



BY THE MANE

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The Educating Family

As adherents of the classical method of education, we understand that a reasoned approach to history – especially through reading primary documents – can give us a better sense of our own age and help us avoid the pitfalls of former ones. People in our culture, however, too often get their history through *entertainments*. Consequently, they get more titillation than truth.

Few Christian groups have suffered more from such an approach than the Puritans. Thanks to the



popular approach to history, the adjective *puritanical* has only

negative connotation. It conjures up images of joyless misogynists clad in

From the Board

When in the trenches of day to day work, we sometimes lose sight of the vision which set us to that work in the first place. This is why rest is important. Rest affords us the opportunity to recalibrate and hone our focus. The annual, national conference of the Association of Classical and Christian Schools provides a platform from which to do exactly that.

This year's conference in Austin also provided the opportunity to clarify that most nebulous stage of the *trivium*, the rhetoric stage. This is important because the rhetoric stage represents the *telos* of the overall vision of classical education. We had the

privilege to hear Nathan Wilson deliver a lecture regarding an overview of rhetoric and story. What follows is a distillation of the main points from his talk.



[Rhetorical] success is not the ability to persuade but to obligate belief.



The talk weaved through the relationship between the nature of knowledge, the nature of proof, and what can be called the incarnational aspect of story. First, a brief discussion of the nature of

knowledge and our historical context will set the table nicely. The study of how we know things is a branch of philosophy called epistemology. It basically asks the questions regarding the preconditions for knowledge, what constitutes knowledge, and how we come to know it. For our discussion, knowledge is simply defined as true belief. Proof is not mere persuasion but is setting an obligation to believe. Therefore, as Wilson shows, success is not the ability to persuade but to obligate belief. Peter preaching at Pentecost and Stephen being stoned are both successful examples

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I call therefore a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skillfully, and magnanimously, all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war.

John Milton
(1608-1674)

Fall Festival



Our Fall Festival continues to be a great way for families to get to know one another and enjoy fun and games. A picnic lunch followed classroom games like Hot-and-Cold and Bottle Bowling, and we enjoyed cotton candy and popcorn, thanks to the Bells (Joshua).

The highlight for most of the students, though, came after lunch, when I emerged from the school wearing swim trunks in the 60-degree weather. Last year's Pie-in-the-Face was such a hit with kids and grown-ups alike, PTO President Jill Beadles (Ella, Grant) felt Dominion needed to up the ante. So I climbed into a dunk tank and prayed for poor aim.

My prayers were not answered. Though only one parent – Rusty Walker (Ella) – managed to

actually dunk me with a ball, Charles Godwin (Elizabeth, Katherine, Amy Claire) faithfully dunked me every time someone hit the target. I lost count of how many times I plunged into that water, and it took me several minutes of sitting in the sun to get my temperature back up. But I survived, and children and parents seemed to have a good time. I don't know where go from here, but I'm sure someone's taking suggestions. – Jamie Cain

Fall Ministry Projects

Each month, our students participate in a ministry project to help with needs in our community or elsewhere. The projects give our students some perspective about God's blessing, while also giving them a practical outlet for fulfilling one of God's greatest commandments: to love our neighbors as ourselves.

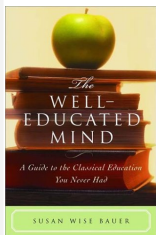
Our October project was collecting supplies for the Lawrenceville Co-op, which provides emergency assistance to Gwinnett County families in crisis. Then, in early November, students and families delivered the supplies to the Co-op on a Saturday morning.

In addition to stocking the shelves, our students

and their families helped Co-op staff clean the facility and prepare for the week's work.

These ministry projects are an important part of our educational mission. Upcoming ministry projects include Operation Christmas Child and a letter campaign for soldiers serving abroad.

On the Shelf



The Well-Educated Mind: A Guide to the Classical Education You Never Had

Susan Wise Bauer became a homeschooling household name when she wrote *The Well-Trained Mind* with her mother, Jessie Wise to help families give their children a

rigorous classical education at home. With *The Well-Educated Mind*, Bauer has given parents a manual for catching up with (perhaps even getting ahead of) their kids. It is thoughtful reading instruction and a helpful reading guide rolled into one.

In the first half of the book, Bauer explains the Trivium, the basic skills of classical education, in the context of reading. She suggests ways to apply

those skills to reading and even offers helpful tips for planning reading time.

The second half of the book is just as valuable. It is a reading guide for great literature, along with guidelines for how to read literature, history, biography, and more.

We often say we want our children to have the education we wanted. This book can help us get a bit more of that education for ourselves.

Puritans (cont.)

austere costumes, waging war against all joy and beauty. Thankfully, history paints a different picture, one that portrays a cultured and principled people who were committed to live and work always to God's glory. I have recently been reading Leland Ryken's *Worldly Saints: The Puritans as They Really Were*. It's a fascinating study of these much-maligned but godly folks who did so much to advance the cause of Christ in the New World. The society they built laid the foundation for the "American experiment," and their contributions made possible much of its success. In this and the next two newsletters, I plan to look at three Puritan ideals that I hope will characterize

Dominion life: the centrality of the family; the necessity of godly education; and the impact of an integrated, holistic view of the world.



