagination should fly beyond the stars.

—Francis A. Schaeffer, Art & the Bible
Fill our frames 🍃

We like to fill our hallway with student art, poetry, essays, short stories and other good works.

Send your submissions to www.ClassicalDifference.com/submissions. Published student works earn a $10 Amazon gift card for purchasing classic books. Or crayons.

If I Were a Tree
Sophia Foster, 4th Grade
Covenant Classical School
Fort Worth, TX

If I were a tall and growing tree
With leaves as green as green could be,
I would grow on a cliff high above the sea.
I would sway and swish and simply be
A tree on a cliff high above the sea.

When autumn came and my leaves went free,
I’d stand, just a skeleton you’d barely see.
And when no one was there to see a leafless me,
I’d change into a beautiful and bright green tree.
Then someone would see my green against the sea,
And they’d say, Oh, what a lovely tree!

Taylor Perdue, 10th Grade
Covenant Christian Academy
Colleyville, TX
Assignment: Drawing trees from observation

The students sat outside and drew with charcoal. Taylor loves art, especially drawing.

Do you recognize this drawing?

Our photographer shot it at a classical Christian school last fall, but the artist remains a mystery. Please let us know who you are so we can credit you! Send a note to: www.ClassicalDifference.com/letters.
The Great Stories, Retold, Form a People

Lucas borrowed much from a time long ago, but not so far away

I will not betray the republic. My loyalties lie with the Senate.

—Anakin Skywalker

Just after the buzz of the latest installment in the Star Wars series—The Force Awakens—here’s some fodder for conversation.

A plot is hatched against the Console’s life as he moves to consolidate his power and marginalize the Senate. Discovered, the would-be assassins flee for their lives. Tracked down on the battlefield by the Console’s chosen apprentice, they are all killed one by one. The Senate turns over all power to the new apprentice-emperor, who sets about conquering and subduing the outer territories. The new emperor brings about the greatest military power known until that time, and succeeds in ruling the empire with an iron grip. He establishes the red-clad praetorian guard to loyally support the Empire in the capital. Rebel bases in the territories organize to restore the Republic, but years of military campaigns stamp them out.

LucasFilms? No, this is the true story of the founding of the Roman Empire under Caesars Julius and Augustus.

George Lucas borrowed much from a time long ago, but not so far away. If your history is a little fuzzy on the rise of the Roman Empire, you might be surprised at just how much Star Wars lore comes from histories and civilizations relatively close to home (relative, say, to Tatooine). His plot parallels much from the period of the Roman-Republic-turned-Empire (509 BC to 14 AD)—the Republic, the Senate, the Praetorian Guard, the practice of imperial succession through a single adopted heir, name changes (apprentice Octavius becomes Caesar Augustus), power transfer, outer territories (ironically, Tatooine is actually filmed in Tunisia, which was once part of the “outer rim” of the Roman Empire), a hub of civilization (Rome = Coruscant), and the list goes on. It doesn’t stop in Rome. Lucas combines Eastern religion, and adds a tantalizing portion of Hollywood action to extend a story that has shaped our common experience with our neighbors for nearly 40 years.

But the plot thickens. If Lucas borrowed his story from the first two Caesars, Caesar Augustus did some borrowing of his own. The new emperor commissioned the “Star Wars” of his time—an epic poem called The Aeneid. For Augustus, The Aeneid was more than a story—it was his cultural weapon. The Aeneid tells the story of a Trojan general on the run from his Greek conquerors, as he establishes Rome through duty and divine fate. The story inspired the great Roman nation under an emperor. Augustus’ “Death Star” was not powered by a hyper-matter reactor, but by a poet named Virgil. So why would the most effective military emperor in history commission a story as an instrument of conquest? Caesar knew two things: You rule with the hearts of the people, and people’s hearts are shaped through stories. Over time, The Aeneid shaped the affections of the Roman people toward nationalism for Rome, and its emperor.

Like Lucas borrowed from Rome, Augustus and Virgil borrowed their back story from Homer, the Greek poet who wrote two stories—The Iliad and The Odyssey—that cultivated the Greek’s love of individual glory and individualistic heroes. These Greek values penetrated Rome’s culture so deeply that they threatened the very idea of Rome as a divine state. You either love to be a great hero for yourself, or for Rome, but you have to pick one.

