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VOLUME 6, NUMBER 1 | SPRING 2020

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VOL. 6, NO. 1, SPRING 2020.

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INFORMATION: *The Classical Difference* is a publication of the Association of Classical and Christian Schools (ACCS). Views expressed in *The Classical Difference* do not necessarily represent the views of the association or our members. Our goal is to inform and expand the community of supporters of classical Christian education. *The Classical Difference* is published four times a year and is mailed, at the request of member schools, to parents who have enrolled in ACCS member schools. If you do not wish to receive this publication, please contact our offices at the email address below. If you wish this publication to be mailed to a friend or relative, please contact us. Gift subscriptions are available. **ADVERTISING:** information@ClassicalDifference.com. **SUBMISSIONS:** *The Classical Difference* welcomes your submissions. If you have a quote, story, article, photo, letter or other submission, visit www.ClassicalDifference.com/submissions. Submissions may or may not be published or compensated. Compensation is dependent upon length and placement. **CONTACT:** information@ClassicalDifference.com. **COPYRIGHT:** ©2020 by the Association of Classical and Christian Schools (ACCS). All rights reserved. A publication of the ACCS. **WEBSITE:** www.ClassicalDifference.com.

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Correction

In the article "The Eliot Society" appearing on page 20 of the previous issue (Volume 5, Number 4, Winter 2019), the author was listed as Sonmin Crane. The actual author was Liz Horst. We apologize for this misunderstanding, and we are grateful to both Sonmin Crane and Liz Horst for their work on behalf of *The Classical Difference*!



Scottish Reformation Tours

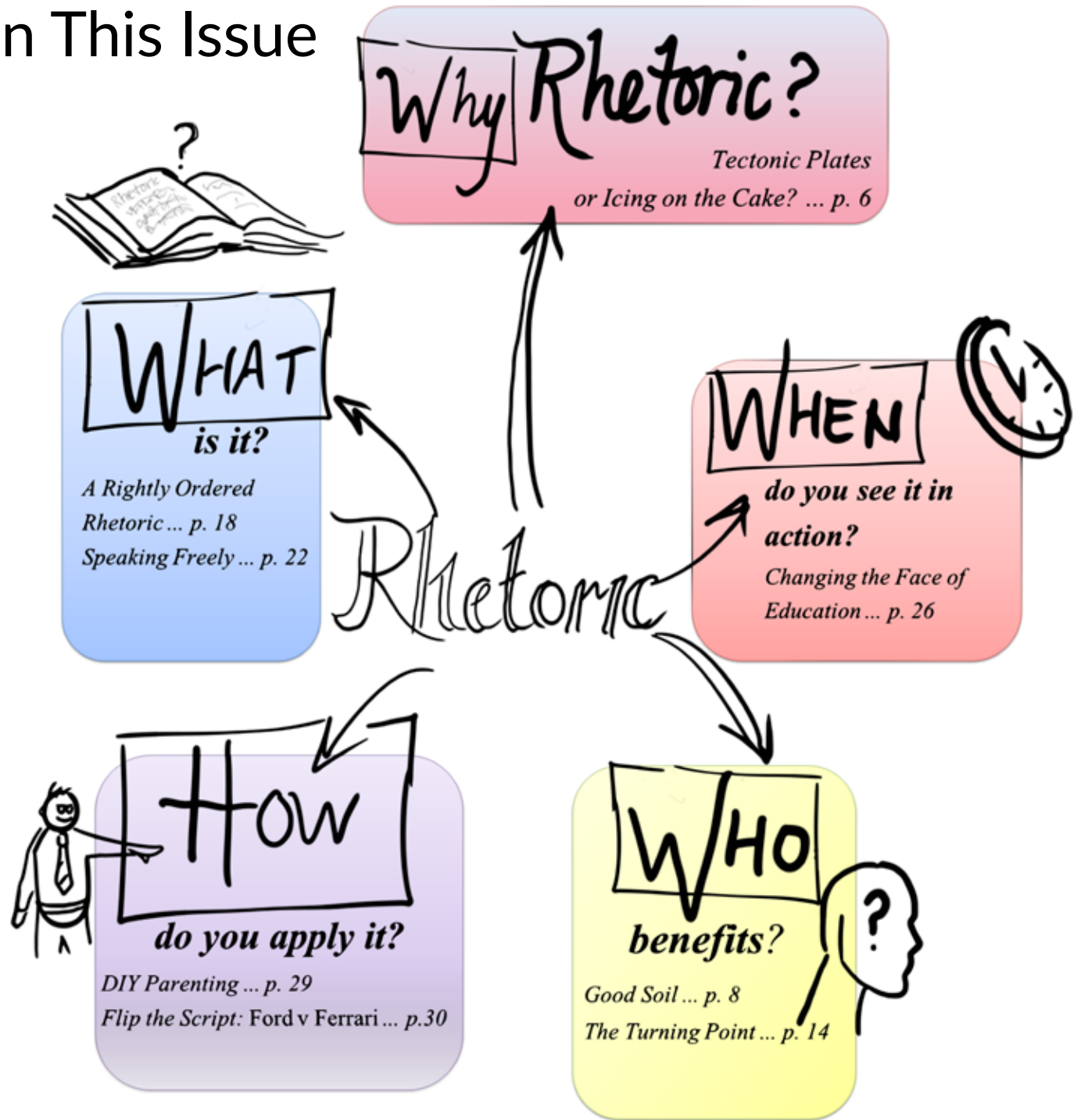
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N.D. Wilson

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COVER: The Ambrose School graduation, courtesy of Pictoria, photo by Valerie MacMahon

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RHETORIC

is part of the **trivium**—grammar, logic, and rhetoric—the foundation of classical education. To learn more about the trivium, visit ClassicalDifference.com/trivium.

RHETORIC in a classical Christian school does not stop at “speech” or “writing” class. Rather, it teaches a way of thinking—a point of synthesis where things make **SENSE TOGETHER**. In that way it is a perfect name for the upper grades, where everything learned in the grammar and logic years comes together. But at a deeper level, Rhetoric is training to **RIGHTLY ORDER** thoughts, impulses, and ideas using that learning. It is a study in antithesis—**OPPOSITES AND CONTRASTS**—and it is a study in asking the question, “Is this better than that?” Or, “Is this more valid than that?”

Rhetoric, like all art, has an **END RESULT**. As a painter, what are you doing? You are learning to view the world (and your imagination) in a specific way, and from that view to reproduce **IMAGES**—using specific skills.

As a rhetorician, what are you doing? You are learning to view the world in a specific way, and from that view to rightly order your **LOVES**—using specific skills.

Here’s the mistake we often make. If you ask Michelangelo what “art” is, we like to think he would answer that it’s **CREATING** beauty, not painting a picture or making a sculpture. He used all sorts of mediums—canvas, paint, stone, fresco. Each required all kinds of techniques.

As art has many mediums, so does Rhetoric: speeches, stories, podcasts, tweets. If the ultimate purpose—the beautiful end result—of Rhetoric is the correct **ORDERING** of affections, then we can teach our kids to use speaking, writing, and reading to achieve that purpose.

And along the way, they will learn the techniques and skills of logic, eloquence, perception, discernment, and understanding that will **BENEFIT** them for a lifetime.





Rhetoric: Tectonic Plates or Icing on the Cake?

Good rhetoric makes the world make sense

What if we were created?
What if the Creator had a purpose when He created? What if that purpose was to glorify Himself?

These axioms are a nightmare to some, like famed atheist Christopher Hitchens. Hitchens argued in his book *God Is Not Great* that the God of the Bible is a megalomaniac. I can see his point. But only because I can see his point of view.

