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- Choosing a School in a Dangerous Age p. 4
- A Princeton Grad Unhinged by a Five-year-old p. 12
- A Classical School Responds to Hurricane Harvey p. 16



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COVER ART: Jeremy Crawford, Rockbridge Academy, Millersville, MD. **PAINTING DETAILS:** "Unwrapped," Runner Up, 2017 Blakey Prize in Fine Arts Contest, Sponsored by the ACCS

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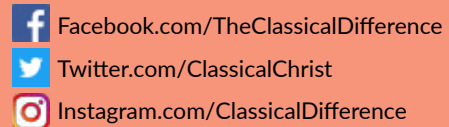
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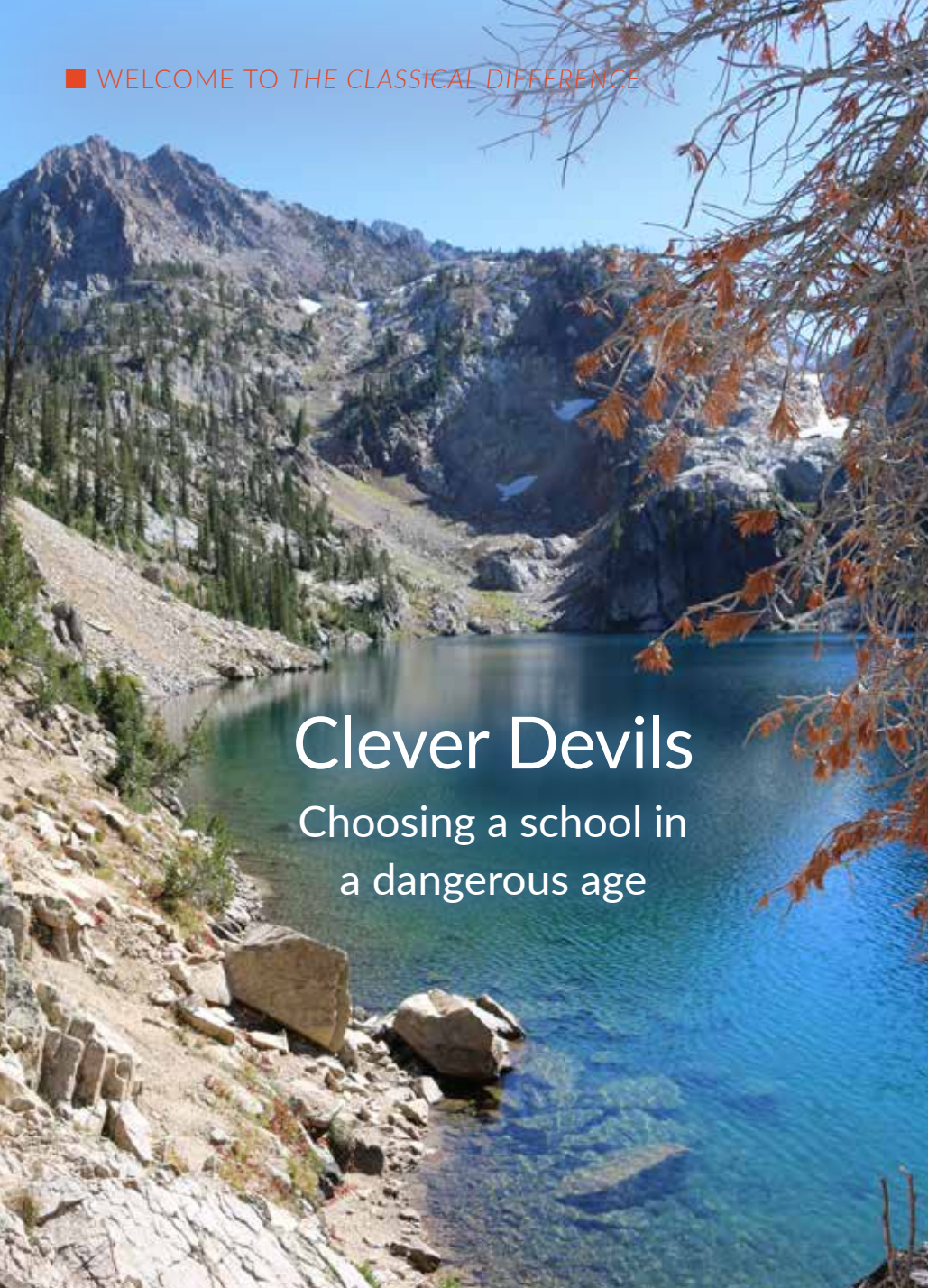
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Clever Devils

Choosing a school in a dangerous age

In Idaho's Sawtooth Mountains, you can see 10,000-foot Thompson Peak. And, if you know where to look, there's

a small crevice near the top. In this crevice hides one of the most beautiful and striking lakes in the world. On summer mornings, we'll begin the four-hour hike from our family cabin to that lake. It's a grueling and steep hike, dangerous in some places as you edge along cliffs. The destination makes it worth it. No one regrets the hike, though they often grow faint from the altitude and climb. Some time ago

a friend of mine relayed a story from boot camp at Fort Bragg—a grueling three- to four-hour trek through hot, sticky swamps, full of dangerous snakes. It ends up where it starts. The goal is to finish. Some might appreciate the discipline this run takes, but they never want to do it again.

These two pictures teach us an important lesson about classical education when compared to conventional education today. If done well, both can be rigorous and teach you something. But classical education begins with a goal, a purpose: the pursuit of truth, goodness, and beauty. Much like the stunning Thompson Peak rises above the valley floor, magic happens when the human soul climbs toward an immense and dangerous beauty. When you finish the hike, you're blistered and beat. But for those of us who've seen it, it's worth doing again.

By contrast, conventional education teaches you stuff. "What will the student know and what can the student do?" This is the question common to the curricula of conventional schools. Students run the gauntlet, get the grades, and pine to finish school so they can be done with it. The exercise you get in a conventional school may build intellectual muscle, but it rarely inspires a love of learning.

Danger lurks in classical education, too. It can quickly become a treachery if we pursue a false summit. Classical education was founded by the Greeks to climb to the height of intellectual ideas. When the Greeks looked up, they saw ideas and reason as the highest peak of human understanding. About three hours into the hike in the Sawtooth Mountains, you think you'll crest the ridge and see the lake. But, the false summit reveals only a boulder field and disappointment. The lake is just a bit further up and further in. As with our hike, Greek philosophers soon found themselves in a boulder field, staggering for footing, looking for something true, good, and beautiful.

And then, along came The Logos, Jesus Christ, who gave Christians the real destination. Christ is the creator of everything and the sovereign of the universe, so He defines truth, goodness, and beauty. Pursuing Him means pursuing

the best of everything. For 1500 years, the Church pursued Christ through classical Christian education. They built great monasteries and cathedrals. They wrote hymns and created Western music as we know it. They unveiled the material world's secrets through chemistry, physics, and biology, and they expanded our minds through deep theology and philosophy. They revealed the language of calculus and painted the ceilings of chapels with glorious scenes. They wrote sonnets, novels, and brilliant treatises—all of this as they consciously educated toward the ideal of Jesus Christ. And then, something happened.

Along the way, the West became engrossed in the glory of creation and our control over it, and we forgot the creator. During the enlightenment, Jesus Christ was replaced by a deistic god and eventually, we arrived back at reason. Before long, the destination of classical education was once again the treacherous boulder field it had been for the Greeks. Classical schools of the 19th and early 20th century waned because people started asking, “Why are we doing this?” They saw a boulder field and realized that it was better to focus on making camp, studying “practical” things like science and math.

Many parents have discovered that the pursuit of the practical in conventional schools is limited and leaves a shallow and frail husk of a soul where their child once was. So, across this nation, the best schools are once again emerging as classical schools. Today, classical education has reemerged in two forms—one that pursues a general “logos” and the other that pursues Jesus Christ. Classical charter schools are public schools that are not permitted to teach Christ, so they return to the Greek error and teach toward the general logos by means of reason. This is not to say that good cannot be done by charter schools, but we are seeking the ideal. When Paul entered the center of Greek classical education in Athens, he pointed to the altar TO THE UNKNOWN GOD as he stood on the rocky outcropping called Mars Hill. Paul knew they thirsted for the deep waters of Jesus Christ. And he told them so. Within a few generations, Jesus changed everything in Athens—even their educational system.

