

THE CLASSICAL

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 1 | SPRING 2018

BRINGING LIFE TO THE CLASSROOM

Difference™

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INSIDE...

- Raising Sturdy Kids p. 13
- The Brave New World, Just North of Us p. 18
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**LEARNING
DISABILITIES**
ENCOUNTER SUCCESS IN THE
CLASSICAL CLASSROOM p. 4 & 8

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“Mercy” Meets “the Law” in Learning Disabilities

The Great Teacher modeled a perfect balance between mercy and law—we call this **grace**.

In classical Christian schools, our wisdom as teachers is often tested as we attempt to hold students to a standard, while understanding that each student has unique challenges.

The privilege and burden of our call to be “Christ” in this world is rarely felt so much as by a classroom teacher. Jesus modeled great teaching in every encounter he had with his disciples. He walked around doing two things: connecting with students (disciples) in their weakness and demanding that they do the difficult—leave their job,

Christ connected with students (disciples) in their weakness and demanded that they do the difficult.

their family, their home. He extended mercy but expected greatness. This is what great teachers do.

When it comes to learning disabilities, two realities collide. Every student is different, but some students are “outliers.” Outliers take attention. And, the classroom format puts teachers in a difficult position—how to serve many students in this environment. Nearly every teacher can name three or four of their 20 students who take the majority of their mental energy. Often, parents expect too much.

On the other hand, schools sometimes forget that they are not running a factory, but rather a place of discipleship. “We can’t let Johnny pass sixth grade when he can’t spell and has terrible handwriting.” Why not? “Because

Seattle Classical Christian School, Seattle, WA

it wouldn't be fair." Fair? Was it fair for the apostle John to be declared the disciple whom Jesus loved? When schools lose sight of why they exist—to cultivate every child to rightly order their affections and to love Truth, Goodness, and Beauty—they fail in their classical Christian mission.

But, parents who seek mercy for their child sometimes want teachers or schools to carry the burden. We cannot imagine Jesus telling a disciple, "If this job I gave you is too hard or an imposition, just do what you can and let someone else pick up the slack." Peter might have gone on fishing and Matthew tax collecting, and the rich young ruler might have been relieved. Ephesians 6 gives parents the responsibility for the education of their children. Teachers are hired help. So, in all this, classical Christian schools need to find the right formula for learning

Many "disabled" students have been helped by the expectations and environment in a classical Christian school.

disabilities. On one hand, we are free to meet students where they are and not be too stuck on our processes. On the other hand, we cannot ask teachers to fix the problems. They have many other students to serve. But we can ask them to be flexible.

Many "disabled" students have been helped by the higher expectations and structured environment in a classical Christian school. But a student with autism or dyslexia may need some adjustment to succeed. In this issue, we'll tackle some of the tough decisions parents make, and some of the myths that persist about learning disabilities. ■■

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

Jonathan Edwards Classical Academy, Nashville, TN



Logos School, Moscow, ID



The Ambrose School, Meridian, ID



CLASSICAL NEWS



NEWEST ACCS MEMBER SCHOOLS



- **LIBERTAS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**, Hudsonville, MI
- **THE ANGLICAN PARISH OF PEMBROKE**, Williamsport, PA
- **BUFFALO CREEK BOYS SCHOOL**, Lexington, VA
- **THE MASTER'S ACADEMY**, Forest City, NC
- **CLEMSON CLASSICAL**, Clemson, SC
- **VERITAS CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**, Eugene, OR
- **THE MAYFLOWER PROJECT**, Pulaski, VA
- **NEW COVENANT CHRISTIAN ACADEMY**, Interlochen, MI
- **THE CLASSICAL ACADEMY**, Anderson, IN
- **CRESCENT CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN ACADEMY**, Greenville, TN
- **GRACE COMMUNITY CLASSICAL SCHOOL**, Tyler, TX
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- **THREE OAKS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**, Decatur, IN
- **BEREAN BAPTIST ACADEMY**, Ogden, UT
- **THE GENEVA SCHOOL**, Laguna Woods, CA
- **AGAPE CLASSICAL SCHOOL VILLAGE**, Carslsbad, CA
- **MINERAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**, Mineral, VA
- **HERITAGE CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**, Fenton, MO
- **PEER ACADEMY**, Knoxville, TN
- **BROOKINGS CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**, Brookings, SD
- **CALVARY CHAPEL FLUVANNA SCHOOL**, Charlottesville, VA
- **CARITAS ACADEMY**, Goodyear, AZ
- **CORNERSTONE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY**, Albuquerque, NM
- **KING'S CROSS ACADEMY**, Forest, VA
- **VICKERY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY**, Jakarta, Indonesia
- **TOLEDO CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS**, Toledo, OH
- **NOBIS PACEM**, San Antonio, TX
- **PAIDEIA CLASSICAL ACADEMY**, Coconut Creek, FL
- **VALLEY CLASSICAL SCHOOL**, Blacksburg, VA
- **WASHTENAW CHRISTIAN ACADEMY**, Saline, MI
- **GRACE COMMUNITY CLASSICAL**, Elgin, OK
- **PATHWAY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**, Douglas, AZ
- **WESTMINSTER ACADEMY**, Tampa, FL
- **UNITED WITH CHRIST CC SCHOOL**, Johnson City, NY

NEW TUITION SAVINGS

New in 2018, parents can ramp up on tax savings to help cover the cost of private school.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act has expanded the use of 529 plans—accounts that allow savers to accumulate interest on a tax-free basis—to include elementary and secondary school expenses at public, private, or religious institutions.

That means individuals can take up to \$10,000 in distributions annually from their 529 plans to pay for private school tuition and books through 12th grade—in addition to using their account proceeds for college costs.

Check with your accountant to clarify the rules for your state.

Excerpted from CNBC.com, Fri, 29 Dec 2017



Visit ClassicalDifference.com/submissions to share stories and quotes. Submissions published in the Set Apart section are worth \$25 in lunch money. See online for details.



"Couldn't Mike just use Apple Pay?"

Century Watch

This year in history: AD 118



THE FIRST METROPOLIS

“ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME”

Rome was the first city in recorded history to reach a population of one million people in AD 118,

nineteen hundred years ago. Controlling the majority of Europe, Asia, and Northern Africa, the Empire governed 65 million people at its height. After Rome’s fall in 450, no city managed to surpass her population until 1500 years later during the Industrial Revolution.

The term metropolis is Ancient Greek (μητρόπολις) and means the “mother city” of a colony ... This was later generalized to a city regarded as a center of a specified activity, or any large, important city in a nation.

For anyone interested in anthropology, the milestone begs age-old questions. How did Rome succeed? How different would the world be if not for the Roman Empire? And, for the U.S. specifically, would there be such a thing as the American Dream?

While we can never fully answer these questions, and countless books have been written in the attempt, we can acknowledge Rome’s significant achievements and later influence on our country’s creation.

NOT SO HUMBLE ROOTS

Dedicated students of history, the founding fathers carefully examined preceding societies to evaluate their

[Continues on page 22 ...]

DIY Parenting



THE BEAUTY OF MONOTONY

“Brian and Emily were friends. True-blue, stuck-like-glue friends Emily used to say. And so they were.”

Growing up, my parents would joke about my favorite childhood book and how I would ask them to read it every night. I don’t even know the title of the book, but those words have stuck with me, and my parents, for nearly thirty years.

My son, too, found a favorite book a few years ago—*Amelia Bedelia Goes to School*. I recall during one impressive streak we read the book 17 bedtimes in a row. I found one night that I could nearly recite the entirety of the book from memory. Unfortunately, so could my son. No more late-night fast-forwarding.