As Hitchens saw things, the universe is an accident that ever improves through evolution. Man is this “blind

watchmaker’s” greatest achievement. And thus, Hitchens offered an opposing set of axioms: *What if Man is the greatest and highest of all creatures, the pinnacle of evolution? What if Man orders all things according to his purposes?* These two juxtaposed sets of axioms, Christian and humanist/progressive, represent the bedrock worldview foundations of our day. Hitchens was not a prophet; he was more like a town crier. He simply explained what was already implicitly accepted as “truth” for a large swath of our culture.

These two opposed sets of axioms form what I call the “Grand Antithesis” in our day. Through cultural appeasement, twentieth-century Christians have unknowingly allowed others to shape our loves, virtues, and

passions to align with the progressive/humanist’s viewpoint. Most of us are incapable of purposefully connecting the underlying axiom, about who we are and what we’re here for, to our everyday lives. We are enslaved because we do not know how to be free.

This is where the liberal art of “rhetoric” comes in. It’s called “liberal” (from the Latin “liber” meaning “free”) because it trains the mind to probe down to unstated, underlying assumptions, and therefore be free to think independently.

Do they believe they were created to glorify God?
Or do they believe they are gods who can define reality their way? Our kids will end up on one side of the fault line or the other, or they will be buried beneath the mountain range in between.



Trinitas Christian School, Pensacola, FL

When we think of rhetoric, we tend to think of it like “the icing on the cake.” We teach students to speak well (the icing), so that their good Christian values (the cake) can be influential in our culture. The practice of rhetoric affects the soul much more deeply than that. It is more like the tectonic plates forming the landscape than the icing covering a cake. It is fundamental, not decorative. It changes how we think.

As surely and slowly as tectonic plates drive deep into the earth to push up continents, one side or the other of this Grand Antithesis will move our children. Do they believe they were created to glorify God? Or do they believe they are gods who can define reality

their way? Our kids will end up on one side of the fault line or the other, or they will be buried beneath the mountain range in between. They will either be caught in the undertow of ideas that lead to destructive and miserable lives, or they will be perched atop the continental shelf, standing against the flow of the errant views of our age.

In classical Christian schools, we start with this: “*God created us and everything else for one singular purpose: His glory.*” We teach students logic: What if this axiom is true? What follows? How should you live, given this purpose? Then, we read and discuss great ideas from great thinkers in great historical cultures, written in great texts. Students practice emulating the best arguments of these great texts, because there’s nothing like emulating a master to learn an art. And the art of rhetoric teaches us that good arguments, after all, connect bedrock axioms with practical daily truth.

Through this process, students learn to think well, to view our universe as one big system that fits together, and to understand this system as it reflects “God’s glory, alone.” This is practiced, not just taught. Over time and through this practice, the student’s loves, virtues, and passions are shaped within the order of God’s world. ■

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

“

“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.”

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

”

“I cannot teach anybody anything. I can only make them think.”

—Socrates

For the past 20–30 years, the ACCS has been graduating young people who have been trained in this deeper way. They start down at the tectonic plates. And, as they move up, they are trained to see the glory of God at every level. This has an effect. One of the most evident is that ACCS graduates have a strong independence of mind. We hope this is born not of arrogance, but because they are deeply anchored to the truth of the universe.

Good Soil

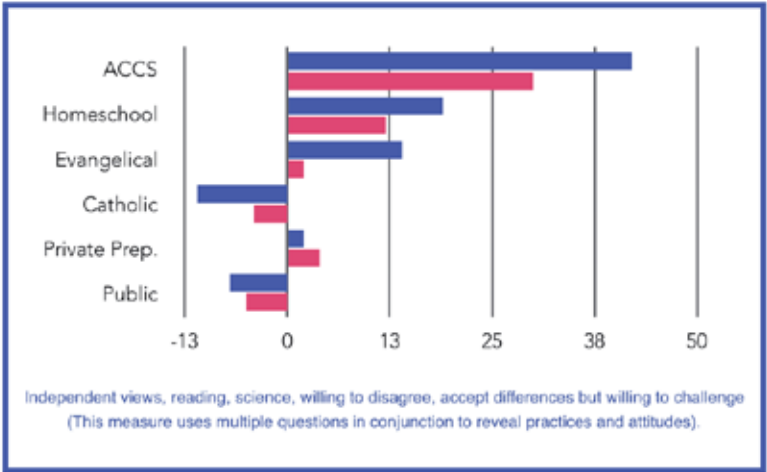
The Life Outcome Survey of ACCS Alumni

The Classical Difference recently released a study by

the ACCS and the University of Notre Dame that reflects the differences in life outcomes of alumni from various types of schools. In the coming Summer 2020 issue of our magazine, we plan to give a full report. One of the attributes unique to our graduates, according to the survey data, was their

INDEPENDENT THINKERS

ACCS Alumni can defy categories as they retain orthodoxy *and* engage the world.



Paldeia Academy, Knoxville, TN

Good Soil

HOW DIFFERENT ARE ACCS ALUMNI?

Look for our summer issue that will break down the survey done by the University of Notre Dame and the ACCS.



In the majority of comparisons from the survey, ACCS alumni (dark blue) reported more pronounced differences.

“independence of mind” profile. On that profile, ACCS alumni scored more than twice as high as the next most independent category—home schoolers.

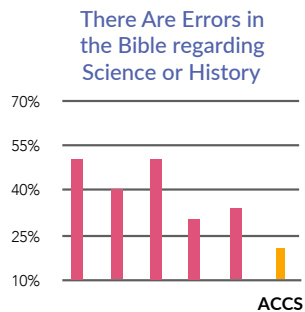
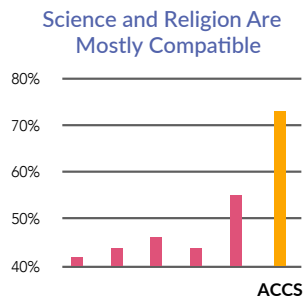
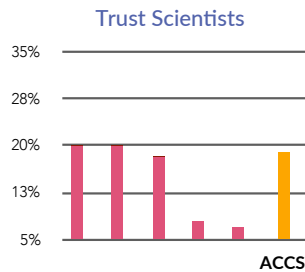
This independence can be seen in graduate responses. I’ll provide just a couple of examples here.

ACCS alumni trust and respect scientists more than any other conservative Christian group. And, by a wider margin, they believe science and religion are mostly compatible. With the position taken by science often reflecting Hitchen’s viewpoint (see previous article), you would think this would result in ACCS alumni compromising their faith. Rather, they are the least likely of any group to believe there are errors in the Bible regarding science or history. This reflects their thoughtful understanding in the face of strong pressure from science.

In another example, ACCS alumni were the most likely of any conservative Christian group to believe that society should be more tolerant of non-Christian religions. But, they were the least likely to believe religion is a private matter and should be kept out of social and political debates. And, they were the most comfortable challenging other religious groups in the public square. Once again, ACCS alumni feel free to tolerate other points of view, but they also feel free to disagree with them.

This is a glimpse into the many factors that show students from ACCS schools are different. Very different. ■■

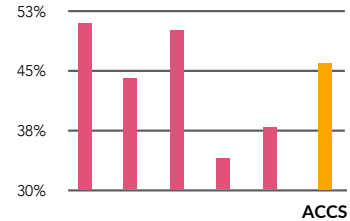
ACCS ALUMNI ARE NOT SWAYED BY “CONSENSUS”



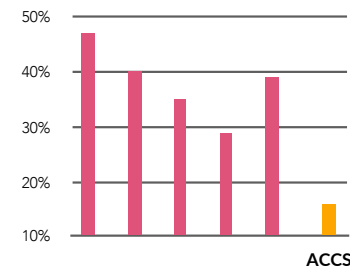
ACCS alumni trust scientists, believe science and religion are compatible, and believe the Bible is true, both in science and history.