C.S. Lewis is said to have warned of “clever devils.” I fear he spoke of those who have been hardened and shaped by the exercise of classical education, but who have been embittered by the futility of the boulder field that promised so much beauty, but delivered only hot, soul-crushing disappointment. Some believe that Christ can be taught on the side. Christ himself never gave us this notion—“I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one...” Classical Christian schools are not immune. If we forget our first purpose, and seek to become college preparatory schools, or

Some believe that Christ can be taught on the side. Christ himself never gave us this notion.



The Geneva School of Manhattan, New York, NY

overemphasize STEM, or wander on other ways, we will be just as lost. Christ must be the central purpose and center of all learning, or a greater problem will emerge even in our classical Christian schools—we’ll be sitting on a mountain, in a boulder field, lost and disgruntled, and looking for answers. At least down in the swampy marsh of conventional education, we had water—tepid and brackish as it may have been.

We live in a blessed age. Christians have a map to excellent education through classical Christian education. We don’t need to reinvent it. It was left as a heritage by our Christian forefathers. We have only two tasks: First, we must keep Christ at the center. He must be the object of our pursuit. Second, we must continue to recover the lost form of education that perpetuated the great Christian civilizations of times past. If we do these two things successfully in our homes and in our schools, our children will enjoy a rich and rewarding view of the lake. ■■

DAVID GOODWIN is the president of the Association of Classical Christian Schools.

CLASSICAL NEWS



Bloomfield Christian School
Bloomfield Hills, MI

NEWEST ACCS MEMBER SCHOOLS

- AGAPE MONTESSORI CHRISTIAN ACADEMY, Vicksburg, MS
- ALL SAINTS CHURCH SCHOOL, Pawleys Island, SC
- BRENHAM CHRISTIAN ACADEMY, Brenham, TX
- FAITH ACADEMY OF WICHITA ASSOCIATION, Wichita, KS
- ROCHESTER CLASSICAL ACADEMY, Rochester, NY
- THE WYCLIFFE SCHOOL, Norfolk, VA

Great & Small

ACCS STUDENT TAKES POETRY TO D.C.



Junior Isaac Lu traveled to Washington D.C. to represent the state of Washington at the National Poetry Out Loud competition in April. As the winner of Cedar Tree's high school poetry recitation contest, he competed against 11 other high school students in his region, and then against the final ten other regional winners to win the state title and an all-expense paid trip to D.C.

Isaac Lu is the second student from Cedar Tree to represent Washington and the 18,000 students

statewide who participated in Poetry Out Loud at the school level. The Cedar Tree tradition of poetry recitation as part of developing rhetorical eloquence begins in kindergarten.

The Cedar Tree tradition of "speech meet" helps students excel at competitions such as these. Speech meet, much like Poetry Out Loud, supports classical learning as it challenges students to memorize effectively and deliver pieces with excellent articulation. Students are judged based on accuracy, style and presentation, and they learn how to present themselves well in front of an audience.

The experience of memorizing and reciting poetry over the years through speech meets, and the culminating senior thesis project, develops students' rhetoric skills, which will help them throughout their lives and careers.



Submit stories and quotes at ClassicalDifference.com/submissions. Published submissions are worth \$25 in lunch money.

EIGHTH GRADER GOES TO NATIONAL SPELLING BEE

"Franklin Classical School eighth grader **ROSY KANNANKERIL** is heading to Washington D.C. to represent Tennessee for the 2018 Scripps National Spelling Bee in late May. According to the Scripps National Spelling Bee, Kannankерил is one of over 11 million students across the nation who participated in school spelling bees. Only a few hundred spellers will advance and make the journey to Washington D.C. for this nationally broadcast celebration of words."

—BrentwoodHomePage.com



To see the original article and find out more about the Scripps National Spelling Bee, visit ClassicalDifference.com/spellingbee.

Through the Looking Glass



St. Stephen's Academy,
Beaverton, OR

■ EXCEPTIONS

My fifth graders were classifying sentences, and one of them asked, "Is Italy an adverb?" I responded, "No, it's a country." He said, "But it ends in -ly!"

—PAMELA CROW, *Legacy Christian Academy, De Queen, AR*

■ DON'T MUMBLE, DAD

Our second-grade daughter was learning about metals in her science class, and her dad thought he would quiz her. "What metal conducts heat the fastest?" he asked. Her kindergarten brother responded in surprise, "I didn't know ducks could eat metal!"

—ANONYMOUS, *The Ambrose School, Meridian, ID*



"I'm experimenting with different ways to keep my students' attention."

DIY Parenting



THE BENEFITS OF BOARD GAMES

THIS SUMMER, BREAK OUT THE BOARD GAMES, AND RELISH IN DEVICES TURNED OFF AND CONVERSATION LEVELS TURNED UP.

If you don't have one during the school year, make a game night. Summer can be the best time to take a break

from outside activities and distractions—to intentionally turn away from the multitude of events that pull at our families. There's plenty of time for those when school starts.

If board games (or any other type) seem like a waste of time, think of games as one of the best ways to mimic real life for your kids in a safe way. They get to

see people at their best and worst, and they have to react. They talk to one another. They deal with the hand they're dealt, literally. They wait. They go. They decide. We love (or hate) board games because they engage us in real world decisions and reactions, with clear stakes for winning or losing. Clear, but not risky. Unless your younger brother bet you a week's worth of doing the dishes on his win.

Think of games as one of the best ways to mimic real life for your kids without the risk.

[Continues on page 14 ...]



LETTERS & NOTES



**BASECAMP
LIVE**

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ClassicalDifference.com/BaseCampLive

Interested in learning more about what's going on in Canada and the classical Christian movement there? In the last issue, Scott Masson, associate professor of English literature at Tyndale University College and founding board chairman of Westminster Classical Christian Academy in Toronto, shared some insights in his article "Foreshadows of a Brave New World." Hear more from Scott Masson at ClassicalDifference.com/BaseCampLive.



Amendment

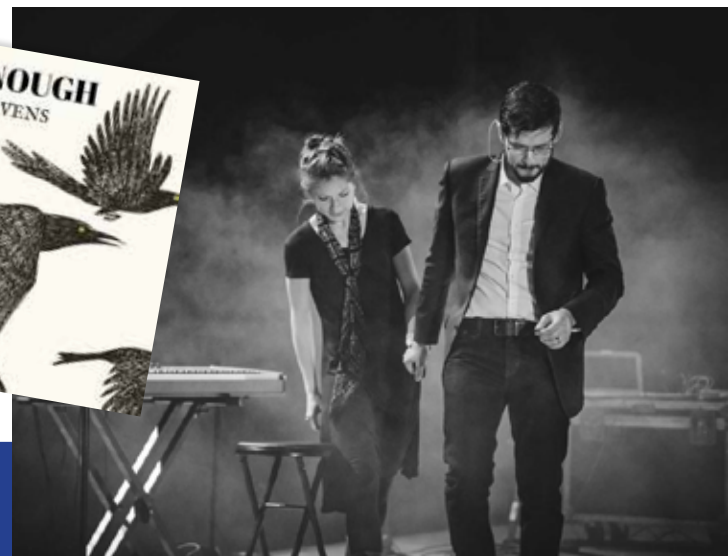
2018 SPRING ISSUE, PG. 11

This photo shows Rockbridge Academy student Olivia August with then 5th grade teacher, Roy Griffith, who is now the current headmaster. The original caption identified him as Mike McKenna.

If you read about Olivia in our last issue, you can see her graduation photo in our Parting Shot section on page 39.

"High Enough" soars into the top twenty

The Gray Havens, guest performers at last year's Repairing the Ruins conference in Pittsburg, began 2018 on a high note—celebrating their first official Christian radio single. "High Enough," featuring Christian hip-hop artist, Propaganda, just reached #19 on The Hot Chart Christian music website. At the time of this printing it was still climbing!



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ClassicalDifference.com/GrayHavens

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“ *This was just what I needed to remind me of why I love classical Christian schooling. I am coming away with new energy, refreshed to start putting these things into practice.* ”

—conference attendee

JULY
16, 17, 18, 19, 20

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A truly practical education

“ I have five boys, and you know what I want them to study in college? Liberal arts. How many massive, well researched studies will it take to prove to even the most techy people that the broad, interdisciplinary, critical thinking, and *human* skills gained there—skills necessary for living as free (“liberal”) people—far outstrip the narrow set of technical information (that is perpetually going out of date) provided by most specialized degrees?

“Project Oxygen shocked everyone by concluding that, among the eight most important qualities of Google’s top employees, STEM expertise comes in dead last. The seven top characteristics of success at Google are all soft skills.” Liberal arts skills, in other words.