With so many of history’s great civilizations growing out of story, we have to ask, “What cultural values is Star Wars promoting?” Most students at classical Christian schools read the formative stories of the West. Why do we read them? C.S. Lewis said that we “need something to set against the present, to remind us that the basic assumptions have been
Will hating anything, even evil, corrupt you? Is death a natural part of life? Is fear the path to destruction?

As your children enjoy the enticing episodic stories of George Lucas, we want them to see through the assumptions. We want them to draw out the values embedded deeply within Star Wars and question them: Will hating anything, even evil, corrupt you? Or are we called to hate evil? Is death a natural part of life? Or, is it an apparition brought about by sin over which Christ is victorious? Is fear the path to destruction? Or can fear be the beginning of knowledge? The best way to help your children grow to become wise is to engage them on this level, and to make sure they have "lived in many times and therefore in some degree are immune from the great cataract of nonsense that pours from our age."
American Class

Ho-hum headlines

Somewhere along the way, the conversation about education became somewhat bureaucratic. If you had scrolled through the main headlines on the front page at www.edweek.org on Friday, Dec. 11, 2015, here is what you would have seen:

- President Signs Every Student Succeeds Act
  For the past quarter century, federal education policy has moved in one direction: toward...a greater reliance on standardized tests, and a bigger role for Washington...

- Positive Mindset May Prime Students’ Brains for Math
  When students have a positive attitude about math, their brains operate more efficiently, according to researchers from Stanford University...

- U.S. Supreme Court Takes Another Stab at Affirmative Action
  The U.S. Supreme Court was deeply divided on Wednesday about the future of affirmative action in college admissions and what to do about a university plan that sometimes considers race...

- Districts to Share Social-Emotional Measures to Inform Accountability
  A group of California districts has been working for years on a...plan to factor measures of students’ social-emotional skills and academic mindsets into accountability scores for their schools.

- Sex Education Programs Fall Short of CDC Recommendations
  More than half of high schools in 44 states surveyed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention teach all 16 topics recommended by the agency as "essential components of sexual health education,"...

- District, Feds Reach Settlement Over Transgender Student’s Locker Room Use
  A suburban Chicago district has reached a settlement with the U.S. Department of Education’s office for civil rights over its treatment of a transgender student...

Since these headlines didn’t provoke us to read, we imagined a series of headlines that might have been...

- President Signs Every Student Can Go to the School of Their Choice Act
- Positive Mindset Good for the Soul
- U.S. Supreme Court Declares the Federal Government has No Standing to Regulate Schools
- To Inform Accountability, Districts Will Measure Contributions of Their Graduates to Society
- In an Unexpected Turn, the State has Declared that Parents are Responsible for Sex Ed
- To Avoid Further Transgender Conflicts, Boys will be Considered Boys, and Girls will be Considered Girls

Is Common Core dead?

In December of 2015, Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which effectively ends Washington’s Common Core mandate [World Magazine, December 26, 2015]. A month earlier, Massachusetts, a former supporter of the Common Core, announced its withdrawal from the national standard. The intertwined nature of the Common Core with college testing, state access to federal funding, accreditation, and a host of other educational mandates creates space for the federal government to reassert its position in k–12 education. Since No Child Left Behind was passed in the early 2000s, federal dollars have been attached to standards, which attaches them to just about everything else in your child’s school, unless the school is truly independent. When it comes to government influence in education, the trend will almost certainly keep Common Core alive in some form.

The good news is that the new bill retains protection for private schools that do not accept federal money. ACCS schools, as a condition of membership, agree not to accept federal money that would compel them to accept these types of strings. And, our accreditation is independent of reciprocity agreements that would shake our schools to these standards.
Late Again!

Unexpected thoughts for the drive

I find morning prayer easy. Today is no exception.

**MORNING PRAYER:**

Good heavens! Where has the time gone? It’s already 6:00? Where on God’s green earth are my glasses? There ... oh for goodness’ sake, it’s actually 6:30. If only I can get the kids to school on time this one day, I promise to be a nicer driver forever! Or better yet, God, give our school some money for a bus!