TOLERANT BUT CHALLENGING

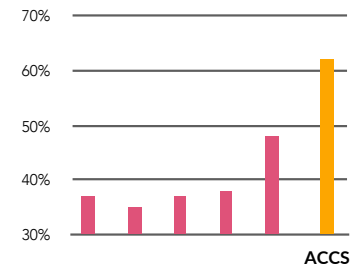
Society should be more tolerant of non-Christian religions



Religion is a private matter; should be kept out of social and political debates



OK to say things in public offensive to religious groups



Percent who mostly or completely agree.

Bars from left to right: public, prep, Catholic, Christian, homeschools, and ACCS member schools.





CHRISTIANITY TODAY'S MOST POPULAR COVER STORY OF 2019—

AND IT MIGHT NOT BE WHAT YOU THINK

On January 3, 2020, *Christianity Today* released its list of 2019 cover stories ranked by popularity. The story on classical Christian education took first place among the most-read articles of 2019. Dr. Louis Markos of Houston Baptist University wrote the piece with the assistance of several organizations, including the ACCS.

Dr. Markos is also a featured speaker at this year's ACCS Repairing the Ruins conference (see page 38). ■■



Visit ClassicalDifference.com/christianity-today for:

- The full lineup of this year's *Christianity Today* cover stories
- The article on classical Christian education



Great & Small SHARING THE LOVE

Kirsten Heselmeyer, a 4-H participant and a student at Grace Academy in Georgetown, TX, was honored at the local 76th Annual Livestock Association Show and Sale in December 2019. But it wasn't just for showing champion livestock. According to *Georgetown View Magazine*, she also "exemplified the kind of leadership 4-H intends."

They went on to report:

Not only did she show the overall Reserve Champion heifer, and a separate class winner, she also organized a hands-on program, with multiple activities for special needs students in three local ISDs [Independent School Districts]. Nearly 70 students visited with and touched miniature sheep and horses, chicks, goats, and some world-champion guinea pigs. She even included a wrap-up to the day with a visit from Santa.

Like many her age who seek to be inclusive with special needs students, she wanted to do something for those who may not have the same opportunities to participate in 4-H. "I had an idea to incorporate my love of working with those who are differently abled and my love of livestock. This was the perfect place to share the things I love with them."

Her dad, Scott, added that she has big plans for the event and hopes to include even more ISDs at future livestock shows. ■■



Visit ClassicalDifference.com/4-H to read the original article in *Georgetown View Magazine*.

Century Watch

FIVE HUNDRED YEARS OF HISTORY, 1520–2020

In the not-so-distant past in America, English was not the national language

because there was no national language. There was not a single street or neighborhood (at least as we think of them). Protestant Christian schools did not exist because schools didn't exist here, and Protestants didn't exist anywhere on this hemisphere. Mass elections with infrastructure like "electronic voting" and "electoral college" would have been in the genre of fantasy, except books were not available and such a genre did not exist back then. How quickly things can change.



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



Grace Academy, Georgetown, TX

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE '20S:

1520

In the early summer, Pope Leo X issues the bull Exsurge Domine (Arise O Lord), threatening Martin Luther with excommunication unless he recants his position on several Catholic doctrines, such as indulgences. In December, Luther burns it. Three years prior, his 95 Theses were nailed to the famous door.

1620

A group of people, born of Luther's Reformation, depart for a new country where they are free to worship God, free to educate their children to do the same, and free to govern themselves in new and innovative ways, if they survive. Willing to take great risks for a new life, they bring to Plymouth the learning that has been passed along for centuries. One of the first things they do is establish schools.

1720

George I is King of England, and the population of the thirteen colonies reaches 475,000. The largest city is Boston, at 12,000. There are plenty of streets and neighborhoods connecting nearly the entire East coast.

1820

America has a name, doesn't particularly care who is king of England, and its population nears 10,000,000. The fifth president is elected out of the vast and growing network of states, the innovative electoral college, and the emerging field of campaign management.

1920

The Eighteenth Amendment prohibits alcohol, the Nineteenth Amendment gives women the right to vote, the first commercially licensed radio station begins broadcasting live results of the presidential election, the emerging Model T car costs \$260 (\$3500 today), and a man named Ponzi comes up with a creative way to make money.

2020

Our population is 327 million. Space travel, radios, and Ponzi schemes are passé. We are headed into an election with two more states since 1920 (Alaska and Hawaii), the largest economy the world has ever seen, the electoral college still intact—and so much information flowing into our minds that the glow from our devices, if we turned them on at the same time, would probably be more visible from space than our lights.

However, we would say the most notable achievement of 2020 is not found on any timelines yet. It's this: the growing network of classical Christian schools has topped 300, spanning the country from coast-to-coast. We aim to be on future timelines as reformers of sorts, joining history's ranks of risk takers and innovators who took on an ever-changing world to protect the most important things, because those things never change. ■■

Before the mountains
were brought forth, or
ever you had formed
the earth and the world,
from everlasting to
everlasting you are God.

—Psalm 90:2



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the good way is, and walk in it. – Jeremiah 6:16*



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The TURNING POINT

How One Student's Senior Thesis
Transformed Her Life and Thinking Forever

BY CHRIS POTTS

ARE YOU HAPPY?

If you are, Charity Kim knows why. And she says you should count yourself fortunate. You may not have a lot of company.

America today, the college freshman contends, is a country whose people are both obsessed with happiness and largely oblivious to what it takes to *be* happy. The result: depression, anxiety, suicides, and addictions in record numbers.

Americans are consumed with finding not so much a surge of excitement, as “a long-term state of well-being

and contentment,” says Kim, who describes happiness as a “cultural infatuation” in this country. “The problem is not that Americans are simply unsatisfied or discontent, but that they are misunderstanding their very nature as human beings. The happiness that Americans want is antithetical to their human nature.”

Kim knows of what she speaks—and speak it she has. Now in her first year at Patrick Henry College, she spent a good part of the previous year and a half crafting her senior thesis, a presentation of which won her first place (and \$1,000) in the Association of Classical and Christian Schools’ (ACCS) 2019 Chrysostom Oratory Contest.

More than that, though, what she learned—and how she came to process it—launched what she thinks may be a lifelong transformation of her own view of faith, life, and herself.

THE DAUGHTER OF KOREAN IMMIGRANTS

who met in the U.S. (her dad is a family doctor, her mom a teacher), Kim was born in Pennsylvania but came west early. She grew up in California, and was just starting seventh grade when her folks first proposed enrolling her, her older brother, and her younger sister in Veritas Classical Academy, a small, private Christian school run by her uncle.

Kim was not exactly thrilled at the prospect.

"I was kind of hard-hearted to the idea," she remembers. "I missed having a lot more friends, doing sports." Nor did the idea of a Christ-centered education impress her much. "My parents would read the Bible to me every day, but I didn't really have a concept of how gripping those things are for our reality—that God *is* reality." She didn't change her mind overnight.

"It was a *long* process," she says. "But over the years, that school opened my eyes to see that Christ really is the center of our universe, and that all truth, all goodness and beauty, not only comes from Him, but it *is* Him. All those different subjects ... those are aspects of God that you're learning about.