We parents are familiar with the first stage of the trivium—the grammar stage—which harnesses the amazing ability of young minds to learn by repetition. As we move to the dialectic and rhetoric stages, the process of repetition becomes boring. “I already know that,” we say, and move on to the next thing. But I propose that we should never abandon our first educational love.

G.K. Chesterton addresses this issue in his insightful work, *Orthodoxy*:

Because children have abounding vitality, because they are in spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things repeated and unchanged. They always say, “Do

[Continues on page 23 ...]



RISING

“Thanks so much for considering how we can bring these students to table at the feast we call classical education.”
—Leslie Collins, Head of School, Covenant Academy, Cypress, TX

As the movement grows, many parents and schools are seeking ways to bring more kids to the table.

This includes kids with learning disabilities.

It's a broad and vague term, but one that affects many families every day. Why is my child struggling? Can a classical Christian school work for us? Is it worth the extra effort?

☀️ *Why is my child struggling?*

RESOURCES

It can be difficult for parents, with limited exposure to learning styles and issues, to sort through the various possibilities for why their child struggles.

Is it a phase or a disability? Who can help? Professional testing is your best first step.

If you suspect a learning disability, “get your kids evaluated early. One of the primary indicators of the successful management of a learning disability is an early evaluation of learning strengths and weaknesses.”*

There are many testing options and resources, including private psychologists, health centers, university hospitals, and learning centers. The public school system offers free and comprehensive testing services with a school referral. There are also free organizations and services that can help.

DEFINITIONS—KNOW WHAT YOU'RE HEARING

Laura Tucker, owner of Education Diagnostics, shares her decades of experience with *The Classical Difference* and helps families and schools navigate the learning years.

COMMONLY USED TERMS

- **Cognitive Development:** Refers to the process of growth and change in intellectual/mental abilities such as thinking, reasoning and understanding. Classical Christian educators teach according to the stages of cognitive development that correspond with the Trivium.
- **Intellectual Functioning:** Also called intelligence—refers to general mental capacity, such as learning, reasoning, problem solving, and so on.
- **Learning Disability:** Characterizes the ways a child learns or issues that impact learning. It is a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations.
- **Intellectual Disability:** A disability characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior, such as Down Syndrome.*

Keep in mind that a learning disability is different than an intellectual disability.

THE IQ TEST

One way to measure intellectual functioning is an IQ test. The IQ score is comprised of several sections each with separate index scores. It is important to compare these scores. When there is a standard deviation of +/-15 between any of the index scores, then a potential cause of a student's learning struggle can be identified.

SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY

The identification of the type of learning disability is determined from academic testing (reading, math, writing, language, memory, etc.). Some types are dyslexia (involving reading and spelling), dyscalculia (math), and dysgraphia

(writing). A student might also have a disability specifically in written expression or comprehension, Executive Function (planning, organizing, and completing tasks), listening comprehension, social skills, or other areas.



ADHD

ADHD is a medical diagnosis. Physicians, not school psychologists or educational diagnosticians, diagnose ADHD. However, a psycho-educational evaluation by an educational diagnostician or other professional can be helpful. ADHD and sensory disorders are often misdiagnosed. Within the CCE classroom, training and defined expectations might help diminish ADHD behaviors.

DELAYS

Some students actually appear to have a learning disability, when in fact that particular function is late to develop, but otherwise normal. Delaying entry into school or grades can help. Developmental delays can indicate that the child might have a learning disability identified in the future.

AUTISM

Autism refers to a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Students with autism might participate in the CCE classroom dependent on the types of behaviors observed. For example, a student with autism who has difficulty making eye contact might not be able to look at the teacher while instructions are given; however, the student is hearing. Some students may navigate the day and manage assignments with the help of an assistant or other students.



*Visit ClassicalDifference.com/LD:

- Signs and Symptoms
- Sample IQ Score Sheet and Analysis
- Detailed Definitions and Resources
- Real Life Stories

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.
—Joe Gerber
(See more on p. 14)

Can a classical Christian school work for us?

Many students with learning differences can succeed in a CCE school because it equips them with a foundation to learn. These schools stand in the place of parents and teach the Word of God and its principles.

A strong partnership between the school and home is essential. Accommodations vary because each school has unique constraints and each child has unique needs. Parents must be willing to help support the school with both finances and time.

Grammar students with mild to moderate learning disabilities benefit from the classical methodology of systematic and repetitive instruction. Older students in the logic and rhetoric grades are often surprised to find greater op-

portunities to demonstrate their strong cognitive abilities through debate and discussion. Students who have struggled to read aloud or write, and who have been the last to finish assignments in the past, are now participating in debates and discussions alongside their peers.

Students caring for students with special needs learn to build and demonstrate Christian character. For example, students learn patience as they wait to hear what the student is trying to communicate and assist the student in communicating to others. Not only is the student with special needs helped, but students in the classroom learn and practice looking out for the needs of others.

I have seen many students who received accommodations graduate from CCE schools, move on to college, receive degrees, and enter the workforce. ■■



*Visit ClassicalDifference.com/LD:

- Comprehensive list of guidelines and questions for a school visit
- Common accommodations AND stories of them in action
- How the classical method helps at various stages

LAURA TUCKER, owner of Education Diagnostics, is a founder and was the Director of Instruction at Rockbridge Academy, Millersville, MD, from 1995-2011. With an M.Ed. from Loyola University, she has over 30 years of experience in K-12 education as a teacher, administrator, reading specialist, and educational diagnostician. She and her husband, Rob, an ACCS national board member, have two adult sons who attended Rockbridge Academy.

REFLECTIONS FROM AN HONORS STUDENT

The significance of classical education is that we teach not just to the intellect, but to the soul. We aim beyond the facts toward virtue. We teach, not only from texts, but from people. We learn, not only from teachers, but from all. We are a community of believers who have been called to teach and to learn with one another for the glory of God.

I have been blessed to see my friends accomplish incredible tasks despite many doubters. I have seen a senior with executive functioning disorder write and defend a twenty-five-page thesis, arguing that God's hand is seen in every

story. I have heard a junior with Asperger Syndrome present a talk to the entire school about the importance of giving thanks in all things. And I myself have grown in wisdom and love more from my relationships with fellow students with disabilities than from any others. Virtue is developed through the work of the Spirit. It is love and patience that these students have to offer. As images of God, we have much to learn from them. ■■

—LYDIA COLLINS, *alumnus*,
Covenant Academy, Cypress, TX

Read stories from others who have been there.

CORNERSTONE CLASSICAL SCHOOL SALINA, KS

RILEIGH

"I truly expected Cornerstone to give up, but they didn't."

—Jennifer Glenn

Jennifer Glenn was at her wit's end when she and her daughter arrived at the doorstep of Cornerstone. Raleigh struggled in kindergarten with her disabilities and severe behavioral outbursts. With standards above those of the public school, the Glens were not yet sure how a CCE school might help their daughter, but were willing to give anything a try.

At her previous public school, Raleigh was assigned an IEP (Individualized Education Program) and used a paraprofessional aid. An IEP is a written document developed for each public school child eligible for special education. For eligibility, a multidisciplinary team must determine that (1) the child has a disability and (2) requires special education and related services to benefit from the general education program.

In their first meeting with Cornerstone's headmaster, Chris Stevens, the Glenn parents gave the school full disclosure, nearly certain they would be turned away. To their shock, Headmaster Stevens not only unflinchingly accepted Raleigh, but also proposed that her IEP and paraprofessional be dropped. Why, they asked? Because, the gospel changes everything.

SWIMMING AGAINST THE TIDE

The Cornerstone faculty treated Raleigh like they treated everyone else. Stevens believes that students like these benefit the class as a whole—the open struggle of one student puts everyone on the same plane, and school becomes a safe place to fail.