Ten minutes later, hair in a bun, jeans on, flyby wake-up calls complete, and eggs scrambled with minimal shells, I’m feeling like something is missing. I have a rating system for “that nagging feeling” and this is about an 8 out of 10. Impressive considering that a 10 usually means a trip to the ER. It will come to me.

Child #3 arrives first to the table, chanting a Latin conjugation for fun. Child #1 shows up next, promptly telling #3 to be quiet because no one wants to listen to that sort of thing at 6:30 am and he is doing it wrong anyway. I wonder, will this knowledge ever be useful for something other than arguing at breakfast?

Then #1 asks, “Mom, where’re our lunches?”

“It’s pizza day.”

“Pizza day is tomorrow.”

Three minutes later, the kids all have a frozen burrito and a cup of applesauce. Oh, for a cafeteria and hot lunch!

Child #2 enters singing “Let It Go,” as if instructing her brothers, who respond in their birth order by telling her to be quiet too, and by joining in, respectively. After two trips upstairs she still lacks her sweater, backpack, and correct shoes.

She stops long enough to tell me we only have two minutes, and begins again where she left off. “Let it go ….”

It hits me. Registration deadline. TODAY. And I can’t let it go.

“Everyone stop!” I ye ... request. “Where are the registration forms?”

Silence. “You mean these, under the syrup?”

**MORNING PRAYER 2:**

Good Lord Almighty, who put the syrup on top of the registration forms? I know, I complain about syrup getting all over the table, but couldn’t they have used a napkin? Doesn’t anyone around here have a shred of wisdom? Don’t they teach that at school?

Finally, we are in the car, with a solid brown block of registration forms, lunches containing artificial ingredients, and purple moccasins in lieu of black Mary Janes. And I reflect.

This pile of forms represents more than procrastination. They mean another year of hectic mornings and large monthly payments and sometimes I wonder, is life really supposed to be like this?

Well-known verses unexpectedly come to mind. “To whom much is given ... write these on your forehead ... hear what I say to the seven churches ... take every thought captive ...”

It looks like we’re going to be on time. I let the pushy driver in.

“Bye, mom!” #3 yells and waves as he heads into the school. #2 blows an obligatory kiss. #1 walks nonchalantly, until he sees a buddy and his face lights up.

We have arrived. My children will now spend the day at a place where the gospel is freely taught, the content is meaningful, the rooms are warm, no one cares about the style of their clothes, everyone knows their names, God’s words are literally on the doorposts, and the overarching goal is to help them use God’s gifts to their greatest good and His greatest glory.

Not many people have days like this.

16,000 hours. That’s how long my children have before they leave to tackle the world on their own. 2,000 days. I head into the school office.

We’ll make each one of them count, syrup and all.

—Stormy Goodwin
Why Classical? Classical Christian schools are popping up in various countries around the globe—Australia, Nigeria, and the Bahamas, to name a few. While the classical method is beginning to spread abroad, it has found good soil in Asia and is particularly taking root in Indonesia.

According to Maryani Budiman, the head of school at Cahaya Bangsa Classical School in Padalarang, Indonesia, the classical method challenges students to question and think critically, skills that are not emphasized within Indonesia’s current system of education. She says that Indonesia’s educational methods, in both public and private schools, are uniform at every level. “They do not really educate the students because the education stays the same.” The system of education in Asia is known for stressing rote learning and rigorous testing. Classroom culture is typified by the idea of the teacher pouring out knowledge and the student simply receiving
"From elementary up to high school," Maryani states, "we just stay in grammar school, in the grammar style of learning." As Dorothy Sayers might describe it, these schools are stuck in the poll parroting stage of education.

Maryani, herself an Indonesian native who received a masters in classical studies from New Saint Andrews College, says that this stagnant system of education is not limited to Indonesia: "This is the culture of education in Asia—we’re geared toward drilling and not thinking. So for us, in Asia, it is hard, let’s say, to just tell you what we want." In other words, when education is only about repeating information and memorizing the assigned material, students are weak in their ability to speak their own minds.

Cahaya Bangsa Classical Christian School is located in the Java province of Indonesia. It is the largest ACCS international member school, boasting 678 students and grades preschool—12th. The name of the school translates to "The Light of the Nations," and this ACCS School is certainly not hidden under a bushel. Cahaya Bangsa is advantageously located just 30 minutes from Bandung, a city of several million and the region’s cultural hub.