"'All our learning is pointless,' one of my teachers said, 'if we're not using it for loving the people around us, and for loving God.'" As she neared the end of her time at Veritas, that idea became the seed of her award-winning thesis—and a turning point for Kim herself.



KIM WILL CHEERFULLY TELL YOU how much she enjoyed her ancient philosophy class, but she doesn't have to. There just aren't that many 18-year-olds in the world who can smoothly work Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato into casual conversation. All of those Greeks gave her input, as she mused on what to spend her senior year thinking, writing, and giving speeches about.

"In classical education," she explains, "are the three stages: grammar, logic, and rhetoric. High school is the rhetoric stage, where you're learning not only to have good ideas, but to be able to articulate them well." While a junior year thesis offers a dress rehearsal for that, it's the senior thesis, Kim says, that is "the capstone of your education."

She credits rhetoric with teaching her to "think differently." Something about the whole process of coming to articulate a certain idea well—both as a writer and an orator—forces one to wrestle and really understand that idea's nuances."

But Kim says rhetoric didn't just teach her to think better—it inspired her to think more.

"Rhetoric has affected my understanding of life and the world around me," she says. "I am far more mindful of the truth, goodness, and beauty." For her, "ideas are more than just statements written on paper, or spoken ... they truly make up the substance of our lives. They drive people, they explain events, they give meaning and purpose to all that we do."

So what drove Kim to immerse her senior year in the whys of the world's search for happiness?

The theme she kept coming back to was the role of suffering in a Christian's life. And that, curiously enough, led her to think about happiness.



Repairing the Ruins Conference



In her award-winning speech, “Finding True Happiness in Gospel Freedom,” Kim describes the belief (based on the writings of Augustine and others) that many of us torpedo our own happiness—even as we obsess over it—by fixating on ourselves: our needs, our wants, our success. That fixation isolates us from those around us and often spurns the necessary disciplines that make freedom possible.

Both of these courses nullify our own true nature, as created by God (“in His own image”), Kim says—and so separate us from the only One who can provide the happiness we crave. We push away those with whom we could share our happiness ... undermine our own freedom ... and try to replace God’s plans with our own. All of those contribute, Kim says, to the profound *unhappiness* that so characterizes our volatile age.

BUT WHILE ALL THOSE IDEAS intrigued Kim, the idea of sharing them aloud did not.

“I was terrified of any public speaking,” she says. The presentations of her junior thesis gave her practice, though, as

The one thing that is never taught by any chance in the atmosphere of public schools is exactly that—that there is a whole truth of things, and that in knowing it and speaking it we are happy.

—G.K. Chesterton, *All Things Considered*

did involvement in her school’s “mock trial” program (allowing students to prepare for and act out legal trials). The Lord used both, Kim says, “to prepare me and let me find my voice.”

To Kim’s astonishment, she won both the school and the national competitions—and soon found herself in an Atlanta auditorium, presenting her thesis to more than 1,000 faculty, principals, and fellow students at that year’s ACCS conference.

“Oh, man, it was really scary,” she says, remembering looking at the huge crowd and thinking, “*Charity, you just have to get to the podium and start speaking.*” Once she did, and “got into the swing of it, it got pretty exciting.” She finished to a standing ovation ... but it wasn’t just her audience that was affected by the speech.

“The ideas that I worked with did impact me,” Kim says. “I tend to be someone who can kind of close myself off ... sit in my own self-pity.” The themes of her thesis are a constant self-reminder, she says, that “you’re called to a life of freedom. You don’t have to live in this bondage to yourself, immobilized by your fears and anxieties.

“You can reach out to other people. Your happy life won’t be in your room, or at home, or in comfort. It will be when you actively begin to love the Lord, love the people right next to you, do your best at the task right in front of you.”

So ... is Charity Kim happy?

“Far from ‘perfectly’ happy,” she admits. But because of what God showed her through the rhetorical process of creating her thesis, “I can say that my life, looking back, has a lot more light in it. And I put more effort now into loving people, and because of that ... I’m happier than I was before. Yeah, I’m definitely a lot happier.

“Not *the* happiest,” she smiles. “But happier.” ■■

CHRIS POTTS is a writer living in Glendale, AZ.



Visit ClassicalDifference.com/turning-point

- See Charity Kim’s speech
- Learn more about the ACCS Repairing the Ruins Conference
- Learn more about the Chrysostom Oratory Competition



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By CHRISTOPHER MAIOCCA



Given our infatuation with competition, titles, and trophies, it is strange that no contest or sanctioning body has arisen that can officially coronate “The Greatest Orator in the World.” We know,

for example, who the world’s strongest man is. As of this writing, it is Martin Licis, a real-life hulk who can successfully deadlift 1000 pounds. We also know who can ingest the greatest number of hot dogs. Currently that honor belongs to Joey Chestnut who can down seventy-one wieners in just under ten minutes. Yet we search in vain for a recognized authority to place a crown atop the world’s most formidable orator. In the absence of any such commissioner,

I will take the honor upon myself to name Jordan Peterson as 2020's "most powerful rhetorician on planet earth."

A GENERATIONAL GENIUS

Until recently, no one knew of the Harvard and University of Toronto professor. He was launched into international stardom when someone posted a video of him being accosted by fifty rabid college students who were protesting his open criticism of a bill which required Canadian citizens to reference individuals by their "preferred pronouns."

When the world saw the deftness with which he dismantled the arguments of his enraged interlocutors, invitations to speak at both conservative and liberal venues multiplied quickly. The former had found their champion, the latter had found a villain capable of drawing crowds, and both had discovered a popular genius, the prowess of which we have not seen for a very long time.

What I have discovered over the years is that these exercises quickly become an analysis, not so much of the speaker's *delivery*, but rather of their *ethics*.

Recently, I was indulging in one of Peterson's more infamous YouTube videos—the one where he is interviewed (interrogated, really) by the well-known British feminist, Helen Lewis. At one point in the discussion, the professor made a statement which caused me to pause. Responding to a question, Peterson observed, "There are two different realms of knowledge. There is a realm of values and a realm of facts. In the realm of facts, science reigns supreme, but it doesn't in the realm of values—for that you have to look elsewhere. This is what the humanities were for, until they got hijacked by lunatics."

Leaving the lunacy of the hijackers aside for the time being, Peterson's identification of two separate spheres of intellectual exploration is terribly significant for those of us walking our children down the well-worn paths of classical education. Perhaps the easiest way to explain what I mean is to take you inside my classroom.

As an instructor of classical rhetoric, one of my responsibilities is discovering examples of speeches for students to analyze. These can be TED Talks, political addresses, or even notable graduation commencements.

RHETORIC: AN ANALYSIS OF ETHICS

To be sure, one of the primary goals is determining the extent to which each speaker conforms to what Quintilian calls, the "perfect orator." Tone of voice, power of glance, presence of fire, gestures, gait, the means of persuasion—all

Bloomfield Christian School, Bloomfield Hills, MI



these are thoroughly scrutinized, allowing us to evaluate the individual as a *speaker*. Yet, what I have discovered over the years is that these exercises quickly become an analysis, not so much of the speaker's *delivery*, but rather of their *ethics*.

For example, last week I had my class watch an address by Philip Wollen—the foremost "animal rights" activist in the world. Students reeled at both the force and the audacity of his assertions. He begins the speech, "King Lear asked the blind man from Gloucester, 'How do you see the world?' The blind man responds, 'I see it feelingly.'"

That brief exordium concluded, Wollen launches into a ten-minute, unabated rant. "Would to God that we all saw the world *feelingly*. Tonight, as we sit in this comfortable room, animals are *screaming* in terror in slaughterhouses—trapped in crates and cages—vile, ignoble gulags of despair!"