For Raleigh, this was a starkly different approach. Stevens notes, "The testing pressure and laws in government schools put a lot of pressure on teachers to use the fastest means to keep the child in the seat in the classroom. This often leaves underlying issues unaddressed. Working



Headmaster McKenna and Olivia
Rockbridge Academy, Millersville, MD

with souls—something government schools cannot do—is messy and it takes time. We knew that if we took the time ... everything else would come together."

One particularly notable difference was Cornerstone's refusal to rely on extrinsic rewards to motivate Raleigh. Why? Stevens explains, "Christianity is about doing the right thing for the right reasons before God. ... There were two or three times when the rest of the class had to leave the room while she cleaned up her desk, but she quickly realized that her behavior did not get her anything good. ... We were honest about things from the beginning, even if the facts were difficult to accept."

THE TIDE TURNS

After a few challenging months, Raleigh began to blossom. She saw partnership and support, and outbursts that before resulted in removal from the classroom turned into simple verbal exchanges that were more easily redirected. She began to take joy in her grades, because she knew she had earned them.

When reflecting on Raleigh's success, Stevens is quick to note, "We leaned heavily on her parents. They were great and supportive!" Glenn also spoke of her partnership with Stevens. "The school needs partnership with the parents and vice versa. No one can do it alone."

Now a thriving first grader, Raleigh is confident and full of satisfaction at each new success. Her story is one of many that demonstrates the power of the gospel—when it changes the teachers, it can change the student.



Covenant Academy,
Cypress, TX
Photo by Amanda Faucett,
amandafaucett.com



ROCKBRIDGE ACADEMY MILLERSVILLE, MD

OLIVIA

In 2002, Florence August struck out when trying to find a school for her triplets and their older sister. After being turned down by many area schools, she made yet another visit to a place called Rockbridge Academy. Without hesitation, Headmaster Michael McKenna told August her triplets would be welcomed at Rockbridge—all of them.

One of the triplets, Olivia, has Down Syndrome among other challenges. Many schools were not willing to admit a student with such learning differences, despite August's desire to have all of her children attend the same school. On the contrary, McKenna expressed that it would be good for the Rockbridge community to have a child with Down Syndrome in their midst.

When Olivia started at Rockbridge, a year after her fellow triplets, she was fully integrated into her class. While she always had a one-on-one aide, often her mother, she was very much a part of the larger group. While each school year brought its own challenges, it also brought much joy and delight when Olivia's presence in the community brought the value of the Imago Dei to an entirely new level.

In the spring of 2016, as Olivia's graduation neared, a few folks pursued the possibility of having Olivia remain a part of the Rockbridge community. Only this time, she would be a staff member.

These days, given the title of staff assistant, Olivia can be found shredding papers, sharpening pencils, assembling admissions packets, and helping a wide variety of staff members with their tasks. She cheerfully takes on jobs such as sweeping the stairs, dusting offices, and emptying the trash. She especially enjoys greeting students as they arrive in the morning and leading songs in Spanish class with a flourish. Her humor and encouragement continue to dwell in the halls of Rockbridge Academy, much to the delight of all with whom she has contact. It is safe to say that Michael McKenna had very little idea of the positive impact his decision would make.

SAM

Sam Kawecki is the second born of five Kawecki student members of the Rockbridge family. Despite herculean ef-

forts on his part in 2004, the pace of the third grade classroom proved too difficult. Teachers, administrators, and Sam's parents discussed the alternative of Sam attending a local private school that specializes in equipping students with dyslexia and/or dyscalculia with the hope that Sam would one day return. Their parting was a tearful one, but Sam persevered. During this time Sam maintained a connection to the Rockbridge community.

Over the next four years Sam gained tools and self-advocacy skills that enabled his return to Rockbridge in the fall of 2008. Sam successfully worked through the 7th -12th grades, earning his Rockbridge Academy diploma in 2014 and going on to college. Sam's bright mind, kind heart, and artistic excellence make him a fondly remembered alumnus. Sam is currently a senior at Covenant College with a major in sociology. He will graduate in May 2018. Sam's story encourages all of us that God has a unique plan for His children to equip them for His service.

COVENANT ACADEMY, HOUSTON, TX

AUSTIN

An 11th grader with Asperger's Syndrome, Austin shared these words at an all-school Chapel Presentation.

The Bible says in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, "*Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*" I want you to pay attention to the idea of giving thanks in ALL circumstances, because that's probably the thing most of us struggle with. It's easy to give thanks when things are good—but what about when things are tough? ...

We should give thanks whenever we can, because everything we have received has been through God's grace. So right now, I challenge you, Covenant Academy, to not only give thanks for the large things, but also the small ones too. I challenge you to remember that no matter how dark times in your life may seem, what comes from that hardship will be something to be thankful for.

And with that, I say, "thank you!" ❖



Link to the complete post at:
ClassicalDifference.com/LD



Covenant Academy, Cypress, TX
Photo by Amanda Faucett, amandafaucett.com

☀ Disability vs. Difficulty



Seattle Classical Christian School, Seattle, WA

EMBRACING THE STRUGGLE

One of the most significant changes I've encountered in the last twenty years is that the goal of raising sturdy, capable young men and women has been replaced with keeping our children happy. Too often our focus is to help kids feel better, rather than live better. Instead of knowing what a "healthy kid" looks like, we have become masters of seeing dysfunction. In doing so, we have greatly limited our ability to help children who truly struggle.

Here are some simple examples. In 1986 the ratio of school aged children on psychiatric medication was 1 in 400. In the year 2000, that ratio was 1 in 40. In 2013 the ratio was 1 in 13. This morning when I checked Amazon, there were over 200,000 unique book titles in the areas of family and parenting. In 1940 there did not exist *any* readily available books on how to raise your kids. Yet by all accounts the children of the 1940s were much sturdier in their makeup and more capable to exist in a difficult world.

In the school setting this affects many things—from the parent who complains because their child had Latin homework over the weekend and how that of course would interfere with his travel field hockey or social calendar, to the student who has the idea that school should be easy.

How has all of this affected the student with learning

difficulties? The use of the term "disability" is a clue. I use the term "difficulty" because in most cases, that is a more accurate description than "disability." When we automatically assume a disability, the conversation changes in a way that assumes a student "can't" do something rather than realizing in the vast majority of cases it is "harder" for that student.

For kids with extra difficulties, we should look for an academic approach and environment that allows for struggle and engages it well. For the significantly "disabled" child, this may be in the public system with the vast array of special education resources. But for many, I have seen the Christian classical model meet that need quite well.

The ability for a student to struggle in an environment that embraces that children learn at different paces and in different ways while at the same time providing a foundation of Truth is invaluable. I often describe the idea of contemplation as allowing students to struggle with big and important things ... that is what education should contain.

When both parents and schools change the message that struggle should be managed and navigated, rather than avoided, we can better see and meet the needs of struggling students. ❏

KEITH MCCURDY has worked with families, children, parents and individuals for more than 25 years logging more than 75,000 clinical hours of experience. He received his Master of Arts and Education Specialist degrees from James Madison University. He is currently the President and CEO of Total Life Counseling, Inc.

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 pain. He said that "guts" is probably the closest English synonym. The students who have challenges that exceed that of the average students teach fortitude through their lives of learning to fight the good fight through a difficult life well lived.