The school got its start from the elders of Jemaat Berkat Bagi Bangsa Church who, 25 years ago, had prayed that their church would become a blessing to the nations. For these church leaders, part of becoming that blessing meant reforming Indonesia’s current educational system. So, in 2003 they started a school. A few years later, the church leaders were introduced to classical education by their first pastor, Gerrit Hansen, who along with his wife, Julie, were following the trivium as they homeschooled their kids. With the Hansens as a compelling example, the school board members realized that the classical method was effective and a good antidote to some of Indonesia’s educational ills.

As Maryani states, "In the beginning we didn’t know what classical was, but basically, through the first pastor, we realized this is what we need because it will train the students to really learn, to think for themselves, and then learn how to learn."

Cahaya Bangsa Classical School is not the only school spearheaded by this church. About 25 miles from its first school, Jemaat Berkat Bagi Bangsa Church planted another classical Christian school, this one for low-income families. This second school, called Sekolah Klasikal Terang Nusantara, opened its doors in 2014 with a handful of students meeting in the church’s office. "It was started based on the need of the church," Maryani explains. "We have a ministry to reach out to single parents or teenagers that have babies out of wedlock. These parents, these moms, could not afford to send their children to Cahaya Bangsa Classical Christian School and we see that there is a need for good education at a very low cost. So then we took a leap of faith and started it in the church office." That one-room school in the church office has grown. They now have 57 students and an even larger number registered for next year.

As the classical method begins to spread throughout Indonesia and elsewhere in Asia, some might object that this Western form of education could threaten Indonesia’s Eastern cultural identity and heritage. Is it wise to Westernize education in an Eastern culture? Maryani addresses this fear by explaining that both Cahaya Bangsa Classical School and Sekolah Klasikal Terang Nusantara are not just classical. They are Christian. It is through the gospel and their security in it that these schools are able to confidently adopt what is effective from another culture without losing their distinctiveness as a people. She states, "It doesn't mean that Western is better than Eastern. We believe that our identity lies in Christ and we have to redeem the culture." This Christ-centeredness allows them to teach using Western methods entirely in the Indonesian language. On the other hand, Maryani explains, these schools are not trying to scuttle their cultural distinctives. "What is good that we can learn from Western culture, while we are not losing our roots in Eastern culture?" Maryani asks—a question that is being asked by Christians all over Asia as they seek to please the Lord in educating their children.

AMANDA RYAN earned an M.A. in Theology and Literature from New Saint Andrews College, and bachelor’s degrees in English and music from U.C. Davis. She is a freelance writer, and teaches high school for Logos Online School. She lives in Moscow, Idaho with her husband and new baby girl.
Around the World

School Snapshots

Morning Star Academy

Located in Jakarta, Indonesia, this school was founded in 2002 by Wanti S. Wowor. This school has 438 students and goes from grades k–12. Wowor was motivated to start Morning Star by a desire to give her children a good education and from the conviction that parents must be involved in the education of their children.

Seoul International Christian Academy

Located in the Gangnam district of the city of Seoul, South Korea, this school was founded by Kyungwon Lee, her husband, and mother-in-law. The idea for the school came to the Lees when Mr. Lee was working in curriculum publishing and discovered Douglas Wilson’s Repairing the Ruins. The book was translated into Korean and with it, the Lees built enough momentum to start the school in 2010. This ACCS School has 60 students and grades ranging from k–8.
**New Providence Classical School**

Located in Nassau, the capital and largest city of the Bahamas on the Edenic island of New Providence, this school is encircled by beaches and colored with coral reefs. New Providence Classical School opened its doors in 2008 and now has 70 students in grades 4–12. Truant students might be found snorkeling, scuba diving, or engaged in general leisure-bumming on the beaches.