He goes on (and on, and on) to attribute nearly every human malady to our insatiable desire for meat. The death of oceans, the crippling of health care systems, water shortages, global hunger, carbon footprints—all because of our bloodlust for chicken nuggets. As you can probably imagine, our classroom discussion speedily moved from an analysis of his delivery, to a deconstruction of his moral universe.



Jonathan Edwards Classical Academy,
Whites Creek, TN

SOUND ARGUMENTS, BAD ETHICS

Now let me confess freely that Wollen's arguments are rhetorically powerful and are gaining significant traction in our culture. Burger King's national campaign to get its plant-based *Impossible Burger*—with genetically modified yeast that looks like animal blood—into every American's hand should be proof of this. Even some of my students began to consider more deeply, not so much the morality of eating meat, but the processes by which that meat reaches their plates.

As far as Wollen goes, the problem is not with his arguments, but rather his ethics. He presupposes that animals are the moral equivalent of humans and proceeds from there to reason (with scientific precision) why slaughterhouses are no different than the death camps of Nuremberg. The effect of all this on his audience is stunning. In fact, I watched in disbelief as he brought a seventy-five-year-old beef farmer to tears who later swore that his cow pastures would be turned into vegetable paddocks the moment he returned to the ranch.

Now pause for just a moment and consider the great goal of a classical education. Coined by Cato, made famous by Quintilian, adopted by Christendom, and subsequently engraved into the cornerstones and mission statements of our

most celebrated classical schools—our aim, simply put, is to produce “good men, speaking well.”

Here we must be careful not to fall into the trap of the sophists who lopped off the first half of this carefully phrased maxim. In other words, the *summum bonum* of our rhetoric schools is not merely to produce good *speakers*, but rather to produce good *men*; and it is impossible to be a good *orator*—in any classical sense of the word—unless one first be, in fact, a good *man*. Thus, we see that rhetoric—whether a course of study or a stage in the trivium—is really just a thread woven into the much larger tapestry of virtue and ethics.

HOW DO WE BECOME “GOOD PEOPLE”?

What is a “good man?” According to Aristotle, a good man is the one who acts according to right reason, and to him, reason is informed not merely by scientific knowledge (*episteme*), but also by intuition (*nous*), wisdom (*sophia*), and (the Christian would add) by revelation (*apokalypsis*) as well. These things together inform what Peterson would call our “values.”

Thus, in terms of classical rhetoric, our friend Philip Wollen cannot be reckoned as a “good man, speaking well” because his reason is misinformed, resulting in a misshapen ethical system. He bases his entire position solely on “scientific arguments,” saying things like “greenhouse emissions from livestock are fifty percent greater than all our automobiles combined,” and “Harvard and Cornell studies have both demonstrated that we can all live without meat,” and “carbon dioxide from the beef industry is killing our oceans with acidic, hypoxic dead zones.”

As Peterson reminds us, scientific data is but one realm of knowledge and can probably tell us precious little about the morality of eating meat. For this, Peterson will say that we must look elsewhere, to the realm of values, that is, the realm of ethics—which is the heart and soul of all true rhetoric and transcends scientific deductions to the degree that heaven transcends earth.

So when our children head off to college and meet their first “vehement vegan,” our hope is that the training they have received will have taught them that it is not scientific data which will persuade their new friend. No, their powers of persuasion will come from a system of ethics which has been shaped, over the years, by a precise logic, by the wisdom of the ages, by the revelation of God, and ultimately, by the goodness of their character.

This is what we mean by a rightly ordered rhetoric. ■■

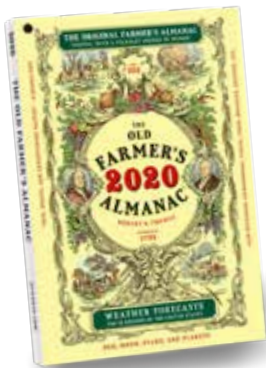


Visit: ClassicalDifference.com/hijacked for links to videos featuring Jordan Peterson and Philip Wollen.

CHRISTOPHER MAIOCCA currently teaches Classical Rhetoric at The Ambrose School outside of Boise. He is the series editor of the soon-to-be-released, eight-volume, *Humanitas: A History of Western Civilization*, from Classical Academic Press.

Back to the Soil

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Bradford Academy, Mebane, NC



Liberty Classical Academy, White Bear Lake, MN



Covenant Christian Academy, Colleyville, TX

Speaking FREELY



The Oaks, Spokane Valley, WA

by KEVIN CLARK

Q: “So, Kevin, what do you do? How would you describe your role?”

A: “I lead people’s souls with words.”

Q: *Silence*

A: “And I teach young men and women to do that wisely—or, if not wisely, at least responsibly and well.”

I’m not sure this is the answer the brand analyst was expecting when he signed up to interview the rhetoric teacher as part of the school’s rebranding exercise.

Admittedly, I was having a little fun with him. But only a little. Behind my attempt at humor was a serious point about the art of rhetoric and its significance for classical education.

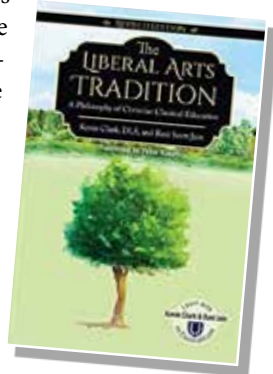
We generally think of rhetoric in either two ways: 1) narrowly, as the classical subject where students learn to speak and write persuasively; or 2) more broadly, as a stage in learning connected to a child’s intellectual development. We often fail to see how rhetoric teaches us both

to speak our minds and to go mind-to-mind, as it were, with the authors and speakers we encounter.

I could not have answered the brand analyst's question any more directly. Leading peoples' souls with words is *precisely* what I do. In fact, it is what everyone does all of the time. To speak is human. To do so wisely, virtuously, intentionally, however, is an art. A liberal art, to be exact.

WHY RHETORIC IS A LIBERAL ART

The liberal arts are skills gained by joining imitative practice, combined with an understanding of how and why those practices work. Take the art of grammar. Before her first lesson or diagrammed sentence, even a young child can appreciate the difference in meaning between the following sentences: “We *might* go out for ice cream on Friday” and “We *will* go out for ice cream on Friday.” So far this is purely imitation, not art. The full transformation happens as we gradually come to understand how changes in expression affect meaning, and we can apply this understanding *freely* in our own speech and writing. Freely, in fact, is the important word here. For what makes the liberal arts *liberal* (from the Latin *liber* meaning “free” or “unrestricted”) is that they set one free to put one's innate abilities to intentional use. In the case of rhetoric, we are set free to lead people's souls with our words—purposefully and responsibly. This is why our forebears made rhetoric an essential part of a child's education.



THE PURPOSE OF RHETORIC

The notion that rhetoric is equally concerned with making polished and persuasive speakers, and with producing perceptive and discerning thinkers—that is, of producing people who not only have something to say, but who know how, when or even whether to say it—gets somewhat less press. Yet, this potential for developing perception and discernment is precisely why rhetoric is understood to be *a tool of learning*, and not simply a method for effective communication.

Aristotle famously defines rhetoric as the power of seeing all the available means of persuasion with respect to a given situation. He is far more interested, it appears, in the effect of rhetoric upon the speaker than the effectiveness of the speaker's rhetoric. According to Aristotle, rhetoric hones our power of perception to discern what is possible to say given a particular set of circumstances.