—Joe Gerber
(See more on p. 14)



**BASECAMP
LIVE**

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HEAR MORE FROM KEITH MCCURDY:

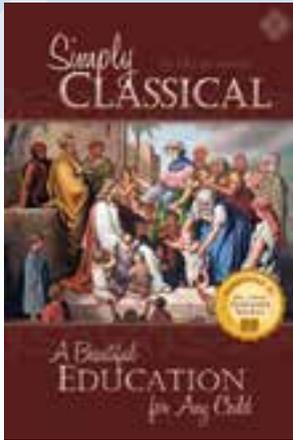
"The Scary Trend Skyrocketing in Today's Teens"



Covenant Academy, Cypress, TX
Photo by Amanda Faucett,
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Tools



SIMPLY CLASSICAL

After seeing measurable academic benefits for my own children—specific learning disabilities, medical conditions, severe mental illness (schizophrenia), and autism—I knew something important was happening before my eyes. I also knew it was not due to my own teacher training, because as I explain in *Simply Classical*, I had failed in

other settings with “progressive” education.

A classical Christian education can bring an exemplary education to any child. When my daughter said to me, “Mom, I want my story to help other children like me,” I knew I needed to write the book.

Parents worry that their struggling children will never learn to read, never receive a good education, or never find joy in learning. We invite everyone to join our efforts in bringing a Christian classical education to as many children as possible.

Students with special needs might not progress as far as same-age peers, but because a classical Christian education is rich and advanced, emphasizing truth, goodness, and beauty, the benefits of an exemplary education remain. Ours is not an elitist endeavor; ours is a human endeavor.

—CHERYL SWOPE, Author of *Simply Classical*

A classical education is like climbing a mountain, each child benefiting from whatever vistas he or she attains in that upward journey. ... *Simply Classical* gives encouragement and real help for all parents ... and has advanced the cause of classical Christian education by confounding its critics who claim it is only for the elite.

—Mrs. Cheryl Lowe, founder of Memoria Press,
in her review of *Simply Classical*:
A Beautiful Education for Any Child



Visit ClassicalDifference.com/LD:

- See the full interview with Cheryl Swope
- Find more about *Simply Classical* and companion resources such as online discussion groups, social skills programs, reviews by real parents, and more
- Read a review by the CiRCE Institute
- Link to other resources listed on this page

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. God has rightly blessed his people with a diversity of gifts. In II Corinthians 12:21-23 (NKJV), Paul writes, 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.”

—Joe Gerber
(See below)

PROGRAMS

Clare Kozushko, a former fifth grade CCE teacher, is now an expert in alternative learning programs and runs the Thrive Center in Newberg, OR. She offers these suggestions.

While none of these programs are modified for the CCE model, each of them enables students to better manage the specific coursework and expectations.



PACE: A great place to start, specifically targeted at kids who are slow to complete work.



NILD: Resources for every learning disability.



BARTON READING AND SPELLING SYSTEM: Designed for kids with low reading comprehension and spelling skills.



THE LISTENING PROGRAM: Depending on the severity of the need, this program may be best used

in conjunction with other programs. This program helps with focusing, attention disorders, anxiety, and Asperger’s. ■■

Holding Back—Why and When

Did you know that children born in September might be more successful in school? Experts say this is because they miss the cutoff and become the oldest students in the class. Children grow at different rates on both the outside and the inside. When is it helpful to hold a student back?*

JOE GERBER, teacher of 9th grade humanities at The Ambrose School and former Licensed Master Social Worker for at risk youth, shares his many years of experience and offers advice for parents on this and other topics. Look for more from Joe online and in upcoming issues of *The Classical Difference*.



*Visit ClassicalDifference.com/LD



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One of Haven's best friends: "She has a beautiful and kind heart and that made it easy to paint her."

Haven Koehler

Work, hope, and community

"Tonight you will need to finish five chapters, and be ready by tomorrow to discuss with the class what you read,"

the teacher instructed her noisy horde of fifth-graders, waiving Tolkien's *Hobbit* above her head. Haven Koehler, one such student, had never before encountered such a daunting demand. New to Highland Rim Academy, she spent many hours prior to her arrival in a special ed classroom, trying to overcome dyslexia and dysgraphia.

If she suffered from dyslexia and dysgraphia, how then might a CCE school that emphasizes reading and writing help her? Her parents felt the same way. But her current program was not helping and the novel prospect of Highland Rim gave them hope.

At first, she struggled. Unlike her previous school, Haven was held to

the class standard and given little grade leniency when it came to the work she produced. A fifth grader at a second-grade reading level, the prospect of finishing five chapters in one night seemed like an impossible task. But, her teachers and her mother knew better.

At home, her mother spent hours reading with her, correcting mistakes and keeping her focused. She followed up with Haven's homework schedule and ensured she was on track.

At school, her teachers took time after class to work with her and strategize ways to meet the class standard. When she failed, which at first she often did, her teachers met her failures with grace and went back to the drawing board. "When I performed poorly," Haven says, "my teachers sat with me while I faced my disappointment, and told me that they knew I could do it, and then helped me plan how to succeed." This vote of confidence transformed Haven's educational experience.

Haven credits the CCE community as another key component in her transformation. At her previous school, she only partook in a few classes with her peers, and spent the remainder of the day in a special ed classroom. "I felt embarrassed leaving to go to my special classes. I wanted to do what everyone else was doing," she recounts.

It was the personal relationships she formed with faculty in the school that gave her the ability to overcome the extra-long homework nights and very difficult reading assignments. ... I think when Haven saw how much her teachers had bought in to her as an individual and how much they came alongside her in her discipleship and education, she found it a joy to engage in the studies set before her.

While she may not be the best reader or writer in her college classes today, I'm confident she is the most well-read student and has a better understanding of what reading and writing are even for than her peers ... I believe by educating her as a whole person created in God's image, and not merely a future college student or employee, we provided her with motivation and purpose.

—CHRISTIE WRIGHT, Assistant Head of School and Academic Dean, Highland Rim Academy, Cookeville, TN

And the special ed classes didn't help. "I went to classes with people who had much more severe disabilities than I did, and where few were improving. The lack of challenge from my peers actually made my symptoms worse."

At Highland Rim, Haven was fully integrated into the community. Because she was held to the same expectations as the class (with some slight accommodations), she rose to meet the standard, and her classmates helped her get there. "At first I felt bad, surrounded by so many smart people, but they helped me succeed." Haven told of classmates who helped check her homework and read for spelling errors before she turned it in. "Being around so many smart people, who were so supportive of me, inspired me to push myself."



Painted for an art competition, the theme of this work is "Truth, Goodness, and Beauty."

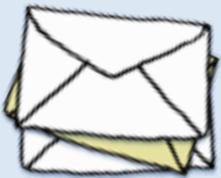
When asked what helped her overcome her disabilities the most, Haven answered without hesitation: the personal support of her teachers and the integration with her classmates. She

felt that her school was truly a safe place to fail.

Not only did her community give her the spiritual support she needed, but the academic preparation as well. "I was so prepared for college. My time at Highland Rim taught me to think logically, drawing from years of historical examples. I cherished Shakespeare, and really loved the true beauty and raw talent of writing. I can keep up in my classes and now excel at reading and writing."

Now a sophomore at Tennessee Tech University, Haven studies elementary education to pursue becoming a teacher at a CCE school. "I'm no longer hindered by my disability," Haven beams, "and I can write a pretty good paper if I do say so myself." ■

■ LETTERS & NOTES



LETTERS & NOTES



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FORESHADOWS of a *Brave New World*

A CAUTIONARY TALE

In Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, the World State has managed to rid itself of all the ills of human nature through technology. People are made, they are no longer begotten.

In this future, life is engineered so that there is no more war and no more poverty;

no more disease; no more religion; no feelings of anxiety, guilt, or envy; all *awareness* of suffering has been blunted, if not eliminated. Huxley imagined what John Lennon sang about 40 years later.

This earthly paradise did not come without cost. In Huxley's World State, the terms "father" and "mother" seem indecent not simply because people are "hatched," but because the terms suggest a viable alternative to the state's management.