"Such as families are, such at last the church and commonwealth must be."



The Puritans believed that a society was built out of families. In other words, the family (and not the individual) was the basic unit of a godly community. In practice, this meant that parents considered the work of parenting as their highest calling. Puritan

author James Fitch (1620–1702) explained the importance of families thus: "Such as families are, such at last the church and commonwealth must be." They knew that the character of their community, and the fruitfulness of their society, depended on their faithfulness to God in their families.

This kind of thinking undergirds Dominion's commitment to covenantal education. This commitment assumes two things. First, we consider the education of children a family's first responsibility. Dominion families make sacrifices – of time, of money, of other opportunities – to fulfill that duty, and the school exists to help parents fulfill it.

Second, we do not think it necessary to fly solo. Enrolling at Dominion means you join a family with mutual goals and commitments, which can help lighten the burden of the day-to-day work.

The Puritans' ideals planted the seeds for a tremendous future, from educational institutions (Harvard), to spiritual renewal (like the Great Awakening), to At our Fall Festival and Thanksgiving Feast, it was obvious to me that families shared more than food and fun. They shared their lives, recognizing that the work God has called us to do for our children is a family effort.

– Jamie Cain
Headmaster

Coming Events

November

- 7 Report Cards issued
- 14 Honors Chapel, 10:30 a.m. (Best Day)
- 20 Family Information Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 26 Early Release, 12:30 p.m.
- 27-30 Thanksgiving Break (NO SCHOOL)

December

- 5 Chapel (Advent), 10:30 a.m.
- 11 Christmas Program, 7 p.m.
- 18 Prospective Family Information Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 19 Early Release, 12:30 p.m.
- Skating Party, Skate Country, 1:30 p.m.
- 22—Jan 2 Christmas Break (NO SCHOOL)

January

- 2 Return to School
- 9 Chapel (Epiphany), 10:30 a.m. (Best Day)
- 15 Family Information meeting, 7 p.m.
- 23 Report Cards
- 30 Honors Chapel, 10:30 a.m. (Best Day)

February

- 18 History Fair, 10:30 a.m.
- 19 Prospective Family Information meeting, 7 p.m.
- 26 Foundational Workshop, 6:30 p.m.
- 27 Chapel, 10:30 a.m. (Best Day)
- Progress Reports

I call therefore a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skillfully, and magnanimously, all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war.

John Milton
(1608-1674)

From the Board (cont.)

of proof where truth resonated in the hearer's conscience.

We must understand our own historical context regarding epistemology. We live in the shadow of the Enlightenment where reason (our rational capability) has been deified. Our culture maintains a faith in reason as *the only way* to gain knowledge. Proof, therefore, is accomplished only through logical explanation or empirical experiment. This is a very abstract and Greek view of proof and knowledge. In essence, it seeks mathematical precision and requires mathematical certainty for all knowledge or proof. If any shred of doubt comes into view then knowledge and proof are unattainable. In this view, man becomes the arbiter for all truth.



Our culture at large maintains a faith in reason as *the only way* to gain knowledge.



In the Christian view, we submit to the authority of God and His Word. This is what Proverbs means when by "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." Elsewhere Proverbs states that the fear of the Lord is to hate evil. This knowledge is not accessed through logical syllogisms or inference. It is revealed.

The prevalent view of

rhetoric today could be described as Unitarian with its singular reliance on logic, while the full-orbed view of rhetoric could be called Trinitarian with its use of *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos* as means of proof.

Ethos refers to an appeal based on the character of the speaker. It is proof based on the consistency of what the speaker says with how he lives his life. As Christians, we can see this easily. A tree is known by its fruit. A bad tree cannot bear good fruit and a good tree cannot bear bad fruit. The truth of this is clear in a negative example. False teachers mar the name of Christ and become stumbling blocks to true belief. We know that the propositions of Scripture remain true though every man be a liar. However, God requires righteousness of us and this is simply consistent with His law. The aphorism "the proof is in the pudding" is a popular expression of the principle of *ethos*.

Pathos is an appeal to emotion. This is shown when the Holy Spirit burdens our conscience. When the weight of our sin is made real to us repentance follows. The Bible certainly requires appropriate emotional responses of us in differing situations. The shock of abortion rightly engenders indignation, anger, remorse. The birth of a newborn should elicit joy and wonder.



Rhetoric by Giuseppe Cesari (b. 1568)

Ethos and *pathos* most clearly remove proof and knowledge from mere abstract realms. When they do this, we can say they en flesh a principle in story. This is precisely what is meant by being incarnational.

Logos is a necessary component as well. This essay is not meant to cast too negative a hue on reason. *Logos* is an appeal to reason and is rightly a part of the Christian rhetorician's toolbox. However, *logos* alone is not the sole source of knowledge or the sole method of proof.

Lastly, the foregoing is not exhaustive by any means. Again, we are in the act of recovery and the art of rhetoric is still quite foreign to us. This article does not even give the original lecture justice. Fortunately, you can (and should) download the lecture in its entirety absolutely free by visiting: <http://www.wordmp3.com/details.aspx?id=8310>. May we recover a burden for this critically necessary aspect of a classical Christian education.

—Derek Monjure
Founding Board Member