—Hannah Grieser, from FaceBook,
Parent and TCD Designer, Logos School, Moscow, ID

READ MORE HERE →



Google “Good Employees”

You might be surprised what you find.

A Google study made headlines with its answer to the question, “What makes a good employee?”

Similar results have been reported by other studies as well. But the most credible support for these conclusions is simple. It’s called common sense.

The *Washington Post* summarizes the Google study results.

Project Aristotle, a study released by Google this past spring, further supports the importance of soft skills even in high-tech environments ... A recent survey of 260 employers by the nonprofit National Association of Colleges and Employers, which includes both small firms and behemoths like Chevron and IBM, also ranks communication skills in the top three most sought-after qualities by job recruiters.

Project Oxygen shocked everyone by concluding that, among the eight most important qualities of Google’s top employees, STEM expertise comes in dead last. **The seven top characteristics of success at Google are all soft skills:** being a good coach; communicating and listening well; possessing insights into others (including others’ different values and points of view); having empathy toward and being supportive of one’s colleagues; being a good critical thinker and problem solver; and being able to make connections across complex ideas ...

This is a position long held by classical Christian educators, who anchor their programs in rhetorical training. As Dorothy Sayers famously says in her essay “The Lost Tools of Learning”:

Is it not the great defect of our education today ... 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.

Classical Christian education, following the Western tradition of mastering ideas, and taking every thought captive to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, could turn this around. Today, our country’s schools teach STEM as though it will save us from economic doom while they shun the study of *ideas* as impractical gibberish. We need to refocus school on ideas.

Today, our schools push out literature in favor of textbooks that teach stuff. We need to restore the moral imagination of our children through great stories.

Today, our schools create subject buckets of disconnected knowledge. We need to teach all things as an integrated whole, pointing to the unity they have in Christ’s kingdom. We need to teach our children to think and communicate and achieve in a constantly changing world where technology is just a tool and the focus is on a life well-lived. That’s success. ■



GET THE FULL STORY

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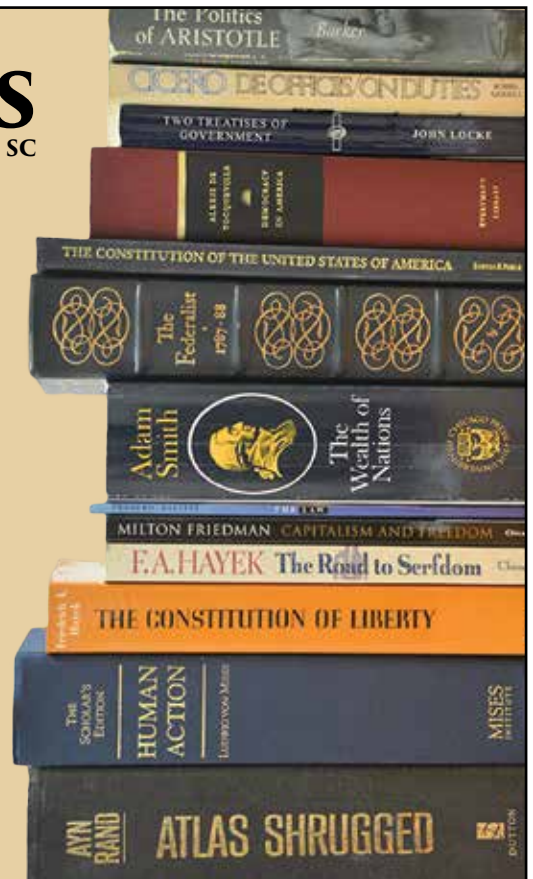
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The Wilberforce School, Princeton, NJ

Princeton Grad Unhinged by a Five-year-old... and what he did about it

Fresh from the halls of a premiere college prep school in Atlanta, a young Howe Whitman headed to Princeton.

From there, doors were opened to Wharton where he went on to get his master's degree. He ended up back at Princeton and, as a Christian, became involved with campus ministry. His two kids were five and three. Life was comfortable and predictable. The path that began on Whitman's first day of kindergarten decades ago had led exactly where it was supposed to.

Today, Howe Whitman sits at a desk in the shadow of Princeton University. His current occupation could hardly be more at odds with his alma mater. He talks about unconventional topics, like the history of ideas, the education of the whole person, and the pursuit of Truth. His office is modest, and shares space at a local Jewish Community Center. His meetings invariably involve children. What reversed his status quo trajectory? It happened in one day, when his five-year-old told him something about life.

The conversation went something like this:

“After talking with one of his pre-school buddies my son said, “My friend said we should HATE our enemies.” I said, “Well, that is an interesting conversation ... were you talking about loving your enemies?” Somehow the Bible had come up and my son was confused. He finally summed it up, in his own five-year-old way, saying, “It was just strange that the Bible came up at school. Sometimes I get my church plans and my school plans confused.”

I thought, “Wow!” Already, at such a young age, these two paths don't meet in his mind. He is articulating that a sort of dualism is the reality of his life. There is school—and there is church and spiritual. And it's weird if they ever cross paths.

My primary responsibility is to raise my children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, to help them to become disciples of Christ for their whole life, and to develop their gifts and use them for the Kingdom of God. If he thinks school (seven hours a day, 35 hours a week) has nothing to do with anything spiritual—that's going down a path that is a little alarming.”

Howe began thinking more deeply about his own education. He remembered, as a Princeton public policy major, reading Thucydides' *Peloponnesian War*. Up to that point, he had only read current articles on those issues. Reading Thucydides, he had an epiphany—people have been thinking about these issues for a long, long time. He could have graduated with a degree from Princeton in public policy without ever having read anything prior to 1950 about the



The Wilberforce School, Princeton, NJ

way people for millennia have wrestled with the greatest issues and questions of human existence.

None of his other schools had done much better. He came to this conclusion: Progressive education values what is current and devalues what is past. It walks away from the richness of what makes education effective by gutting everything “old.”

Valuing only what is “progressive” creates another problem. It tends to separate education from philosophy, spiritual life, and faith. The hundreds of thousands of dollars his family had spent on the best private schools and universities seemed to have built nothing solid and lasting, because modern education is disconnected from what is truly important. It is incoherent. The five-year-old knew it.

What was Howe’s reaction to this revelation? He began to seek the answer to this question: Where could he find deep, rich academics integrated with intentional Christian discipleship? The search led him to classical Christian education (CCE). In CCE he found the model for what he believed education to be. He would eventually cofound The Wilberforce School in Princeton, NJ.

According to Howe, “You have to be a little bit crazy to think you can add anything to the educational environment of Princeton. It’s an education town and education is the town idol. There are well-regarded public schools; well-endowed, respected, independent private schools; expensive prep schools. And it’s a very post-Christian culture.”

But, with a sentiment to which many parents can relate, his kids made him do it. According to Howe, “Princeton used to do what we as classical Christian schools do now. That’s what’s so exciting to me about CCE. It is the recovery of an education that, due to philosophy and progressive views of education, has been abandoned.”

Parents often gasp when Howe tells them, “We are not a college prep school.” He goes on to explain:

“The fact is, if you aim at human flourishing, if you aim at a rich, deep education, it goes beyond bubble tests and competition and job preparation. You actually get people who are better prepared for the workplace, better prepared for college, and better prepared for life.”

Howe often mentions his experience with his son.

“We talk about integration of faith and learning, and the intentionality required to do that. Because during those school hours, formation is happening—not just intellectual, but spiritual and character—whether we want it to or not. Parents realize they want their child to have an integration of faith and learning, rather than coping with a dualism where they do spiritual on Sundays and academic at school. That is a recipe for disintegration.”

Each year gets more exciting for Howe. Four years ago, Wilberforce started its high school, and Howe has enjoyed the richness of the upper school program. Howe’s feelings echo those of many parents involved in CCE:

“When I think about what our students are doing and what I did in high school—even at a pretty well-regarded school—I think, “So much of what I did in school was a waste of time.” Classical education is the education I wish I had. And it’s a privilege that my children do. ■■

HOWE WHITMAN is cofounder and head of the Wilberforce School, Princeton, NJ.

The Connection

QUESTIONS ARE ONE THING, ANSWERS ARE ANOTHER. HOW EXACTLY DID HOWE'S QUESTIONS LEAD HIM TO CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION?