In keeping with this ideal, all incentives for individuals to act responsibly and morally have been removed. There is no possibility of a better life. Yet self-interested or immoral choices are encouraged because individuals enslaved to their desires make ideal citizens of a totalitarian state.

The social landscape Huxley presents, and the portrait of human nature it paints, no longer seems so futuristic, and

that may be particularly so in Ontario, Canada's most populous province, because of the social policies of its government.

ONTARIO'S GREAT LEAP FORWARD— STRANGER THAN FICTION?

Over the past five years under Ontario's Premier Kathleen Wynne, the changes redefining marriage, the family, and the human person have been swift and comprehensive.

Current SOGI (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity) legislation is advancing society *against* marriage, the family, and personal responsibility in an unprecedented way. It eradicates the basis of personal identity, and makes human identity entirely dependent upon the state's definition.

THE FLESH BECOMES WORD

There are five bills that encapsulate the legislative changes in Ontario.

✗ **BILL 33** adds "gender identity and gender expression" to Ontario's *Human Rights Code*. The Federal government has produced similar legislation.

This policy gives public recognition to a person's private sense of identity, and overrides the public's right to privacy in public places specifically designed to exclude the opposite sex. In other words, public bathrooms and showers are open to anyone who wishes to share them with you.

The price good men pay for indifference to public affairs is to be ruled by evil men.

—Plato

✗ **BILL 13** requires public and Catholic schools to allow gay-straight alliances and to root out “homophobia,” “biphobia,” and “transphobia.” This served as a pretext for the Ontario government to usurp the power of parents (and duly elected trustees), even forcing schools to change their equity and inclusive education policies.

✗ **BILL 77** prohibits “reparative therapy” for minors struggling with issues of sexuality or gender identity. Parents have no recourse, even with their own children. Scientific evidence or reason are not allowed to influence the discussion.

✗ **BILL 28** removes the words “mother” and “father” from Ontario law, while allowing people to become parents through “pre-conception parentage agreements” with up to four unrelated and unmarried adults. The effect of this not only gets rid of the natural family as a defining feature of family law, it transforms all children into commodities and all parents into property owners. And private property is not a right defined under Canada’s Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

✗ **BILL 89** integrates gender identity and expression into the Child and Youth Services Law. It has been suggested that parents who oppose the gender identity of their children could lose them.

These changes have been simultaneously implemented in the curricula of Ontario public schools in its sex-ed curriculum and in its Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, over strenuous parental objections and public protests. Primary schooling has been given over to “social justice” by the Elementary Teachers Federation.

A U.S. PERSPECTIVE

The thoroughgoing checks and balances of the United States’ political system, the tradition of state’s rights, and the sovereignty of the family, church, and school helps make them resistant to totalitarian rule. For these reasons, the U.S. may be less susceptible to this sort of legislation than Canada.

On the other hand, the American ideal of the “self-made” man is more truly American than in any other country, and the high tech moralists of Silicon Valley exercise their influence everywhere. The technological ideal of a *Brave New*



For links to more information about the bills mentioned in this article, visit ClassicalDifference.com/Canada.

World is a threat wherever man’s total dominion over life is embraced.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

In the end, a private classical Christian education is absolutely essential to the well-being of both our countries, because only it acknowledges the goodness of nature created by God as an aspect of His common grace. That natural good is in our very bodies, as Nancy Pearcey has argued in her recent book *Love Thy Body*, but it is only properly understood in the light of the redemptive work done by Christ in His human body.

For “the earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof,” and of “the increase of His government and peace there will be no end.” ■

DR. SCOTT MASSON is an associate professor of English literature at Tyndale University College in Toronto. He studied classical Greek and Latin in Germany, but became a Christian while doing his doctoral work in Durham, England.

He was the founding board chairman of Westminster Classical Christian Academy in Toronto, and remains committed to advancing classical education in Canada. He is a proud husband and father of two.

“We must realize that the Reformation worldview leads in the direction of government freedom. But the humanist worldview with inevitable certainty leads in the direction of statism. This is so because humanists, having no god, must put something at the center, and it is inevitably society, government, or the state.”

—Francis A. Schaeffer



Mars Hill Academy, Mason, OH

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



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[... Continued from page 7]



What were they doing back then?

Many argue that Rome’s affirmation of a common humanity and subsequent commitment to justice and equality, though limited, opened the way to unprecedented achievements. Progress in medicine, science, art, and engineering solidified Rome’s position as the cornerstone of Western civilization.

Pioneer physicians Hippocrates and Galen successfully depressed the level of mortality below the level of fertility, extending Roman longevity and triggering an explosive population boom.

Ptolemy sparked a centuries long quest for scientific truth, arguing for a geocentric solar system.

One of the first societies to successfully employ concrete, Rome developed the most intricate and sophisticated network of roads and aqueducts of its time.

Mastery of concrete also yielded a vast Roman underground utility grid of plumbing, hot and cold water, and sewers.

Utilizing a common tongue—Latin—the Empire unified over 65 million people of different racial origins across the world. Today, Latin is the root of over 60% of languages.

A multitude of prolific writers carefully documented their opinions and observations. Virgil, Livy, Tacitus, and Plutarch are a few among many brilliant writers who forever immortalized Rome’s grandeur and failures with a dash of their pens.



cause of death. Their ingenious inoculation? A preventative political structure. They credit the political architecture of the U.S. republic to Greco-Roman civic philosophy and structure. It was within the reign of the Roman empire that the notion of divided government branches was conceived, where the world’s first elected officials ruled, and where the equality of all citizens before the law was first established.

All our Founding Fathers believed that history was a precursor of the future. In the annals of history—particularly that of the Greek and Roman republics of antiquity—they believed they could find the key to inoculating America against the diseases that infected and destroyed past societies.

—Dr. Joe Wolverton II

When faced with the task of creating their own republic, the founding fathers drew upon millennia of vicarious experience gained from their studies of history and literature. At the time, colleges required, among other challenging feats, that incoming freshmen read, translate, and expound upon original classical Greco-Roman works in the original Latin and Greek. Twenty-seven of the 39 signers of the Constitution were college graduates; nearly all were classically educated. Considered provocative and new, Carl J. Richard’s book, *Why We’re All Romans*, “wouldn’t have been a surprise to those educated in colonial colleges.”*

Through our founding fathers, our “uniquely American” values of autonomy and democracy, checks and balances, religious liberty, and impartiality before the law were transferred to a new world—values nurtured thousands of years before among the seven Roman hills, demonstrating that even today, all roads lead to Rome. ■■



*ALL CITATIONS:
ClassicalDifference.com/2018-spring

[... Continued from page 7]

it again”; and the grown-up person does it again until he is nearly dead. For grown-up people are not strong enough to exult in monotony. But perhaps God is strong enough to exult in monotony. It is possible that God says every morning, “Do it again” to the sun; and every evening, “Do it again” to the moon. ... It may be that He has the eternal appetite of infancy; for we have sinned and grown old, and our Father is younger than we.



“story of the week,” a “Scripture of the month,” or a “quote of the day”—to intentionally repeat as we drive to school, pray for dinner, or read before bedtime.

Perhaps we will find that repetition and rhetoric, like Brian and Emily, are true-blue, stuck-like-glue friends after all. ■



*ALL CITATIONS: Classical-Difference.com/2018-spring

KYLE RAPINCHUK is assistant professor of Christian Worldview at School of the Ozarks in Point Lookout, MO. Kyle is co-founder of The Classical Thistle where he also serves as editor and author.

Indeed, we have sinned and grown old, and our sin has been the abandonment of wonder and enjoyment in the beauty of monotony.