Think of how the point guard in basketball reads his situation while moving the ball down the court—the position of the defenders and the defensive plays, of course,



but also the time on the clock, the momentum of the game, and the quality of play his team has exhibited so far. Scanning through the myriad of ways he could direct the offense, he decides in the moment what is likely to be most effective given the unique challenges and opportunities the situation affords. As rhetoricians, we are the intellectual counterparts of the point guard. We find ourselves with something to say, and must choose the most effective way to say it given the complex particularities of our situation.

HOW WE LEARN RHETORIC

Clearly this is an important and valuable skill; how does the rhetorician acquire it? These powers are honed in large part by poring over the texts that form the “great books” aspect of the classical curriculum—reading, marking, learning, and “inwardly digesting” them. These texts are not simply the repository of great ideas, they are the particular words that particular men and women deployed to lead the souls of others—in myriad times, places, circumstances, and with manifold goals, motives, and intentions.

Could this be why?

- Mock trial has an unusually high success rate at CCE schools
- Chrysostom winners are asked to speak at the ACCS national conference (see page 14)
- Patrick Henry College has a track record of success
- Leadership and influence of classical Christian alumni is growing. (The data is in—see page 8.)
- Google and others call for liberal arts skills above STEM



Find out more:

ClassicalDifference.com/rhetoric-stats



What I want to fix your attention on is the vast, overall movement towards the discrediting, and finally the elimination, of every kind of human excellence—moral, cultural, social, or intellectual. And is it not pretty to notice how “democracy” (in the incantatory sense) is now doing for us the work that was once done by the most ancient Dictatorships, and by the same methods?

—Speech by the demon Screwtape,
Screwtape Proposes a Toast, C.S. Lewis

All genres are relevant to the rhetorician, whether works of science or history meant to instruct, poems meant to delight, or manifestoes meant to rouse men to action. In the course of study, we become students of men’s actions as well as their words. We reflect upon the good and the bad, the potent and the ineffective, the virtuous and the worthless, all the while honing our own powers of perception, discernment, and, in the long term, judgment. Rhetoric is an essential point of integration for the entire curriculum, and as such an essential part of a child’s education.

RHETORIC TODAY

Contemporary educational leaders are busy asking which skills will best serve the needs of the 21st-century-marketplace. Classical educators appreciate this pursuit, but feel

compelled to attend to more fundamental issues. What could be more important than providing an education that will set young men and women free to lead others wisely, virtuously, and well? What could be more useful than the powers of perception and discernment? The philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre spoke prophetically of neglecting the great texts of the classical syllabus, saying it would produce a generation of students who were “unscripted, anxious stutterers in their actions as in their words.” In a culture where that prophecy unfortunately seems to have come true, the recovery of this precious art of rhetoric could not be more urgent. ■■

KEVIN CLARK is the founder and president of The Ecclesial Schools Initiative (www.esischools.org), an organization that supports the growth and mission of the church by partnering with local congregations to found a network of affordable and truly accessible Christian classical schools. ESI’s first K–8 campus is opening in August 2020 at Saint Alban’s Church in Oviedo, FL. Kevin is co-author of *The Liberal Arts Tradition* available through Classical Academic Press. He and his wife Taryn have four Christian classical school students of their own—Aubrey, Caedmon, Naomi, and Eleanor.





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Changing the Face of Education



As part of the application process for a teaching job at Covenant Classical School in Fort Worth, TX,

David Diener was asked to teach a freshman history class. “On what?” he asked. “Well,” replied the teacher, “this year we’re doing medieval history and I feel like I didn’t do a good job on universalism vs. nominalism in scholastic philosophy. So that would be great.”

“Is this a joke?” Diener thought. “These are ninth graders, not graduate level philosophy students.” But he responded, “Sure.”

Ironically, a classroom at a K–12 school was not where Diener expected to be. With a dual PhD in philosophy and philosophy of education, his vision of “the good life” cast him as a professor, not a secondary teacher. Classical Christian education (CCE) was still a fairly new idea to him. Over the past few years, he had become involved with some organizations in the movement, and he figured checking out a K–12 teaching position could be a good learning experience.

He was clear with the headmaster that, based on the job description, he probably wasn’t interested. He and his wife, Brooke, kept a detailed list of job opportunities, along with notes on the current status and their im-

pressions. This job didn’t get a “No” mark. It got erased entirely. Diener notes, “I found out later they weren’t really interested in a PhD for this position, either.”

Right before his day in ninth-grade history, Diener completed a similar day of teaching at a Christian university as part of his application process for a professor position—his first career choice. He remembers, “The students weren’t engaged. They seemed bored, they didn’t track with anything I said, most hadn’t read Plato or other thinkers or philosophers, and they didn’t seem to care. I left wondering if they even got it.”

In the ninth-grade classroom, on the other hand, he met a bunch of typical 15-year-olds with one major difference—they had been given an opportunity to debate philosophy, learn Latin, read great literature, and study history. These were just kids, but they could analyze Aquinas on the spot—they already knew about him—and they enjoyed it. Diener recalls, “They understood the intricate philosophical problems I posed to them in ways I never expected. Teaching those ninth graders was an unbelievable teaching experience. I was floored.”

After one day he knew, “This is going to be a better place to teach.”

Along the path that led Diener to classical Christian education, only one event earned the title “jaw dropping”—this first time he stepped into a classical Christian classroom. That moment would define the rest of his life. “I came to believe that I could have a greater educational impact within the context of a classical Christian school than I could as a college professor.” And, over the years, he found this to be true at almost every CCE school he encountered.

PREPARATION FOR THE JOB HE DIDN'T KNOW HE WANTED

As a biblical studies undergrad at Wheaton, Diener “saw the light in Dr. Weber’s historical theology class.” He remembers sitting in class and studying through the various theological debates and controversies. “One day, I suddenly realized: under all these theological debates and questions and

What’s happening in logic in seventh grade is affecting the ways that colleges teach critical thinking skills because classical schools are producing students who think at a totally different level.

answers are philosophical assumptions; you can trace them all back to metaphysical and epistemological roots.” Diener switched to philosophy, along with a minor in ancient languages (Greek and Hebrew).

After graduation, Diener took advantage of his past carpentry experience, working with an Amish builder on high-end custom trim and cabinetry. He and his wife then fulfilled their dream of becoming missionaries and moved to Bogotá, Colombia, to teach at a Christian international school. That’s where he fell in love with teaching.

Diener headed to graduate school in Indiana, while his wife started researching preschool homeschooling for their kids. After attending a conference, she said, “You should look at this,” and handed him a stack of materials from an up-and-coming group called Classical Conversations. Diener recalls, “We ended up doing Classical Conversations. The sad irony is, I was in the middle of a PhD program in philosophy of education and I had never heard of classical education.”

Upon returning home from the homeschooling conference, Brooke also handed Diener a slip of paper with a phone number on it and told him, “I met an interesting vendor and told him about what you are studying. He gave me his number and said that he wants you to call him.” The next year, after another conference, she said, “That same guy recognized me and said, ‘Your husband never called me! I want to talk to him.’” So this time Diener called, and it turned out that the “interesting vendor” was Chris Perrin, the founder of Classical Academic Press. Perrin was Diener’s gateway. Beginning with the Alcuin Fellowship, Diener began meeting others involved in CCE and partnering on projects where his background proved helpful, such as reviewing and writing books.

After graduate school, the job hunt was on. He took the job at Covenant as both a teacher and head of upper schools, and the rest is history.

After three years at Covenant, Diener became the headmaster at Grace Academy in Georgetown, TX, before



Hillsdale Academy, Hillsdale, MI

moving to Hillsdale College where he serves as the headmaster of Hillsdale Academy and a professor of educational philosophy.