During the time Howe was seeking a better educational philosophy, his sister was also searching for something different for her 1st grade son. While enrolled at the same prep school that Howe and his sister had both attended, her son was diagnosed with ADHD and prescribed Ritalin. When she expressed her uncertainties, a friend told her about her own son's similar story and how he was currently thriving without medication at a classical Christian school.

Howe's sister enrolled her son in a classical Christian school. In second grade, Howe observed that the school placed an emphasis on habits and engaged in activities where students learned to attend to a subject. There were small classes. Expectations were clear. He flourished, becoming one of the first graduates from the school.



BASECAMP LIVE

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ClassicalDifference.com/BaseCampLive

This article is excerpted from an interview of Howe Whitman, "The Princeton Graduate Unhinged by a 5-Year-Old," by BaseCampLive. Hear the complete interview at ClassicalDifference.com/BaseCampLive.

Not only did the student flourish, but the family was surrounded by a community of people who were like-minded in seeking to integrate faith and learning. The community became a source of renewal for their faith.

As time went on, Howe learned more about CCE and eventually dedicated himself to providing Princeton with a classical school.

Howe has seen over and over again students and families renewed—families who came just to "check the box" of a good education find out that education is far bigger than they thought. While Princeton, NJ, is a different part of the country, with perhaps a different set of needs and expectations in the minds of parents than in other places, the solution is still the same.

[... Continued from page 7]



To limit decision fatigue, we've listed a selection of the most popular board games here. Pick a night for each. Or find a favorite you all enjoy, so you don't mind when your kids ask you to play over and over. ❏

YOUNG KIDS

Winners

- No Stress Chess
- Richard Scarry's Busytown
- Eye Found It
- Sorry!

Honorable Mentions

- Connect Four
- Candyland
- Battleship

OLDER KIDS AND ADULTS

Winners

- Ticket to Ride
- Settlers of Catan
- Dominion
- Ravensburger Labyrinth
- Rummikub
- Pandemic

Honorable Mentions

- Chess
- Risk
- Trivial Pursuit
- Blokus
- Stratego
- Apples to Apples
- Carcassonne
- The Game of Life



These lists are based on data from several websites that rank board games solely by user votes. We stayed away from rankings on opinion websites, or websites with a particular bent, such as "games that teach logic" or "games that ruin friendships" (yes, they have those).

Data was gathered from The Strategist, Amazon, and Ranker. The Winners list includes only those games that appeared on at least two out of three sites, starting with the most popular. The Honorable Mentions are the top listings from each site (not included on the Winners list).



FIND LINKS TO ALL WEBSITES at ClassicalDifference.com/Games.



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



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A CLASSICAL SCHOOL RESPONDS TO HARVEY



Harvey entered as a burglar and left us with a stronger and better community.

—LESLIE COLLINS

Head of School, Covenant Academy, Houston, TX

The first indication of trouble was the burglar alarm. Earlier, Leslie Collins, Head of School at Covenant Academy, had received a text indicating a power surge. During a hurricane the magnitude

of Harvey, this is to be expected. A burglar alarm is not. The texts kept coming, indicating movement in room after room. That's when she knew, "Harvey had crept into our classrooms and was destroying our building inch by inch."

As soon as the unprecedented rain pouring over Houston slowed, a board member picked Collins up in his truck to assess the damage. The school's courtyard, usually filled with green grass and joyful students, was filled with water to the edge of the concrete. They sloshed through each room in shock and arrived at the front hall to find that several families had already come to check on their beloved school. "What should we do now?" they asked.

In any Christian community, our response to tragedy—death, loss, damage, or fear—is as a people set apart. In that moment, Collins was reminded that in Christ we are victors. "The whole city was in crisis. I was cognizant of the fact that we were going to get through this together and it was going to be different. God's providence gave us this circumstance. We would live IN this moment, not hurry up and get over it. We were going to lean into it, not away from it."

DEMOLITION

Up to this point, Covenant had been in session for two days, Thursday and Friday, with Friday hosting House inductions. What would they do come Monday? They would learn something new—building demolition.

While at their temporary location, art projects were designed to help students process the devastation they saw in their city and school.



To see more artwork by the Covenant students, visit ClassicalDifference.com/harvey.

Several weeks prior, Leslie had completed Incident Command System training through FEMA, and had required similar training of all faculty. The training outlined expectations for how to respond to possible school disasters. The moment the first group came together immediately following the hurricane, a chalkboard was cleared and became command central. Objectives written. Teams created. Duties assigned. Collins used almost everything she had learned. They got to work.

They worked 9 am–7 pm every day for five days to clear the building. Hundreds of people came to help from all over the state and country, many of them unknown. “I don’t even know how people knew about us. God would lead them to our website, or they would hear through connections. People came to be the hands and feet of Jesus. They were assigned teams immediately and given clear objectives. We were even able to send some people off campus to help our families whose homes had been damaged.”

The kids were active participants in the demo. According to Collins, “The only reason we got it demoed in five days is because kids were involved. They were tearing up, organizing trash piles, sweating, dripping, exhausted. Many of these kids understood for the first time in their lives what it was to have this type of hardship and move on.”

Once everything was demolished, the drying began. It was a logistical feat to position fans, hook them up, check circulation, “focus on the beams,” and sanitize everything. Processes were developed for an additional new skill set no one ever wanted—flood mitigation.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Their school building had weeks of drying and refinishing ahead. While others halted classes, Covenant continued learning.

Through family connections they found a temporary home at, appropriately, the Alamo. This reproduction was located a close one mile north of the school building, and became the backdrop for their theme of “leaning in.” Leslie shared her initial vision with her students.

When people say, “Remember the Alamo” they mean, “Don’t let that happen again.” We need a different mindset—lean in and move on. God’s providence has given us this circumstance. We will live IN this moment, not hurry up and get over it. We will relish the opportunity we have to build community. This won’t define us. We are victors, not victims. We need to be intentional about this.

A GOOD STORY

CCE believes deeply that literature makes us more human. Collins wanted to provide stories the kids could use to bring healing and perspective to their situation. “The process of experiencing literature together can offer great wisdom and help. We can connect with people who lived in the past and whose lives were often more difficult.”

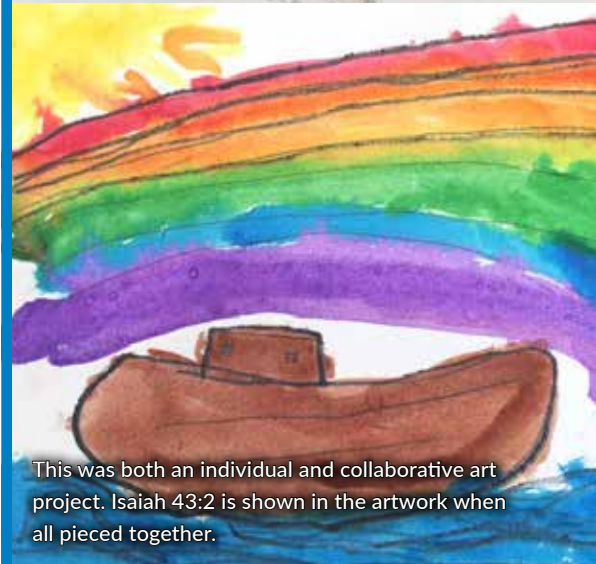
The House system made this time much easier. Each House was subdivided into upper and grammar school age groups, as they read books that reflected a response to a struggle. Booker T. Washington’s *Up from Slavery* was read by the upper school. They selected this book because he refused to be a victim as he worked to rebuild the south.

HURRICANE HARVEY ■

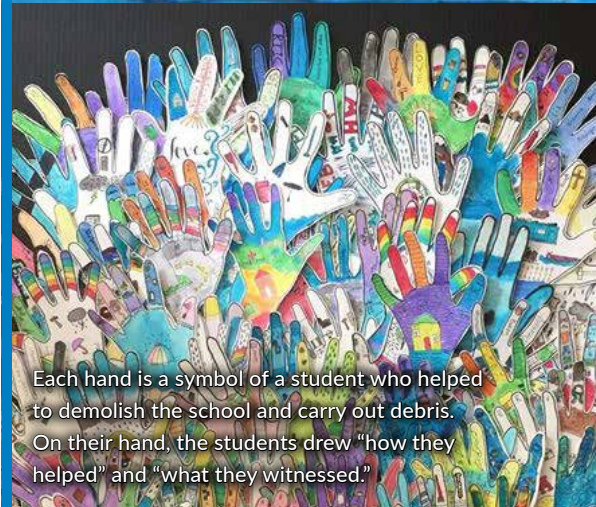


Lamentations 3:22 tells of God’s steadfast love.