This sin goes deeper than educational philosophy, though that is a good place to start in correcting our practice, and most classical schools are making the attempt. They realize that the loss of the beauty of monotony is what causes us to abandon the rich, life-transforming reading of the Gospels because we already “know the story of Jesus.” The loss of the beauty of monotony is what causes us to skim through Psalm 146–150, since hearing “Praise the LORD!” fifty times is superfluous when I understand it after the first. The loss of the beauty of monotony is what causes us to leave off reading our Bible because we become bored with the discipline of daily devotion. As John Piper says, when we do this, we “miss the miracle.”*

The loss of the beauty of monotony is a loss worth reversing. It is a loss worth fighting to regain. It may just be the very thing that keeps us sane in the midst of a culture that is absolutely obsessed with—dare I say worships—the new and different.

Enjoy repeating words to your children that are good, true, and beautiful, whether via your own family Bible reading or that day’s homework. Perhaps we should start the practice of picking Scriptures and stories—a

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*soft tongue breaketh the bone.” These days, a soft tongue doesn’t get you very far, but someday it might again.**

Sitting at her desk in the London advertising firm Benson’s in 1921, a young Dorothy Sayers began to wonder how people could be gullible enough to believe the slogans she and her colleagues wrote. By the time she presented *The Lost Tools of Learning* in 1947, Sayers answered her own question: the entire education system in the West had been realigned to teach students simply what to think. Dogma had trumped thought.

She knew it was not supposed to be this way. Sayers came from Oxford, where she studied medieval literature and was among the first women to graduate from the storied institution. Oxford and Cambridge were different from other institutions. In tutorials, the dons with whom she studied expected her to come prepared to argue a thesis, to think critically, and to never accept a conclusion without making it her own. “Although we often succeed in teaching our pupils ‘subjects,’ we fail lamentably in teaching them how to think. ... They learn everything except the art of thinking.”*

Sayers knew there was a deep historical irony in this turn of events. What separates the West from the rest has been our emphasis on self governance, checks on institutional power, and firm resistance to any form of demagoguery. By the time she had written *The Lost Tools of Learning*, Europe had been brought to its knees by national socialism and fascism. Totalitarianism was beginning to cover much of the planet in darkness. But Dorothy Sayers under-

stood that the courage to resist always begins in the mind, in our imaginations.

What was her strategy to preserve civilization? Go back to what worked in the first place. Sayers proposed a return to an education based upon the medieval Trivium: grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric. Each stage was age-appropriate and built upon the last.

The courage to resist
always begins in the mind,
in our imaginations.

Sayers was confident that children are capable of far more responsibility and acuity than our modern age would have us think. She queries: “When we think about the remarkably early age at which the young men went up to university in, let us say, Tudor times, and thereafter were held fit to assume responsibility for the conduct of their own affairs, are we altogether comfortable about that artificial prolongation of intellectual childhood ... which is so marked in our own day?” Who can argue that the modern welfare state has not capitalized on the the psychology of dependence over self-reliance and industry?

Imagine what Dorothy Sayers would say to today’s new media—filled with self-assured snap judgments on the internet, all of which are framed by advertising slogans and other sorts of propaganda. Her prescription would be the same as it was in 1947: classical education—now

Here in NYC, words are bartered like a commodity, and how they are used

reflects the culture of our day. David Brooks, an op-ed columnist for *The New York Times*, recently wrote:

Back when they wrote the book of Proverbs it was said, “By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a



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[Continues on page 31 ...]



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Classical Education in Action

■ **PROVIDENCE
CLASSICAL SCHOOL**
Spring, TX

Fifth-grader Mary Jane Lopiccolo enjoys her time in the afternoon carline waiting for her number to be called. Mary Jane is an avid reader, and this is a book she chose herself.

SARAH TURNER
Director of Advancement



■ **WESTMINSTER
ACADEMY**
Memphis, TN

Fourth graders Lyla Nagem and Abigail Nicolas gather for See You At the Pole in Memphis, TN. There was a time of worship, followed by a time of prayer for the school, community, and city. A tradition of over 25 years, 3 million students from across the U.S. gather to pray for their schools and communities.

JULIE NAGEM, Public Relations

■ **MARS HILL ACADEMY**
Mason, OH

Mars Hill Academy second-grade students donned their surgical scrubs to perform contraction “surgery.” Students had to make decisions whether to keep or cut out parts of word pairs such as “will not,” “we will” and “have not.” Second grade teacher Mrs. Alicia Weber of Maineville prepped the class for the procedure, equipping them with red pens, scissors, and adhesive bandages which acted as apostrophes. Students then displayed their successful “operations!”

MICHAUX MERHOUT
Advancement Team





■ VERITAS SCHOOL Richmond, VA

Veritas School of Richmond, VA, recently purchased the Laburnum House, a historic Richmond mansion built in 1908. Not only is the house notable for its age, it was also featured in the PBS Civil War drama *Mercy Street*. In fact, before Veritas bought the property, an agreement for a second season of filming the series had already been negotiated, so the season was filmed at the school that fall. The show wrapped up after the second season, but you can catch up on missed episodes by streaming them on Amazon!

EXCERPT FROM *THE RICHMOND TIMES*

■ VERITAS COLLEGIATE ACADEMY Chesapeake, VA

Veritas Collegiate Academy of Chesapeake, VA, expands their school—this time to Beijing, China. What prompted this unlikely choice? After bestschools.org named Veritas one of the top 50 Christian high schools in the U.S., Veritas received several requests to bring their school to Beijing. And they listened. Veritas Prep opened in Beijing in the summer of 2015, and now enrolls 55 students. After success in Beijing, Veritas plans to build a school in Budapest, Hungary, and has reported interest from Vietnam and Nigeria. Will there be a CCE school on every continent one day? We hope so.

CALEB ELGUT

Director of Quality Assurance



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Star Wars: The Last Jedi?

Hopefully.

ALERT: This article contains spoilers.
Skip to the last two paragraphs to avoid them.

At a certain pivotal moment in the last third of Rian Johnson's foray into the *Star Wars* saga, Luke, desirous of ending the Jedi order once and for all, sets out to destroy the sacred texts of the old Jedi religion. As he approaches the cave to

torch them, he is confronted by his old master Yoda, who completes the task for him by calling lightning down from heaven and swallowing the cave up whole. Yoda responds to Luke's confusion and astonishment with two very telling responses: "Page turners they are not" and "The Library contains nothing that the girl Rey does not already possess."

These two statements sum up much of what is wrong with the newest *Star Wars* entry.

Star Wars: The Last Jedi is the first of the *Star Wars* films that could be labeled as iconoclastic. JJ Abrams' take on the *Star Wars* mythology tried, to a fault, to echo the tone and tenor of the original trilogy. This new iteration has chosen, almost wholesale, to destroy the world that came before.

To recognize how this happened, one must understand what made the first *Star Wars* so revolutionary. The original (subsequently re-titled *Star Wars: A New Hope*) appeared in an era when great filmmakers were embracing the cynicism of the age. *The Godfather*, *Taxi Driver*, *Chinatown*, and *All the President's Men* are examples of the dominant aesthetic that rejected the notion of authority, the idea of an established morality, and the longstanding notions of hero and villain. People found the old Hollywood of yesteryear too hopeful, sentimental, and unrealistic for their post-Vietnam, post-Richard-Nixon world. They wanted their entertainment to fit their experience.

It was into this world and this common sensibility that *Star Wars* was born. Unlike other popular films of the day, Lucas presented a clear vision of good and evil, set against the optimistic backdrop of a mythology that was as distinctly American as apple pie. He made a movie that was aptly titled *A New Hope*, for it did indeed instill people with whimsy, wonder, and a desire to be good. It made us believe in heroes again.