**Bethel American International School**

Located in Nigeria on a 40-acre piece of land near the city of Ibadan, this school was founded in 2012 by Good Samaritan Society of America. Bethel School has grades 7–12th and approximately 60 students. While English is its official language, the students at Bethel School may also speak a range of other languages, the most popular being Yoruba.
ACCS Member Schools

Acacia Academy
Kokomo, IN
Ad Fontes Academy
Centreville, VA
Agape Christi Academy
Eden Prairie, MN
Agathos Classical School
Columbia, TN
Aletheia Christian School of Poria
Poria, IL
Alpha Omega Academy
Huntsville, TX
American Christian School
Succasunna, NJ
Annapolis Christian Academy
Corpus Christi, TX
Appomattox Christian Academy
Appomattox, VA
Aquidneck Island Christian Academy
Middletown, RI
Arma Del Academy
Highlands Ranch, CO
Augustine Christian Academy
Tulsa, OK
Augustine Classical Academy
Mechanicville, NY
Augustine Classical Academy
Lakewood, CO
Augustine School
Jackson, TN
Baldwin Christian School
Baldwin, WI
Bayshore Christian School
Fairhope, AL
Beacon Hill Classical Academy
Camarillo, CA
Bethel American International School
St. Paul, MN
Bloomfield Christian School
Bloomfield Hills, MI
Bradford Academy
Mebane, NC
Brown County Christian Academy
Sardina, OH
Cahaya Bangsa Classical School
Bandung, Jawa Barat, Indonesia
Cair Paravel Latin School, Inc.
Topeka, KS
Calvary Christian Academy
Silver City, NM
Calvary Christian Academy
San Jose, CA
Calvary Classical Academy
St. Cloud, MN
Calvary Classical School
Hampton, VA
Candies Creek Academy
Charleston, TN
Cary Christian School
Cary, NC
Cedar Tree Classical Christian School
Ridgefield, WA
Charis Classical Academy
Madison, WI
Christ Church Academy
Lafayette, LA
Christ Presbyterian School
Baron Rouge, LA
Christian Heritage School
Longview, TX
Christ’s Legacy Academy
Athens, TN
Clapham School
Wheaton, IL
Classical Christian Academy
Post Falls, ID
Classical School of Wichita
Wichita, KS
Clear Lake Classical
Clear Lake, IA
Colquitt Christian Academy
Moultrie, GA
Coram Deo Academy
Flower Mound, TX
Coram Deo Academy
Carmel, IN
Coram Deo Academy
Richland, WA
Coram Deo Preparatory Academy
Houston, TX
Cornerstone Academy
Mooresville, TN
Cornerstone Academy
Snohomish, WA
Cornerstone Christian Academy
Appomattox, VA
Cornerstone Christian Academy
Abingdon, VA
Cornerstone Classical Christian Academy
Montgomery, AL
Cornerstone Classical Christian Academy
Hebron, KY
Cornerstone Classical School
Basalt, CO
Cornerstone Classical School
Salina, KS
Covenant Academy
Macon, GA
Covenant Academy
Cypress, TX
Covenant Christian Academy
Hartburg, PA
Covenant Christian Academy
West Peabody, MA
Covenant Christian Academy
Colleyville, TX
Covenant Christian School
Smyrna, GA
Covenant Christian School
Panama City, FL
Covenant Classical Academy
Louisville, KY
Covenant Classical Christian School
Columbia, SC
Covenant Classical School
Concord, NC
Covenant Classical School
Fort Worth, TX
Covenant Classical School
Naperville, IL
Covenant School
Huntington, WV
Coventry Christian School
Potomac, PA
Dominion Christian School
Oakton, VA
Dominion Classical Christian Academy
Dacula, GA
Denver Classical Christian School
Federal Way, WA
Eastwood Christian School
Montgomery, AL
Enkarya Christian Academy
Stephens City, VA
Evangel Classical Christian School
Alabaster, AL
Evangel Classical School
Marysville, WA
Evangelical Christian Academy
Colorado Springs, CO
Faith Christian Academy
Kansas City, MO
Faith Christian School
Roanoke, VA
First Classical Academy
Katy, TX
Franklin Classical School
Franklin, TN
Geneva Academy
Monroe, LA
Geneva Academy
Rosenburg, OR
Geneva Academy
Lincoln, DE
Geneva Classical Academy
Lakeland, FL
Geneva School of Boerne
Boerne, TX
Gloria Deo Academy
Spring Branch, TX
Good Shepherd School
Tyler, TX
Grace Academy
Springfield, MA
Grace Academy of Georgetown
Georgetown, TX
Grace Academy of North Texas
Prosper, TX
Grace Christian Academy
Merrick, NY
Grace Classical Academy
Laguna Niguel, CA
Grace Classical Academy
Springfield, MO
Grace Classical Christian Academy
Granbury, TX
Grace Classical School
Jacksonville, NC
Great Books Honors College
Montgomery, AL
Greenville Classical Academy
Simpsonville, SC
Grove City Christian Academy
Grove City, PA
Harvest Christian School
Peralama, CA
Haw River Christian Academy
Pittsboro, NC
Heritage Christian Academy
Winter Haven, FL
Heritage Oak School
Telchacu, CA
Heritage Preparatory School
Atlanta, GA
Heritage School
Fredericksburg, TX
Hickory Christian Academy
Hickory, NC
Highland Rim Academy
Cookville, TN
Horizon Prep School
Baltimore, MD
Imago Dei Academy
Alamogordo, NM
Immanuel Lutheran School
Alexandria, VA