“The Alamo” became the school’s temporary home.



This was both an individual and collaborative art project. Isaiah 43:2 is shown in the artwork when all pieced together.



Each hand is a symbol of a student who helped to demolish the school and carry out debris. On their hand, the students drew “how they helped” and “what they witnessed.”



In the grammar school, they read *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* because of the themes of loss and courage, displacement and rebuilding. Although the wartime aspect of these stories is not what most people remember, the Covenant students related to these ideas.

According to Collins, the literature was not only helpful at the time, but provided a way back to these issues throughout the year. When they returned to campus, “rhetoric students would refer to Booker T. Washington and doing hard things in their chapel talks.”

Art instruction was focused on providing opportunities for students to process what they saw and illustrate the Scripture that was sung, read, and recited. Students told their Harvey story and reflected on God’s faithfulness in the storm.

LITURGY

Liturgy and chants are both aspects of CCE that became even more important in the midst of uncertainty. Collins distinctly remembers thinking about the importance of ordering their days. “Our liturgy was full-orbed. We incorporated all the senses in bringing about restoration. In fact, I would say the only sense we did not incorporate was smell.”

Covenant’s music director selected “How Firm a Foundation” to be the “Hymn of the Month” and they sang all verses together at the beginning of each day. This was followed by a short, theme-based talk.

Next came the “Character Call-out” written by Collins for their unique situation. Their theme—lean into hard things—became the backdrop to every discussion that would follow as part of literature or history during the remainder of the day. Socratic discussions—another foundational component of CCE—became more meaningful.

Various Scriptures were read daily, always beginning with Isaiah 43:2— “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.” (ESV) This was both spoken and sung together.

COMMUNITY

Within houses and small groups, they did team-building games intended for both community building and fun, as many of these kids were dealing with trauma, fear, and loss outside the classroom.

Dancing was brought into the curriculum. Collins believes that, done the right way, “dancing is an important aspect of community. It intensifies relationships, and brings joy.” Their Hymn of the Month allowed them to “get a little blue-grassy” and turned out to be perfect for learning the Virginia Reel.

DISCIPLESHIP

Classical educators realize they are primarily discipling souls. This becomes more difficult when dealing with situations beyond their own experience.

Calling on a respected Christian counselor, Keith McCurdy, Collins helped her faculty process the situation so they could disciple their students. “He was essential to helping teachers to be instruments of healing. In every interaction with the kids, it helps if teachers are unified in approach. The teacher has to know the truth in order for the students to be taught.”

According to Collins, “Every Christian was deeply encouraged by the evident work of the Holy Spirit in the midst of tragedy.” At times it felt like a “well-

orchestrated three-ring circus. Every day we'd finish the day and say, 'OK, we're going to make this change and do this and that.' And then I would email teachers. We rolled with it. It was an incredible feat of administration on behalf of all our staff."

The students are doing well. They still get a little nervous when it rains.

REBUILDING

While students attended school at the Alamo, donations of money and time continued to pour in.

Over \$10,000 was raised on Covenant's website donation page alone. Schools, individuals, and organizations sent checks during the next several months totaling over \$200,000. An anonymous donor connected with nearby Grapevine Christian School gave another \$100,000, saying, "Because we know what it's like to survive a flood. We know what you need and you need money right now. We want to leverage our gift by asking the school to match it." They raised an additional large sum from the Grapevine Christian School community in just one day.

Another nearby school, Brazos Christian, brought a van full of people and was a significant labor force. Covenant Christian School in Indianapolis sent a group of 11th grade girls who "worked their fingers to the bones" putting Covenant's library back in order. North Cobb Christian School sent a team to encourage our teachers with hand-written cards for each and every faculty and staff member. Their student council donated \$1,000 to our student council with the provision that the money would be spent only on something fun. Donations of furniture, supplies, books, and even kitchen equipment came from individuals, churches, and schools. Churches supplied food and shelter not only for locals but also for those who came to help. Many sister CCE schools helped as well. They were overwhelmed by the kindness of others and inspired by their example.

**But thanks be to
God! He gives us the
victory through our
Lord Jesus Christ.**

—1 CORINTHIANS 15:57

In five weeks, they were back at their school. Covenant believes that, if anyone kept track of these sorts of things, this would be a record.

The Covenant community returned with a new-found love for walls, floors, and bathrooms. But, that's all they had. They learned a different way of continuing to lean in. The refinishing was not complete until their first

open house in late October. It was a tough deadline, but as Collins said, "We were determined to at least look civilized. We were not going to be the school that looks like it's not going to make it."

Collins appreciates the city's mantra, "Houston Strong." She recalls, "In other tragedies like this, I've seen people respond as victims. People need to not be victims. Houston refuses to do that, and it makes me proud to be from Houston."

And she believes more firmly today in her mission.

The essence of classical Christian education is that we are not defined by what happens but by how we respond, and we want to learn to respond in all situations with truth, goodness, and beauty. Our identity in Christ allows us to be more than someone who endures; we are more than conquerors. CCE is about understanding who you are in Christ. ■■



Author & Film Director N.D. Wilson

How school gave him an unfair advantage



Back in 1981, Logos School opened its doors with 18 students. It would become one of the first ACCS schools and start a nationwide movement. An early alumnus of Logos School, Nate Wilson credits that day for starting him on the path to a career as a successful creator of both books and films. His most recent work, the nature documentary *The Riot and the Dance*, was released in theaters across the country. We asked Nate a few questions about work, imagination, and classical Christian education.

1 Describe the impact classical Christian education (CCE) has had on your career as an author.

I couldn't possibly describe my career as an author without my K-12 CCE experience at Logos School (in Moscow, Idaho), as well as my undergrad at New Saint Andrews College. I'm in the business of imagination, but I can't imagine what my brain would be like without Latin and logic, ancient history and mythology. The education I received so thoroughly shaped my imagination and linguistic abilities, that not one of my books would exist without it.

2 How valuable are stories?

Stories catechize imaginations and impulses. Reading classical literature in high school gave me a glimpse into another (and quite fantastical) perspective on the world. In college, as my worldview expanded and integrated various points into one cohesive whole, it dawned on me that Homer's perspective on reality might have been accurate at that time. Or, at the least, more accurate than the way we moderns project our materialistic atheism back onto that time.

Reading Homer taught me how the ancients read the world around them. Our stories do the same. What do we yearn for? What do we love and honor and desire? Our stories reveal everything about us culturally because they both shape our loves and loyalties and bestow cultural honor on certain things and condemnation on others (just like Homer and Virgil and Ovid did). All this to say, stories are the Walter Mitty-like daydreams of a culture. And what says more about your desires than your daydreams? I value stories as both the portraiture and the leadership of a culture's dreams.

3 How did CCE instill a sense of wonder?

The classical model does not intrinsically instill wonder in any way. But a truly Christian vision of the world that doesn't provoke wonder, isn't Christian at all. The breadth of a classical curriculum, mediated through distinctively Christian instruction, should kick down the walls of modernism and materialism that restrict the imaginations of

students in our own time and place. And that is what happened to me. How could any of us see God's incredible artistry in every facet of reality, and within every educational discipline, and not be filled with wonder?

4 Is the value of CCE primarily for those already literarily inclined? Is there any benefit for those who are more analytical and STEM-driven? Can it really be for everyone?