The original trilogy (and even the prequels) is completely in earnest. These films are not self-aware in the slightest and they do not make light of the themes that matter the most to them. Religion, tradition, wisdom, good, and evil—these were things to be taken very seriously in the *Star Wars* of yesterday.

Yoda, however, in *The Last Jedi*, destroys the notion of a received tradition and of religion, and lets us all know that power does not rest in a tradition that is passed on from



**BASECAMP
LIVE**

ClassicalDifference.com/BaseCamp

- Tom Velasco talks culture and classical Christian education from several angles.
- Hear Dr. Sean McDowell's interview "Star Wars Does Battle Against the Me Generation."

Recent films

THAT HAVE SOMETHING TO OFFER OUR CULTURE

NOTE: Many movies listed here are NOT appropriate for all audiences. Parents, exercise caution.

Though not necessarily the best or most interesting, each movie below says something of significance to the culture in which we live.

- *Dunkirk*: a film about bravery, and about standing your ground and never giving in, even when the odds are stacked against you
- *A Ghost Story*: a mythic exploration of time, home, family, connection and grief
- *Wonderstruck*: also mythic in scope, and dealing with issues of home, family and connection
- *Darkest Hour*: a film about doing the hard thing, even when everyone is against you
- *The World of Tomorrow*: a film about the dehumanization that is happening as we progress as a culture
- *It Comes at Night*: a film about fear and what it can do to us as people
- *Guardians of the Galaxy*: a film about what it means to be a father
- *War for the Planet of the Apes*: a film about what it means to be human
- *Lego Batman*: an exploration of egocentrism and what it means to be a part of a community

master to student, but lies instead in the individual. Rey has all the power she needs at her own fingertips and she does not need anyone to bring that out. She doesn't need books, she doesn't need tradition, and she doesn't need Luke. She doesn't even need any training—she clearly receives none throughout either of the films in which she appears. She has the power within herself and herself alone. This is why *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* is, philosophically, a failure. It has finally jumped ship. It is now self-aware.

Consider Poe's "mama" joke directed at Hux in the beginning of the film, or Luke's flicking the dust from his shoulder during the final sequence. Consider the tantrum that Kylo Ren throws after being reproved by Snoke. Consider Luke himself who, in a moment of weakness, lights his lightsaber to kill his sleeping nephew, beginning Kylo Ren's fall into darkness. It no longer recognizes the very real, menacing evil that was present in the original films. What is more, there is no longer anything or anyone truly good.

This is a film that has decided, not to subvert the expectations of culture, but rather to jump on board. There is no true good and no true evil. There is no hope for actual resolution to take place in the world around us, but we are fated to commit the failures of our fathers

monistic view of the universe that teaches a Taoist ethic. This indeed has always been present in the films, but is far more explicitly stated, and in far darker tones, in this one. Nor have I mentioned the heavy-handed feminism portrayed throughout the film, which goes to great lengths to establish the authority and superiority of women over men, going so far as making each example of male decision-making a tragic failure, especially when contrasted with the particular wisdom and heroism of their feminine counterparts.

Star Wars is a mashup of modern progressive talking points tacked onto the skeleton of Lucas' established mythology. It subverts the good that existed in Lucas' work, and accentuates the bad. It is not your mom and dad's *Star Wars*. ■■

TOM VELASCO studied philosophy and history in college with a minor in Latin, and has since spent the majority of his years teaching everything from logic to humanities to Greek and Latin at The Ambrose School, Meridian, ID. His natural affinity for pop art and culture, especially cinema, is evidenced by the approximately 370 films he has viewed each year over the past five years. An active member of a social networking community of amateur and professional film critics, he has also written many film reviews and critiques.

ad infinitum. There is no longer any tradition, religion, or truth outside of ourselves—there is nothing to lead us to hope. My only hope is in myself alone, and the only thing I can do in the face of despair is laugh. This is the message and lesson of the world in which we live, and it is the new message of *Star Wars*.

This just scratches the surface. I haven't even begun to discuss the way Johnson doubles down on Lucas' already established



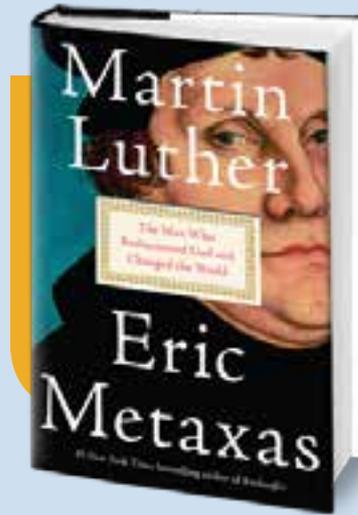
What's on Our Nightstand?

Here at TCD, we love to share our latest inspirations.

This month, we've been riveted by Eric Metaxas' biography, *Martin Luther*, released in 2017, the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

If you're looking to gain a deeper appreciation of the Western world as we know it, a better grasp of church history, or just plain inspiration to do the right thing in the face of seemingly insurmountable opposition, this is the book for you.

On All Hallow's Eve in 1517, a young monk named Martin Luther posted a document he hoped would spark an academic debate, but that instead ignited a conflagration



The book is dedicated to our friend Gregory Alan Thornbury, who you can meet here → See more: eric-metaxas.com/books/martinluther/

that would forever destroy the world he knew. Five hundred

years after Luther's now famous 95 Theses appeared, Eric Metaxas, acclaimed biographer of the bestselling *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy* and *Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery*, paints a startling portrait of the wild figure whose adamant faith cracked the edifice of Western Christendom and dragged medieval Europe into the future. Written in riveting prose and impeccably researched, Martin Luther tells the searing tale of a humble man who, by bringing ugly truths to the highest seats of power, caused the explosion whose sound is still ringing in our ears. Luther's monumental faith and courage gave birth to the ideals of faith, virtue, and freedom that today lie at the heart of all modern life. ❏

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[... Continued from page 24]

more than ever. Only a person who can think around a problem is in a position not to be the problem.

The nineteenth-century German scholar Johann Herder once defined culture as “the life-blood of a people, the flow of moral energy that keeps a society intact.” From whence does this “flow of moral energy” come? Surely it begins in the home, and surely it is established in the classroom at the developmental stage when minds of children are filled with wonder and awe about the world around them.

The Christian community has a solemn responsibility to get it right—to not give the Empire the droids that they’re looking for. We must look

Only a person who can think around a problem is in a position not to be the problem.

to the past, to the tradition that has served us so well. As G.K. Chesterton once so memorably observed: “Tradition means giving votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead.”

Let the polls open and the voting begin. If I don’t miss my guess, it’s going to look a lot like Dorothy Sayers’ *The Lost Tools of Learning*. And that’s why what’s happening in the classroom every day at the Geneva School here in New York City, and classical Christian schools around the country, matters so very much. ■■

DR. GREGORY THORNBURY is president of The King’s College, New York City.

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Hygge for All

Discover Denmark's secret
to happiness & well-being



LOVERS OF HOBBIT HOLES and all things Norse will appreciate a new word coming out of Denmark—*hygge*. While the Danes may not see it this way, it seems to take simple age-old biblical principles and apply them to daily life. As you're rushing through the last weeks of winter while juggling homework, appointments, and a multitude of other activities, you might try a little *hygge*—because, as Bilbo said, “It is no bad thing to celebrate a simple life.”

By Céleste
Perrino-Walker

Hygge is taking the world by storm. This wildly popular Danish word comes

from a small language with only about 5.6 million speakers. Few people outside Denmark can pronounce it, and there is no equivalent word or phrase in the English language. There is also no straightforward definition. The closest we can come is to say that *hygge* is a feeling of coziness, intimacy, or warmth. It is these things but so much more as well. Activities, décor, and experiences can be *hygge*. As translator ToveMaren Stakkestad says, “*Hygge* was never meant to be translated. It was meant to be felt.”