Coram Deo Classical Academy
Brownsville, TX
Island Christian Academy
Langley, WA
Jonathan Edwards Classical Academy
Whites Creek, TN
Kings Way Classical Academy
Clackamas, OR
Legacy Academy
De Queen, AR
Legacy Classical Christian Academy
Hasler, TX
Libertas Academy
Tampa, FL
Liberty Classical Academy
White Bear Lake, MN
Lighthouse Christian Academy
Stevensville, MD
Logos Christian Academy
Fallon, NV
Providence Christian Academy
Dothan, AL
Providence Classical Christian Academy
St. Louis, MO
Providence Classical Christian Academy
Stout Falls, SD
Providence Classical Christian School
Kirkland, WA
Providence Classical Christian School
Oxford, GA
Providence Classical School
Spring, TX
Providence Classical School
Williamson, VA
Providence Classical School
Huntsville, AL
Providence Preparatory School
Temple, TX
QCA
Tangerang, Indonesia
Redeemer Classical Academy
Murfreesboro, TN
Redeemer Classical Christian School
Kingston, MD
Redeemer Classical School
Harrisonburg, VA
Regent Preparatory School of OK
Tulsa, OK
Regents Academy
Nacogdoches, TX
Regents School of Austin
Austin, TX
Regents School of Charlottesville
Charlottesville, VA
Regents School of Oxford
Oxford, MS
Renaissance Classical Christian Academy
Fayetteville, NC
River Hills Christian Academy
Robstown, TX
Riverbend Academy
Ormond Beach, FL
Riverwood Classical School
Tuscaloosa, AL
Rockbridge Academy
Millersville, MD
Rocky Mountain Christian Academy
Niwoot, CO
Samuel Fuller School
Middleborough, MA
Sandhills Classical Christian School
Southern Pines, NC
Schaeffer Academy
Rochester, MN
School of the Ozarks
Point Lookout, MO
Seattle Classical Christian School
Seattle, WA
Seoul International Christian School
Seoul, South Korea
Spearfish Classical Christian School
Spearfish, SD
St. Abraham’s Classical Christian Academy
Apost, CA
St. Mark’s Classical Academy
Rydal, PA
St. Stephen’s Academy
Beaverton, OR
St. Stephen’s Classical Christian Academy
Eldersburg, MD
Summit Christian Academy
Yorktown, VA
Summit Christian Academy
Livingston, MT
Summit Christian Academy
Fall City, WA
Tall Oaks Classical School
New Castle, DE
The Academy of Classical Christian Studies
Oklahoma City, OK
The Ambrose School
Meridian, ID
The Bear Creek School
Redmond, WA
The Cambridge School
San Diego, CA
The Cambridge School of Dallas
Dallas, TX
The Classical Academy of Franklin
Franklin, TN
The Covenant School
Dallas, TX
The Geneva School
Winter Park, FL
The IMAGO School
Maynard, MA
The Oaks: A Classical Christian Academy
Spokane, WA
The Paideia School of Tampa Bay
Tampa, FL
The River Academy
Westchase, WA
The Saint Timothy School
Dallas, TX
The Stonehaven School
Marietta, GA
The Willerforce School
Princeton Junction, NJ
Tidewater Classical Academy
Virginia Beach, VA
Timber Ridge Academy
Jackson, WY
Trinitas Christian School
Pensacola, FL
Trinitas Classical School
Grand Rapids, MI
Trinity Christian Academy
Lexington, KY
Trinity Christian School
Montvale, NJ
Trinity Christian School
Opeka, AL
Trinity Christian School
Kailua, HI
Trinity Classical Academy
Valencia, CA
Trinity Classical Academy
Omaha, NE
Trinity Classical School
Clarkeboro, GA
Trinity Classical School
Bellingham, WA
Trinity Classical School of Houston
Houston, TX
Trinity Preparatory School
Voorhees, NJ
United Christian School
Camp Verde, AZ
Uvalde Classical Academy
Uvalde, TX
Veritas Academy
Texarkana, AR
Veritas Academy
West Barnstable, MA
Veritas Academy
Los Angeles, CA
Veritas Academy
Savannah, GA
Veritas Academy
North Branch, MN
Veritas Academy
Cody, WY
Veritas Academy
Fletcher, NC
Veritas Academy
Chesapeake, VA
Veritas Academy
Huntsville, AL
Veritas Academy
Bellaire, TX
Veritas Christian Community School
Sierra Vista, AZ
Veritas Christian School
Lawrence, KS
Veritas Christian School, FBC
Dayton, TX
Veritas Classical Academy
Beaumont, TX
Veritas Classical Academy
Fullerton, CA
Veritas School
Newberg, OR
Veritas School
Richmond, VA
Victory Academy Ocala
Ocala, FL
Westminster Academy
Memphis, TN
Westminster School at Oak Mountain
Birmingham, AL
Westside Christian Academy
Wentlake, OH
Whitefield Academy
Kansas City, MO
Whitefield Christian Academy
Whitefish, MT
Wickenburg Christian Academy
Wickenburg, AZ
Wilson Hill Academy
Austin, TX
Winter Park Christian School
Tahlequah, OK
Woodstream Christian Academy
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One Sunday, after an excellent sermon on Exodus, one of my kids asked: What's for lunch? Sometimes, my husband makes the simple complex—especially when our 45-minute drive home from church gives him a captive audience. This time, however, it led to a fun tradition in our household that excites the kids and gets mom off the hook for lunch! Here is how it started.