“Gratefulness” is one word Diener uses when describing where he landed, as Hillsdale’s unique program brings almost every aspect of his background together. Both administration and teacher apprenticeship programs take place at Hillsdale Academy, an on-site (and growing) K–12 classical Christian school. Diener reports, “This semester we have 18 apprentices at the Academy.” He continues to serve multiple CCE organizations, consulting, speaking, writing, and teaching.

HILLSDALE AND BEYOND

According to Diener, it’s easy to be grateful when you see the effects CCE delivers.

“I have seen many students who go off to college and careers come back incredibly grateful for how well-prepared they are compared to their peers.

FUN FACT: Diener is fluent in Spanish and speaks to his children only in Spanish. Why? “It was kind of whim,” Diener explains. His parents lived in Honduras as missionaries before he was born. When they moved back, his father worked in a ministry to migrant workers, “so we had lots of interactions and heard a lot of Spanish. When I took Spanish in high school and college it came easily.” Their oldest child was born in Bogotá and rather than lose that exposure, Diener said to his wife, “How about I do Spanish and you do English? And 15 years later we’re still at it. It’s really handy on mission trips to Mexico.”



Hillsdale Academy, Hillsdale, MI

I had one student whose senior thesis was on the issue of intellectual property rights in the age of the internet. He wrote one of the best thesis papers I've ever read by drawing on John Locke's theories of property and applying them to intellectual property in the digital age. Here is a young person who wants to study computers, and who also understands that John Locke has something to say to our current situation in a way Locke himself never imagined.

Leaders in universities and in industry and business are continually calling for higher levels of thinking, reasoning, writing, and speaking skills in their employees. According to Diener, "Classical schools are meeting those needs in a way that no other educational model is."

"Classical schools are also bringing renewal to liberal arts education in a powerful way that most colleges are no longer interested in or capable of doing. They are transforming education by pushing up. What's hap-

pening in logic in seventh grade is affecting the ways that colleges teach critical thinking skills because classical schools are producing students who think at a totally different level. Why are colleges showing up at ACCS conferences today when they weren't

a few years ago? They want students. They recognize the value."

"On the other side, they recognize that our schools need teachers so undergraduate and graduate programs for classical teachers are cropping up. This has been happening only in the last few years—Templeton at Eastern, the University of Dallas, Houston Baptist, and Hillsdale is preparing to launch a program—all these colleges are addressing the new and growing need for classical Christian education. K–12 classical schools are changing the face of liberal arts college education." ■■

DR. DAVID DIENER holds a BA in philosophy and ancient languages from Wheaton College as well as an MA in philosophy, an MS in history and philosophy of education, and a dual PhD in philosophy and philosophy of education from Indiana University. He is the author of *Plato: The Great Philosopher-Educator* and serves as the series editor for Classical Academic Press' series *Giants in the History of Education*. The Dieners have four wonderful children and are passionate about classical Christian education and the impact it can have on the church, our society, and the world.



Hillsdale Academy, Hillsdale, MI

Think Spring!

It's at this time of year that we most long for spring. We asked our schools to send some nature our way, and they delivered abundantly. If you're missing the sunshine and green grass, visit ClassicalDifference.com/think-spring for a taste of what's to come.

Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;
let the sea resound, and all that is in it. Let the
fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let
all the trees of the forest sing for joy.

Psalm 96:11-12

Summit Christian Academy,
Newport News, VA

■ SET APART [... Continued from page 11]

DIY Parenting

RHETORIC 101

UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENT'S HIGH SCHOOL YEARS

Here at *The Classical Difference*, we often hear parents ask, “Why do we call high schools, the ‘school of rhetoric’ in the classical world?” We think that is a great question. This issue is devoted to explaining just that. We believe you’ll discover that rhetoric is much more than you imagined. To get started, see page 3 for a guide to this issue.

We also hear parents regularly say, “I wish I had the kind of education my child is getting!” Thankfully, it’s never too late to become a lifelong learner. If this whole topic of rhetoric has piqued your curiosity, or if you have always wanted to improve your own communication skills, or if you are just looking for creative ways to draw your teenager into more robust conversations—then Chris Maiocca, instructor of Classical Rhetoric at The Ambrose School, recommends the following books to help get you started:

TEACHER’S PICK

Institutes of Oratory by Quintilian, translated by Rev. John Selby Watson

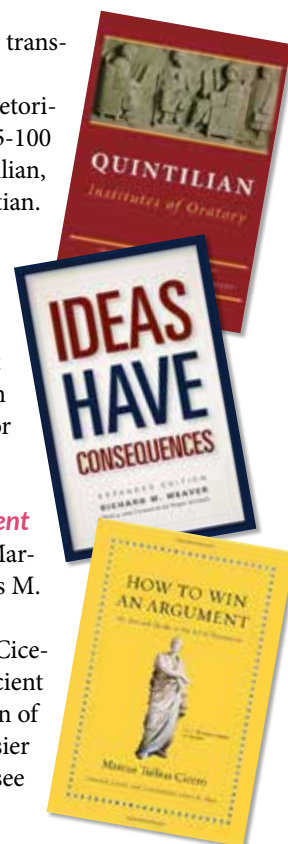
Written in Latin by the Roman rhetorician Marcus Fabius Quintilianus (35-100 AD), commonly known as Quintilian, during the reign of the emperor Domitian.

Ideas Have Consequences by Richard M. Weaver

Originally published in 1948, and widely regarded as one of the most prophetic commentaries on Western society today. Weaver is also the author of *The Ethics of Rhetoric*.

How to Win an Argument: An Ancient Guide to the Art of Persuasion by Marcus Tullius Cicero, translated by James M. May

Written in Latin by Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BCE), often considered ancient Rome’s greatest orator, during the reign of Julius Caesar. This is considered easier reading than Cicero’s original works (see *Cicero: Rhetorica ad Herennium*). ■■



Flip the Script on *Ford v Ferrari*

An epic story with epic heroes



When I ask “who was the hero in that movie?” my kids groan. They know more questions will follow. And, I know their next words: “Dad, this isn’t school.” Thankfully, our classical Christian school asks questions like this, too. Maybe, if I can convince a few more parents to ask questions like this on the way home from the movies, I’ll head-off the next predictable line from my kids: “No one else’s dad asks these questions!” So, with that in mind, here goes...

The recent movie *Ford v Ferrari* reveals how we see our heroes. The bones of the story are enticing: In the 1950s, Ford made “functional transportation” and needed a better image. Ford sought to buy Ferrari because of their legendary dominance at Le Mans—the world’s most prestigious auto race. Enzo Ferrari rebuffed Ford, and an epic rivalry was born.

Ford and Ferrari would proceed to engage in now legendary auto industry battle at the Le Mans race in 1964, 1965, and 1966. Ford, the newcomer, outspent Ferrari on an unprecedented scale. At one point, Ford famously bought the entire first-class cabin of an airliner to express ship new windshields to Le Mans for the race. Ford recruited the unconventional but talented team of Carroll Shelby (designer) and Ken Miles (driver). After three tries, Ford finally won.

As the story goes, American ingenuity and economic might prevailed against a giant of auto-racing: Ferrari. To this day, Ford is the only American manufacturer to win Le Mans. As we read, watch, or hear stories like this, one of the most important questions to ask our children is, “Who is the hero in this story?” And, more importantly, “Why?” Is it Ford because Ford won? Is it Shelby because he built the team? These questions lead us beyond cars and racing to see the influences of our culture on subtle messages we ingest every day without thinking about it. Since this movie parallels another ancient story, it makes a good example for explaining how classical Christian education helps our graduates see what others do not.