We aren't prophets, and we don't do student palm-reading. The goal of CCE educators and schools should be to prepare students for their futures, wherever those futures might take them. Becoming broad and versatile humans will benefit any student, regardless of their future calling. I might offend some people here, but trying to let the proclivities and gifts of a particular student govern or guide

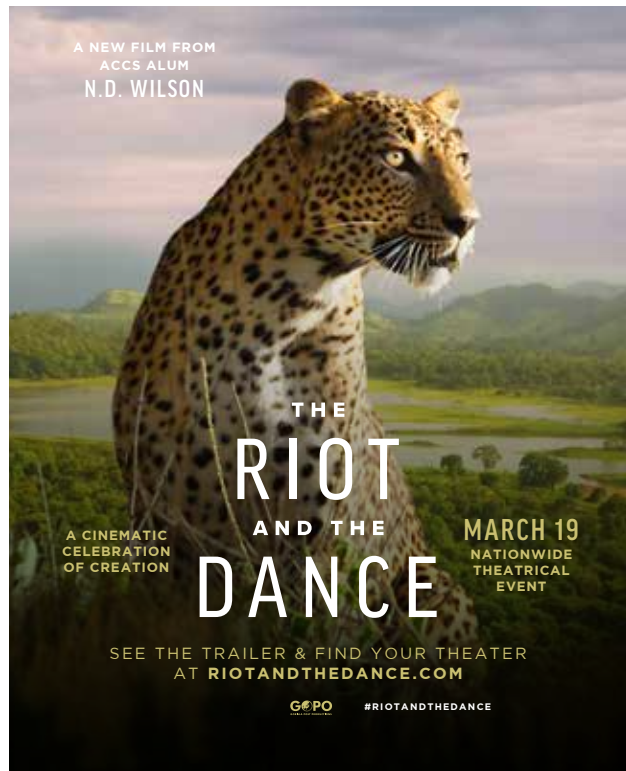
How does one extract one's education from one's work?

the subject matter of their course of study is the height of parental and educational folly. We should be growing strengths, but constantly targeting weaknesses. Imagine having a child with a particularly large nose, and after

some discussion with experts, deciding to focus entirely on trying to grow that nose larger. The example is farcical but fair. STEM-driven students particularly need to be pushed and grown with literature and history and rhetoric, just like the more literarily inclined need to be pushed with STEM. The timid need sports, the jocks need the life of the mind, and so on. All of us are made in the image of God and need to work to image Him as broadly as we possibly can.

5 Tell us about the intention behind *The Riot and the Dance*.

For far too long, we have let the materialists be the curators of God's work in our culture. They might film things beautifully, but they do so while proclaiming that everything we are gazing upon is completely meaningless and came into being without an artist of any sort. Our goal for this production was to do the exact opposite—to celebrate creation and its meaningfulness as the work of our divine Father. Of course, we wanted to honor Him both with our words and with the cinematic quality of our work. It has brought us a great deal of joy, traveling His world and touring His living museum with an eye to bring back what we captured for Christian families who want to know their Father better through bearing witness to His works.



I've also been thrilled by how many people assume that we didn't capture these images ourselves. We've been asked a number of times how we were able to license so much great footage (from assumed secular sources). The answer: we didn't. We chased these things ourselves and learned a great deal about our Father in the process.

6 What role did your education play in the development of this film?

CCE played no direct role in the making of this film. But indirectly, the role is immeasurable. How does one extract one's education from one's work? Our crew was primarily made up of graduates of Logos School in Moscow, Idaho.



Find more about N.D. Wilson and his latest book, *Outlaws of Time: The Last of the Lost Boys*, at ClassicalDifference.com/NDWilson.



And every single producer is currently involved in CCE in some capacity. So, CCE shaped the people who shaped the film—from my own writing and direction, to camera operators, to sound capture, to production, to the initial editing.

7 What would you tell parents about CCE, and what would you tell a disgruntled student?

I would tell parents that CCE should not be approached as a great way to get college scholarships and that no CCE school should be treated as a prep school. We are not feeder programs for institutions of higher unbelief. Our children and students should be striving to better love and image God with all their hearts, souls, bodies, and minds. The opportunities and disciplines of CCE provide fantastic opportunities to do just that.

But CCE also gives students something valuable to squander. In a very real way, I think of every CCE grad as a trust-fund kid. What will they do with it? Do they comprehend what they've been given? Are they going to slack off and waste the educational wealth they've received?



BASECAMP LIVE

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“Our world is more WONDER-filled than you realize!” Hear from N.D. Wilson himself in this interview about his recent film. Visit ClassicalDifference.com/BaseCampLive.

Or are they going to break a sweat and consciously serve God with it?

Our culture has fallen so far that CCE grads have a bit of an unfair advantage. Which means that we can slack off and still win sometimes. But that's not what God wants from us. As for the disgruntled student: Oh, cry me a river. Suck it up and read *Classical Me, Classical Thee*, written by a CCE grad (my older sister, who also happened to be the impetus for the entire CCE movement). ■■

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DOWN THE HALLWAY



BELLA SHALALA
Grade 8
Sandhills Classical Christian School
Southern Pines, NC

According to art teacher Susan Baer, this chalk pastel landscape was inspired by the work of American master Wolf Kahn. After observing realistic landscapes and photographs from nature, Bella's goal was to explore texture, space, color, abstraction, and mood using simplified shapes and arbitrary color.



ISAAC HARMON
Grade 2
Haw River Christian Academy
Pittsboro, NC

This Van Gogh reproduction was drawn in pencil and colored with soft pastel on heavy paper for 2nd grade art class. *Photo by ACCS president David Goodwin.*



Brighten our walls!

We like to fill our hallway with student art, poetry, essays, short stories and other good works. Send your submissions to ClassicalDifference.com/submissions. Published student works earn a \$10 Amazon gift card for purchasing classic books. Or crayons.



SARAH CHUCHUTA
Grade 9
Cary Christian School
Cary, NC

After completing a series of lessons on portraiture, Sarah was asked to create a self-portrait in which she was breaking out of a wall of her choosing. She chose to create this graphite drawing for the assignment. *Submitted by art teacher Alexis Booth.*

My Hiding Place

I scramble as he counts to 10
To where my hiding place has been.
I get there on the count of 9.
Nails poke and scratch me like a pine.
It smells of dust and real old paint.
I will not utter one complaint.
I sit there waiting for a sound
Huddled on the concrete ground.
Soon I hear it! There they are!
Now they can't be very far!
I hold my breath till I might burst.
They say, "I bet I'll find her first!"
Oh no! I think I'm going to sneeze!
I'll be seen if not at ease!

ABBEY HELMUS
Grade 6
Providence Christian Academy
Lansing, IL

This poem was written as part of a descriptive writing unit in 5th-6th grade composition. Students were asked to incorporate sensory imagery, specific details, and a simile while writing about a childhood experience. *Submitted by teacher Kim Darling.*

If I move my head, I'll bang it!
If I move my foot, they'll see it!
Oh, what am I going to do?
Soon I'm going to achoo!
(sigh) I hear them trot away.
Finally I can sneeze, hooray!
Have they given up just yet?
They've probably gone upstairs, I'll bet.
Like a turtle out of its shell,
I crawl out feeling pretty swell.
They couldn't find me! I was great!
So I stand up very straight.
Upstairs I go, and tease I will.
I don't like sitting so very still.

Should We Be Afraid to Hold a Student Back?

Bringing honor to all in the classroom



The Ambrose School,
Meridian, ID

BY JOE GERBER

More than anything else, we want our children to live the good life. That usually means a good job, a happy family, and

a robust faith. Our greatest fear is making decisions that will limit their future. Sometimes we latch onto academic success as the most predictable path to success.

In I Corinthians 12:21–23, Paul instructs the church about the necessity of diverse membership within the body of Christ. Our modern view of education is often opposed to this principle—and consequently puts great pressure on parents to make sure their kids measure up. First, we parents need to remove fear as the basis for our decisions. Second, we need to free ourselves from false ideas about value, purpose, and happiness.

And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you;” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor.

I Corinthians 12:21–23 (NKJV)

WHEN IS IT HELPFUL TO HOLD A CHILD BACK?

Not all kids are the same. Today, though, to argue that all students do not have equal abilities is to violate the modern, secular creed of “egalitarianism.” Our culture values sameness, and is willing to go to great lengths to get it. God created every individual as just that—an individual—not an automaton with the same brain as the student at the desk next to him. We must value God’s diverse order of gifts that exist in the body of Christ.

A different level of academic success does not mean a student needs to be held back. A student may not be an “A” student, but has been given a unique set of gifts from God that should be cultivated and ultimately used for His glory and for the purpose of cultural renewal. I repeat, this student does not need to be held back.

However, as a ninth-grade teacher, I have seen situations in which a student being held back for a year was the best decision that a parent could make. Being sensitive to children’s needs at a young age can make a significant difference in their future experience at school.

When I taught fifth grade, I had a student we will call “Tom.” Tom was one of my best, brightest, and most Christ-like students. He was a natural leader. So far so good. After meeting with Tom’s mom during a parent-teacher conference, I discovered that he had presented with significant social and academic struggles when he first began school. You see, because of where Tom’s birthday fell, he started school as a very young five-year-old. After second grade, the decision was made to hold Tom back a year. This decision changed Tom’s whole experience in the classroom with his teachers and peers. I was shocked when I heard this story. It was difficult for me to imagine Tom as a kid struggling socially and academically because my experience with him was so positive.



In the previous issue, we discussed learning disabilities in more depth. To view resources, ways in which CCE can help, possible accommodations, and success stories, visit ClassicalDifference.com/LD.