1. We all know that our senses are a direct link to our thoughts. For kids, if you want to give them something to “hook onto,” food is probably a good bet.

2. We talked about what they used to eat in Bible times, what manna might have looked like, why they used unleavened bread in the exodus, and about God's provision of quail. This in turn led to the story of Elijah and the widow who had only enough oil and flour for one more meal.

3. When we got home, the delicious family tradition called the Bible Times Dinner began. See what I mean about “complex”?

4. The best part about this meal is that, since serving food was a more simple affair before stainless steel, and since dad invented the meal for an outdoor grill, it is like a day off for mom.

Get out the candles, and put away the plates and silverware! 🎆


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Getting ready

TIPS FOR AN EASIER SUMMER

A century ago, I bet no one thought gardening would become a fad. The popularity of gardening continues to grow, and for good reason. As parents in a technological age, we often seek new ways to get our kids outside.

If you want to introduce gardening to your kids this spring, you might try the simple 4x4 garden plans from Bonnie Plants. Dig into the Kids’ Garden, the Pizza Garden, or the Salsa Garden for starters.

Get the corn chips out and the pizza dough ready!

Sow some salsa, plant a pizza

For links to the garden plans, visit www.ClassicalDifference.com/LinksForSpring2016
“Gaga Ball is taking over.”

Have you noticed strange octagonal structures cropping up all over the country? Introducing gaga ball, the latest phenomenon in gaming (real-world, that is). Many classical schools now sport the ubiquitous Gaga Ball Pit. And apparently it’s fun.

Redeemer Classical Christian School, Kingsville, MD

“Gaga Ball is taking over.”

Point. Shoot.

Capture a student moment and share it at www.ClassicalDifference.com/submissions. Yours might just be the last face people see in our next issue.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States represented in current enrollment</th>
<th>91% of students receive scholarships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:1 Student–Faculty ratio</td>
<td>73 Great Books read in the Core</td>
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