So, what is all the *hygge* hype about? *Hygge* is widely credited for boosting Denmark to the top of the World's Happiest Country list, which is compiled and released each year in the *World Happiness Report*. This is baffling to many people because it's no

My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

— Isaiah 32:18

secret that Denmark suffers through grueling long, dark winters. Its citizens should be frozen, yes, and understandably depressed. And yet, here they are, touted as the happiest people on the planet. What gives?

While it is hard to nail down a definition of *hygge*, most people would recognize the feeling it evokes if they have ever snuggled up with a comfy blanket and a mug of cocoa or tea by a roaring fireside while the winter wind whistles outside. The Danes would say that feeling of well-being, or coziness, is very *hygge*. In fact, anything that contributes to this feeling is considered *hygge* whether it comes from

cuddling up with a good book or socializing around the dinner table with close friends and family over bowls of steaming hot soup and thick slabs of crusty bread.



Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

—1 Peter 4: 9–10



As it turns out, I've been practicing *hygge* for years and just didn't know what it was called. *Hygge*, for me, is Friday night communal meals when my scattered family catches up



... You do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

—James 4:14



around the dinner table. Or playing my violin by the fire-pit on a warm summer night while watching the fireflies dance.

Signe Johansen, who wrote *How to Hygge: The Nordic Secrets to a Happy Life*, says, “At the core of *hygge* is the guiding principle that we must all make the most of the short time we have on this planet ... And be kind to ourselves and those around us.” *Hygge* encompasses all aspects of life, but it can be broken down into a few key areas to make the concept easier to grasp for those who don't hail from Denmark.

✧ THE HOME: *Hygge* Headquarters

Hygge starts at home. That's why Danes are particular about their surroundings. Home should have a “welcome; come on in; make yourself comfortable” vibe. Wooden floors are preferable to carpet, but lush scatter rugs lend a comfy touch. Candles



Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

—Philippians 2:4



and good lighting are very important. Aesthetics aren't the only concern; Danes place a high value on entertaining at home, which is very *hygge*. And entertaining is much more prone to happen in a comfortable, clean, well-cared-for space. No one can relax in the midst of chaos.

✧ THE TABLE: In the Company of Others

Meik Wiking, who wrote *The Little Book of Hygge*, says, “In all the work I have done within the field of happiness research, this is the point I am surest about: the best predictor of whether we are happy or not is our social relationships.” It turns out, the first line of defense against the long,



7 Ways to Add *Hygge* to Your Everyday Life

- 1 **GET OUTSIDE.** Even if all you manage is a quick walk around the block or tea on the patio, an important component of *hygge* is getting outside every day no matter what the weather.
- 2 **FRESH FLOWERS.** Fresh flowers are a season-less and a beautiful way of bringing the outside in. Don't overlook pretty weeds as a wild bouquet. You don't have to break the bank.
- 3 **TEA.** Hot drinks of any description are considered very *hygge* because their heat is soothing to the body, their fragrance is soothing to the mind, and sipping them slowly is soothing to the soul.
- 4 **SIMPLICITY.** *Hygge* is the exact opposite of complicated. *Hygge* embodies simplicity in all its forms from decoration to possessions to occupation.
- 5 **LIGHT.** While candles and twinkly lights fill the night, anything that maximizes natural light inside is inherent in *hygge*. Whether that is big windows or mirrors on the wall, let the light shine in.
- 6 **BOOKS AND MUSIC.** Quiet activities like curling up with a book or listening to music (bonus points if it's vinyl played on a record player) are very *hygge*-ish.
- 7 **FRIENDS AND FAMILY.** The crowning jewel in the concept of *hygge* is socializing with loved ones. No need to go overboard—a long dinner full of laughter is at the top of the *hygge* list.

isolating winters is socializing, and what better way to socialize than over a meal?

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another ...

—Hebrews 10: 24-25

Danes often throw nutrition out the window when entertaining. As Johansen says, “If you’re contemplating a dessert with sweet potato, avocado, chia seeds, or anything ‘clean,’ then you’ve kind of missed the point of *hygge*, which is about enjoying delicious food, not fretting about whether it’s healthy.” Fretting aside, it is perfectly possible to enjoy healthy food that is also delicious despite what Johansen thinks. And really, who wouldn’t rather have the best of both worlds?

And thus you shall greet him: “Peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have.”

—1 Samuel 25:6

In this instance, food is merely the vehicle for gathering around a common table to chat and laugh, which is sure to lift spirits. Spending time with family and friends is the real nourishment.

✿ THE CELEBRATION: Making Good Days Even Better

Hygge really shines during celebrations. With decorations on the outside and goodwill on the inside, it’s hard not to experience the benefits of

hygge and want to incorporate them into each new day. Think of your ideal Christmas: If you can capture the excitement, contentment, and well-being of the season, you’ll know exactly what to aim for once the holiday luster has faded, and the world returns to the hum-drum of everyday living.

✿ THE GREAT OUTDOORS: Overcoming the Winter Blues

Danes subscribe to the old adage that there is no bad weather, only bad clothing. One of the reasons they thrive during protracted winters is because they don’t merely endure winter; they enjoy it. An important tenet of *hygge* is getting outside every day, even if it’s only for a short brisk walk or a fast and furious snowball fight.

While gym membership is not frowned upon, it’s looked on as a distant second to time spent in nature. Suffering through exercise in an attempt to improve your physical appearance is not in keeping with the principles of *hygge*. Rather, participation in exercise is its own reward. An added benefit of exercising outside in nature is that it is calming. In a world that increasingly needs to “digitally detox,” this is an important bonus.

While culturally, perhaps, it is impossible to understand *hygge* in the way a native Dane can, we can slow

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.

—Psalm 19:1

down and consciously take moments to relax and improve the quality of our lives.

In the end, it boils down to this: the acquisition of wealth is not the point of life. Living is the point of life. And that is a very *hygge* perspective. ■

One’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”

—Luke 12:15

CÉLESTE PERRINO-WALKER’s favorite *hygge* activities include knitting, hiking, spending time with her family, and curling up with a good book. She is the author of many inspirational articles and books.



Say What?

As if coming up with an accurate definition of *hygge* in English isn’t hard enough, try pronouncing it. English speakers aren’t quite sure what to do with all those “g”s, and the “hyg” in the beginning looks like it ought to be pronounced “hig” except that it isn’t. It will be hard to share the concept with others if you can’t say it. Here, then, is an English speaker’s guide to saying *hygge* like a native Dane.

Close your eyes and pretend you aren’t looking at the word. It’s easier that way because it doesn’t sound anything like it looks. Now say, “hoo-guh.” The “guh” part is short so bite down on it pretty hard, as if you were saying, “hoog-uh.” Congratulations! You are now speaking Danish.

The word *hygge* is a noun, and there are variations for different parts of speech (ie. *hyggeligt* and *hyggelige*). But for purposes of this article, we’ll stick with *hygge* to describe anything within this concept for clarity’s sake. Learning one complex Danish word is a big enough goal for now.



*ALL CITATIONS: ClassicalDiference.com/2018-spring



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Fresh Perspective

Classical Christian Academy, Post Falls, ID



**PHOTO BY JOLEEN NORCINI,
PARENT VOLUNTEER**

Mount St. Helens Observatory, Washington
Classical Christian Academy
7th and 8th Grade Northwest
Travel Study Trip
May 2017
Anna Darrow, 8th Grade

I am thankful to share my photos particularly because it serves to help motivate parents to seek out classical Christian schools for their children. I have witnessed the impact that all phases of classical Christian education have had on my own children as well as my friends.

—Joleen Norcini

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