If the following three characteristics apply to your child, it might be a good time to talk with the teacher or administration to help sort through possible underlying causes for these struggles, and to identify whether or not an extra year might help.

- Younger than the majority of other classmates
- Significant academic struggles
- Significant social struggles

Trust your teacher's opinions regarding your concerns. It may be that your concerns are not being observed by the teacher in the classroom. Some students will struggle academically more than others, regardless of their grade placement. And, that is okay.

WHAT ABOUT KIDS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES?

Students with learning disabilities might be greatly helped by an extra year of growth and development. Kids never “overcome” true learning disabilities. Some diagnosed learning disabilities can be overcome in the sense that a child can outgrow certain limitations. Most learning disabilities, though, require a child to learn to strategize or cope rather than to overcome. Any discussion of learning disabilities is fraught with a diversity of opinions about the causes and definitions. It's fair to acknowledge that, in a fallen world, struggle and difficulty are inevitable.

Classical Christian education (CCE) is especially suited to care for students who struggle to learn. The classical classroom is not primarily a place of acquiring information. It is primarily a place of virtue formation. When the classroom is oriented around love of God and, through God, a love of the good, the door for students with a diversity of challenges and disabilities is swung wide open.

Teachers and parents alike would do well to remember that students with disabilities are very often the students who are examples to their peers of fortitude, or what C.S. Lewis referred to as the ability to “stick it” under discomfort. He said that “guts” is probably the closest English synonym. The students who have challenges that exceed that of the average student teach fortitude through their lives of learning to fight the good fight through a difficult life well lived. ■■

JOE GERBER is a teacher of ninth grade humanities at The Ambrose School and former licensed master social worker for at-risk youth.

A Philosophy with Consequences

Replacing “egalitarianism” with compassion and wisdom

Paul reminds us in I Corinthians 12:21-23 that God has rightly blessed his people with a diversity of gifts. When applying this principle to the classroom, teachers and parents must reject the modern notion of egalitarianism which states that all kids are the same and any unequal results in their academic achievements are therefore a fault of the curriculum, the teacher, the school system, or, if all else fails, society itself.

One of the least egalitarian of American poets once condemned these ideas with the following words:

“We know all men are not created equal in the sense some people [modern educators] would have us believe—some people are smarter than others, some people have more opportunity because they are born with it, some men make more money than others, some ladies make better cakes than others—some people are born gifted beyond the normal scope of men.”

This is not the argument made by an eighteenth-century Virginia gentleman or French aristocrat. This conclusion is drawn by Atticus Finch in his closing statement during the trial of Tom Robinson in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

He goes on to argue that our modern attempts to equalize educational outcomes make “the children left behind suffer terrible feelings of inferiority.” The unspoken message—that a person's value is determined by attainment of knowledge, the ability to ace tests, and the level of conformity—puts tremendous pressure on kids and focuses their attention on meaningless pursuits that ultimately deflate. Atticus is arguing against the pragmatist prophets of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who so radically transformed the way Americans think about education today.

The most difficult conversation I ever have with parents in 2018 is when I need to inform them that their child is not the next Einstein. But the biblical story has never been a story of equality of results or equality of gifts. When equality is discussed in Scripture it is almost always in reference to our fallen condition, God's love for his church, and the call of the gospel to all people of all nations.

In our CCE schools, we must boldly proclaim the truth that all men are not created equal—at least in the sense of intellectual capacity. We of all people should never forget that pursuing excellence to the best of our abilities will look different for everyone; that truth, goodness, and beauty are not measured by grades; and that in God's economy a lazy “A” student may well be considered less honorable than the hard-working “C” student sitting next to him.





AROUND THE WORLD

FINDING A WAY

From large organizations, to individual schools, to a single pastor—people are finding a way to bring education to those who need it most. In this issue, learn about Rafiki, an organization dedicated to grassroots education throughout Africa.

WHAT DOES SOCRATES HAVE TO DO WITH CLEAN WATER?

Karen Elliott of Rafiki Ministries gives us an answer:

“In 2000 the Kaduna riots broke out in Nigeria. Conflict turned to violence at the introduction of sharia law when the majority non-Muslim population resisted. At the time, a young boy named Fidelis lived with his mother, father, and sister in a small village. One day a group of tribal Muslims attacked their village. Fidelis watched in horror as the assailants cut down both his mother and father. In desperation he fled to his house, jumped



IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Vietnam: A Pastor and a Teacher in an Unlikely Place

into a large water vessel—which happened to be empty—and hid inside for several hours until the assailants left. He finally emerged from his hiding place, only to find the lifeless bodies of his parents.

Through the sovereignty of God, Fidelis was brought to Rafiki.”

Rafiki Africa Ministries operates villages throughout Africa. Each village includes an orphanage, preK–12 school, and teacher college centered around classical Christian education.

For 33 years, Rafiki has worked to help children know the love of Jesus and raise their standard of living. Rafiki’s instinct to employ education to mitigate the poverty, disease, and corruption that has plagued the African continent for centuries is not particularly unique.

100 years ago, colonial powers likewise deemed accessible education the best way to boost Africa’s standard of living. They suggested purely vocational training would best equip students to work, emphasizing the practical studies of health and agriculture. The re-

sults have been disappointing. The narrow, specialized exposure to subjects has produced narrowly interested albeit capable students, unable to synthesize ideas and lacking in innovative imagination: the precise skills needed to resurrect Africa from poverty. Students cannot consider new political regimes if they have only ever learned how to grow a tree. They cannot dream of going to the moon if they have never studied the solar system. They cannot recognize a tyrant if they have not studied the virtues of a good leader. The proposed system of vocational training severely limited students' capacity to understand broad ideas and inspire social change.

Africa's current model engages students at a very superficial level, grading students only according to short-answer tests and little else. Students are not encouraged to ponder questions or consider long-term implications of the answers; instead they are taught to merely pass unit tests. According to Rafiki Executive Director Karen Elliott, "cram, pass, forget" largely sums up the current African model of education. It sounds familiar.

Not only is the structure itself broken, but its application has been noncommittal at best. Teachers attend only about 60% of their own classes, and those employed register at a fourth-grade math level and a seventh-grade reading level. Teachers use no curriculum, with 60–70 students per class. This is true even among church schools, which are often Christian in name alone, as they employ only government-certified teachers and teach no biblical material at all.

SOCRATES?

The Rafiki Foundation takes a common solution one step further: instead of simply training Africans for specific jobs, Rafiki has implemented classical Christian schools to broadly expose students to enduring ideas, to teach them to love what is good and praiseworthy, and to train them to articulate those ideas with clarity and excellence. Instead of merely engaging the student's mind to pass a test, Rafiki engages his whole person, focusing on the merits of the student himself instead of the difficulty of the test. Instead of preparing the student to get by in the existing social system, Rafiki equips him to change the structure of the system itself.

The Rafiki Foundation currently maintains ten Rafiki Villages in ten African countries. This is the largest-scale implementation of the liberal arts ever attempted on the continent. At this point, missionaries still run the villages, but the villages are intended to gradually become indigenous ministries.

Over the years Fidelis has grown into a kind, hard-working young man. Due to his exceptional ingenuity and mathematical mind, Fidelis began to stand out academically among his



peers. He now takes courses throughingham University, with the goal of becoming a computer programmer.

When he last visited his home village, they all remembered him as "the boy in the pot" and were amazed at how far he had come since that time.

Fidelis was once asked about his favorite hymn. He responded, "O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus" because "after singing this, I always asked the Lord God to search me, O God, and know my heart. I always asked God to help me love my brothers and sisters and to give me the heart to love my enemies even though they killed my dad and mom. Whenever I sing this song, I always feel closer to God and feel His presence with me." ■■



JOIN RAFIKI IN HELPING OTHERS

We believe CCE is the best education for the whole human being, the best way to train a child in Christ, and the best way to teach a child how to think. We long to see each child reach his or her highest potential in order to transform Africa spiritually, educationally, and economically. The key to doing this is to enlist additional child sponsors. We are praying that all of our children, over 25% of whom are not fully sponsored, will reach full sponsorship this year.

May God bless you as you give—that a child like Fidelis in Africa might know God and have a bright future of life and service to Him.

We offer multiple sponsorships per child. With \$25 a month, sponsors receive regular updates on their child's successes and prayer concerns. Monthly sponsorships or one-time donations are appreciated.



For contact phone number, email, or online giving, visit ClassicalDifference.com/Rafiki.