A teacher I know once asked his students, “Who is the hero? Achilles or Hector?” referring to the seminal Greek epic, Homer’s *Illiad*. Achilles is the Greek war hero who brings about victory over the Trojans. Hector is the self-sacrificial leader of the legendary city of Troy who joins in single combat with the unbeatable Achilles in an effort to save his city. It doesn’t end well

for Hector. Yet, nearly all the students chose Hector as their hero. The Greeks who wrote the story saw Achilles as the hero—two juxtaposed views. How can two groups of people see opposing heroes from the same story? Who tells the story is one factor—but the Greeks wrote the story! Even more significant is the *paideia*, or enculturation, of those *hearing* the story.

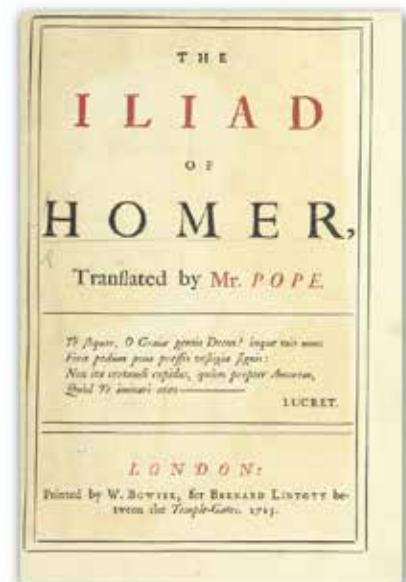
In the movie, Ferrari's story is scantily told. Like Hector, Enzo Ferrari had a small but loyal team of brilliant engineers, some of whom were offered and refused much more money to come over to the Ford side. Ferrari's race team had a fraction of Ford's budget. They focused on refinement. Where Ford put power, Ferrari tweaked airflow and fuel efficiency. Where Ford bought the best drivers, Enzo cultivated his team. Ferrari's story is one of loyalty, tenacity, faithfulness, and fortitude. Against this type of virtuous resistance, victory took three years for Ford and ten for Achilles.

The epic connections go further.

There is some irony in the fact that Enzo Ferrari, of course, was Italian. Virgil, another Italian, rewrote the myth of Troy a thousand years after Homer, but with a new hero—Aeneas. Aeneas was not known for his victory in battle, but as a fleeing, defeated Trojan general who sought to found a new home for his people. Like Hector, he does so with fortitude, loyalty, tenacity, and self-sacrifice. This myth, in effect, built Rome—not in a day, but as myths will do, over centuries. If Ferrari's virtues were influenced by Aeneas's epic, it seems Ford's virtues reflected those of Achilles from the Greeks.

In one scene, the Ford team jokes about a pair of pilfered stop watches from the Ferrari team, reinforcing the cowboy image of the Americans. In another, a manufactured-for-Hollywood brawl breaks out between Shelby and Miles (no such fight happened in the real story). Team Shelby uses cunning to replace entire brake assemblies instead of brake pads, exploiting a technicality in the rules. These small plot spins reflect the film's appeal to American collective virtues. We like cowboys. Getting there "by any means necessary" has a naughty but practical ring to it. We Americans have fancied ourselves this way since we embraced the term "Yankees" at our founding (as in "Yankee ingenuity"). The movie's mythical status reinforces these virtues as it plays to our affections. At one point in the movie, Henry Ford garishly departs the track during the race in a helicopter. Enzo comments sarcastically: "That's classy. Take a helicopter to a car race." In another, we see Enzo tip his hat to Miles after the win. Glimpses of Hector as Enzo are there to see. Many of us probably saw the tip of the hat as an ode to Ken Miles rather than an exhibition of honor by Enzo.

Virtues are those affections we hold deep inside us. Cultural virtues are passed to us without our realizing it. Classical Christianity challenges cultural virtues to refine them, and seeks to improve the cultures in which we live. This has been



the common grace gift of Christianity for two millennia. Do our culturally transmitted virtues call us to love the right things? Do they make us love the right things in the right order? Many of the “virtues” in our media and movies are false virtues, and our children are absorbing them. What can we do to prevent this?

We can teach our children to see what is happening to them. Classical Christian education exposes students to these great myths like the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* and holds up their heroes to the light of Scripture. Unlike the authors Homer or Virgil, we have the gift of Truth in the person of Jesus Christ. We can teach students the art of seeing through blind conformance with the false virtues in our culture, as well as the art of identifying and refining those that are good. This skill is best developed using historical myths and historical cultures as our subject. Then, we can show our kids how the same tools of virtue evaluation can be used every time we see a movie, read a book, or look at Instagram. This skill has never been so critical.

Virtues, aligned with Christian truth, goodness, and beauty are powerful. Virtues based in error—or simply wrongly ordered—are also powerful. And, they are dangerous. If our students can come to see every story and every character as a source of heroes who have virtues, then they can rightly divide truth. This is our call as Christians. Put your children’s classical education to work this weekend when you watch that movie. Ask them who the heroes are and why. They may roll their eyes (if they’re teens), so you need to push them to think more deeply than the obvious. Maybe Enzo Ferrari deserves another look. After all, the image of a Ford today is, well, a Ford. A Ferrari is still a Ferrari. In the long-game of reputation, who won? ■■



Bruce McLaren and Chris Amon winning car from 1966.
Ford GT40 Mark II (1966 24 Hours of Le Mans, No.2) Shelby American Inc.
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“

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”

HEROES ASIDE, *Ford v Ferrari* is a worthy movie for older families. There’s some language, but otherwise the father-son relationship between Ken Miles and his son is worth the price of admission. The director, James Mangold, does an impressive job of moving the plot along while developing the characters. Far from a car-guy flick, the film tells a story as well as any movie you’ll watch this year.

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Honoring Those Who Serve



■ A WORD OF THANKS

At Rockbridge Academy, nearly 9% of our alumni are currently serving in the armed forces or are at a service academy or in ROTC. Last year, we made cards and had nearly the entire upper school sign notes of gratitude for our alumni, and we mailed them all over the country and the world to our service members. We are grateful for their sacrifice and service and remembered with fondness their time here at our school.

Located in the surrounding areas of Annapolis, Fort Meade, and Washington, D.C., more than 20% of our current families are active duty or veteran families. We take some time each year for a Veterans Day Ceremony to honor all those who have served.

—SONMIN CRANE, Rockbridge Academy, Crownsville, MD



■ RIGHT TIME, RIGHT PLACE

Our 8th graders returned from their annual trip to Washington, D.C. with a story to tell. While at the WWII monument, they ran into a group of veterans who were on an honor flight to D.C. Many of the veterans served in WWII, Korea, and/or Vietnam. It was an amazing experience for the students. More importantly, several of the veterans since then found the school and reached out afterwards, saying that their encounter with our students was a joy and the highlight of their trip. Our students sat with them, prayed with them, and listened to them.

Specifically, one Korean-conflict veteran mentioned that he really enjoyed the well-thought-out questions from the students. Another Vietnam-conflict veteran recalled that two students approached him on their own and asked him questions about his military experience and that the experience “made him feel worthy and valuable.” A WWII veteran mentioned how unusual it was that these students looked him in the eye and listened to what he was saying, and then asked appropriate questions. He also mentioned that they didn’t have cell phones.

So many of the veterans commented on how engaged the students were because they didn’t have phones (a requirement for our students on all school trips/functions). The entire experience speaks beautifully to classical education!

—JULIE NAGEM, *Westminster Academy, Memphis, TN*





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