Gather Around the Fire Pit

And take some time
to read ...



A spooky story and a fire go hand in hand. Start there to set the mood even if you have to finish in the comforting light of home.

... FRANKENSTEIN

I long for the moment when these hands will meet my eyes, when that imagination will haunt my thoughts no more. ... Unhappy man! Do you share my madness? Have you drunk also of the intoxicating draught? Hear me; let me reveal my tale, and you will dash the cup from your lips!

—Mary Shelley

... DRACULA

I have learned not to think little of any one's belief, no matter how strange it may be. I have tried to keep an open mind, and it is not the ordinary things of life that could close it, but the strange things, the extraordinary things, the things that make one doubt if they be mad or sane.

—Bram Stoker

... THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

It was for one minute that I saw him, but the hair stood upon my head like quills. Sir, if that was my master, why had he a mask upon his face?

—Robert Louis Stevenson

... THE COMPLETE STORIES AND POEMS

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered,
weak and weary,

Over many a quaint and curious volume of
forgotten lore —

While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there
came a tapping

As of someone gently rapping, rapping at my
chamber door.

“Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my
chamber door —

Only this, and nothing more.”

—Edgar Allen Poe

... AND THEN THERE WERE NONE

There was nothing hidden in this house, nothing concealed. It had no atmosphere about it. Somehow, that was the most frightening thing of all. They exchanged good-nights on the upper landing. Each of them went into his or her own room, and each of them automatically, almost without conscious thought, locked the door...

—Agatha Christie

“Aha” Moment

NOUN: A MOMENT OF SUDDEN INSIGHT OR DISCOVERY.

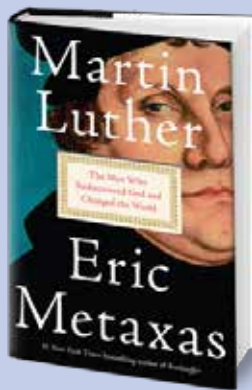
—Google.com



Did your student have an “aha” moment this year?

Perhaps they made a leap in overcoming a struggle. Or you witnessed a unique flash of insight. We parents relish these moments for our kids.

We would love to encourage other parents with your child’s “aha” story.



Book Club

Still trying to find time to read Eric Metaxas’s *Martin Luther*? We would encourage you to add it to your summer reading list, and weigh in at Classical-Difference.com/bookclub.

VISIT CLASSICALDIFFERENCE.COM/AHA

Is your child (or are you) struggling to come up with an idea, make a plan, or solve a problem? Visit the link above to read Harvard Business Review’s insightful article, “4 Steps to Having More ‘Aha’ Moments.”

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Classical School
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Greenville Classical Academy
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Christian Academy
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Harvest Christian
Academy of New York
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Harvest Christian School
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Heritage Christian
Academy of North Idaho
Spirit Lake, ID
Heritage Classical Academy
Hudson, OH

Heritage Classical
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Mineral Christian School Mineral, VA	Providence Classical Christian Academy Sioux Falls, SD	Seoul International Christian Academy Seoul, South Korea	The Oaks: A Classical Christian Academy Spokane, WA	Veritas Academy Cody, WY
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PEER Academy Knoxville, TN	Rochester Classical Academy Rochester, NY	The Classical Christian Conservatory of Alexandria Alexandria, VA	Triuno Classical Christian School São Luis, Brazil	Whitefish Christian Academy Whitefish, MT
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8 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR BACKYARD BIGGER



the poor were taught a trade, and generally only the wealthy were exposed to the arts and humanities. She wrote prolifically on the issue of education, and taught her philosophy to teachers and governesses for decades. Within the classical Christian movement, her ideas are now referred to as the “Charlotte Mason Method.” Her philosophy can be summed up in her words, “Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life.”

Many of Mason’s recommendations for studying and experiencing nature are great for parents trying to create a fun, productive summer for their kids. Not only will your kids find a whole new world in their backyard, but they might have a new perspective to share with their classical classroom come September.

HERE ARE 8 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR BACKYARD BIGGER, ACCORDING TO CHARLOTTE MASON:

1 Start a nature observation notebook:

Give your kids a notebook, colored pencils, and a field guide. Send them out to observe, focusing on how objects feel, smell, and sound. Have them note where a plant or insect is found and what it is doing, and have them hypothesize why. Joyfully review their findings with them.

2 Challenge your kids to find a (new to them) species of plant or insect every day:

By simply searching nature, your children can develop familiarity with the habitants of your backyard, and a sense of wonder when they continue to discover new species.

Do you shudder at the thought of a three-month summer vacation? Do you reluctantly envision a summer spent indoors, in front of a screen, just to keep the dreaded, “I’m bored” at bay?

You are not alone. We have researched a few ways, based on the Charlotte Mason method, to make your backyard bigger this summer.

Charlotte Mason (1842-1923) was a British educator who dedicated her life to providing a “liberal education for all.” In nineteenth-century England, children were educated according to class;

3 Take a weekly nature walk:

This is a great time to bond with your child, and discover nature together.

4 Have a picnic:

You can simply eat lunch on the grass in your backyard if you don't have time to pack and drive. Your kids would probably rather eat in the yard than at the table any day.

5 Create geography paintings:

Have your child draw maps of your backyard, including the position of the sun, boundaries, the four directions, and physical landmarks. Have them note shadows at various times of the day, or get a sundial!

6 Plant a garden:

Want to try a small garden but don't want to build one? Try the 4x4 garden box from Walmart.com. At around \$30, it might pay for itself in cucumbers and tomatoes. [Greenes Fence 4' x 4' x 7" Cedar Raised Garden Bed](#)

A great way for your child to observe plants growing! A few recommendations on what to plant:

STRAWBERRIES: These grow without much effort, and are fun when kids get to eat the true “fruits of their labors!”

CRESS HEADS: If you can find a cress head planter (sometimes known as a “chia pet”) the plant grows out of the planter’s “head” like “hair” or a “tail.”



This is probably in your backyard: closeup of a butterfly.

BUTTERFLY SEED MIX: An assortment of flower seeds, selected to attract butterflies.

Bonnieplants.com has great ideas for simple (or themed) box gardens! Find out more at [ClassicalDifference.com/backyard](#).

7 Build a bird feeder:

Hummingbird feeders or basic bird feeders are great ways for your child to connect with nature. Find links to DIY

and inexpensive hummingbird feeders at [ClassicalDifference.com/backyard](#).

Encourage your kids to note feeding times and eating habits, and try their hand at drawing or photographing a hummingbird.

8 Catch an insect:

This is an excellent means of observation. Also, a pet insect can help teach your child responsibility. ■■



An Atmosphere, a Discipline, a Life

LEARN MORE ABOUT CHARLOTTE MASON

By “atmosphere,” Mason referred to the learning environment of the child. What are the relationships there like? Are they tense? Are they peaceful? What ideas rule in that community? The child will absorb the ideas that rule the learning atmosphere. Mason maintained that students will be educated by the environment as much, if not more, than the actual curriculum material.

By “discipline,” Mason referred to the cultivation of good habits, specifically the development of good character, which should make up one third of their education.

Mason’s third component, “life,” refers to academics and curriculum. Note that, according to her philosophy, only one-third of a child’s education is comprised of curriculum. Mason believed that students should be given living thoughts and ideas, not just dry facts. This means instead of textbooks, students should read primary sources. Instead of lecture, students should also engage in Socratic discussion. And instead of fill-in-the-blank science worksheets, students should observe and enjoy God’s creation.



This summary is excerpted from [SimplyCharlotteMason.com](#). Learn more about Charlotte Mason by linking to the full article at [ClassicalDifference.com/backyard](#).



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Olivia receives her diploma

MANY OF YOU MET OLIVIA AUGUST in the previous issue (Spring 2018). If a picture is worth a thousand words, this picture represents the best ending chapter we could provide to her story.

“As parents, we all walk alongside our children in the education process, don't we? We experience our own graduation of sorts and our hearts walk across that stage with each of our kids. However, Florence, Olivia's mom, took that to a whole new level. So, it seemed most appropriate when Olivia graduated that we confer an honorary degree upon Florence August as she graduated alongside Olivia.”

—Sonmin Crane,
Rockbridge Academy,
Millersville, MD



Classical Christian Academy, Post Falls, ID



GIVE IT YOUR BEST SHOT!

Want to be the last face people see in the next issue? Submit your best school-related photo. If your photo is selected, you'll also receive **\$25 CASH**.

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