



The Standard

A publication of St. Andrew's Academy

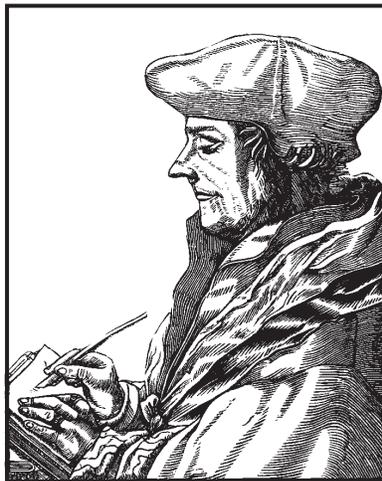
From The Headmaster

At the time of this writing, we find ourselves halfway through the school year. The students at St. Andrew's Academy (at least the Middle School and High School students) are busily writing away as they take their midterm exams. This term is called Hilary term after the practice of the colleges at Oxford University and after an early saint and doctor of the Church, Hilary of Poitiers (c. 315-367). (Hilary was a very learned man and a staunch defender of the faith against the arian heresy that denied the divinity of Christ. Hilary travelled widely and taught all over the Roman Empire.)

As the students are busy, so are the staff and many things are coming up on the St. Andrew's Calendar for us all to be aware of. First of all, a parenting class called "Shepherding a Child's Heart: Childrearing in an Age of Confusion" is just started on Thursday evenings at the school building. This class is sponsored by St. Andrew's Academy and St. Thomas Mission, a new Church plant meeting at the St. Andrew's chapel.

Secondly, don't miss the Annual St. Andrew's Academy Winter Choir Concert. This year, the date is February 19 and the time is 7:00. The concert will be held, again, at the Lake Almanor Community Church auditorium. Our thanks to LACC for the generous use of their space.

A few other items on the calendar are a ways away, but I'll remind us all of the Spring Drama production and, of course, of our first graduation. Plan on attending both, if you can.



Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536) was an important figure in the Protestant Reformation though he never left the Roman Church. Erasmus was the mind behind the first published Greek New Testament and was a leading humanist scholar. Though a Dutchman, he taught at Cambridge University, England and was a great influence on the English Reformation.

We are very thankful to Bishop Ted Casimas and the King of Glory Church in Seattle, Washington, for their generous gift for a sign outside the St. Andrew's school building. Signs are not inexpensive, and when the Bishop heard of our need, he talked with the vestry and they approved the gift and sent a check. Our heartfelt thanks to them for their kindness and help.

Please read the essay by Doug Wilson in this issue of The Standard. In it, Pastor (and Professor) Wilson answers the question of whether or not a solid Christian education is "extreme". He brings some much needed clarity and honesty to the discussion.

Also, please see the pictures—we hope you enjoy this glimpse into our school life here at St. Andrew's. Please keep us in your prayers.

Blessings, this Epiphany Season,

Fr. Brian Foos

Does Classic Mean Extreme?

By Douglas Wilson

In the eyes of some, the classical Christian school movement represents an extreme reaction to some of the excesses of our relativistic culture. It is usually granted that the government schools have declined in recent decades, and that reforms are necessary. Most people genuinely want the slide to stop, but they are still sometimes alarmed at what radical reformers propose.

The word radical comes from the Latin word *radix*, which means “root.” Reformers who go to the root of the matter are therefore radicals, and frequently are more than a little scary to some of the concerned bystanders. When we look at a dying tree in the back yard, we should realize that none of us knows what a diseased root actually looks like, or what to do about it. Far better to opt for the mainstream reforms which begin by spray-painting the brown leaves green. This would not be considered a radical reform.

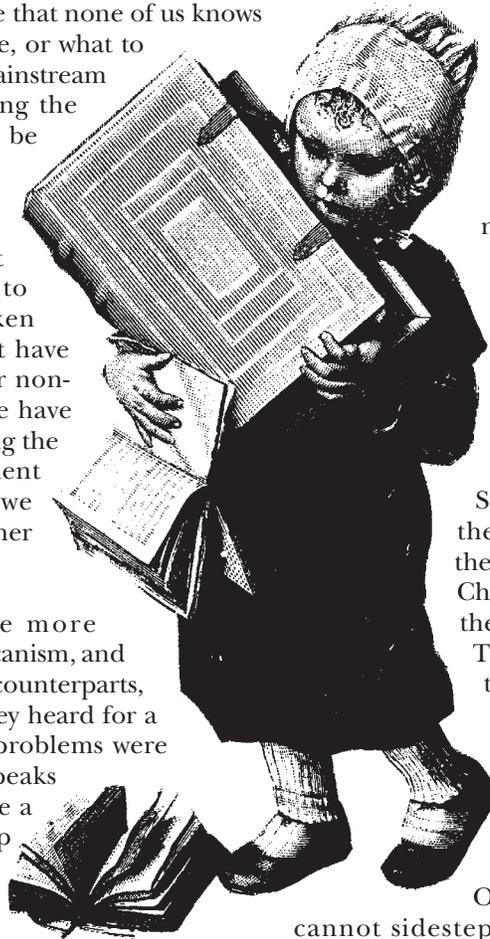
When we open our classical and Christian schools, one of the first things we discover is that we have to teach the subjects we have undertaken to teach in a certain way. We do not have the luxury of remaining detached or non-committed. When we do this, and we have begun the entire process by challenging the root assumptions of modern government educators, it is not surprising that we come up with different answers on other subjects as well.

When American Christians were more culturally homogenous in their Americanism, and tended to blend in with their secular counterparts, distinguished only by the messages they heard for a brief time on Sunday morning, the problems were well contained. If the Church only speaks once a week, it does not need to have a lot to say. But when Christians open up schools, they have to have something to say every morning, all day long, five days out of the week, nine months out of the year, for the next twelve years. In short, a full-orbed worldview rapidly becomes necessary.

But before all this was revealed, the secularists by and large behaved themselves, and the myth of neutrality continued on uninterrupted for a good while. But within the last generation, the phenomenon of what Cornelius Van Til called “epistemological self-consciousness” began to cause severe problems. The secularist unbelievers became increasingly aware of the demands of their covenant-breaking system, and began to insist upon the right to abortion on demand, sodomite marriages, open hostility to the Christian faith in government school classrooms, and so on. This in

turn resulted in the same kind of epistemological self-consciousness developing in many evangelical Christians (beginning with their response to the work of Francis Schaeffer), and they pulled their kids out of the government schools, started their own academies, and here we are.

Well, not exactly. Once these Christians started their own academies, they did so because they had challenged one of the central root assumptions of the modernists, the right and responsibility of the government to educate our children. Suddenly, many other things that these Christian educators had been taught in the government schools when they were children were also brought into question. And so on the first day of class, there you were, with all these children looking at you expectantly, and you realized that on a whole host of issues you had been poorly educated yourself. But you cannot be silent because parents are now paying good money for tuition.



What are some of the questions that arise? Was the American War for Independence a violation of Romans 13? Or not? Why not? Does Hamlet contain Christian themes? Was the Protestant Reformation necessary? Why or why not? Was Walt Whitman a blasphemous poet? Was the South right on the constitutional issues in the controversy that led to the War Between the States? Was it a sin for Stonewall Jackson, a Christian, to own slaves? Was it a War Between the States or a Civil War? What is the difference? The great classicist Basil Gildersleeve said that the war was fought over a point of grammar. Should we say the United States is, or the United States are? Was he right? Should the school close on Martin Luther King Day? Why or why not? What about old and young earth creationism?

Of course, because you are now a school, you cannot sidestep these questions. In the old days, when we only spoke as Christians on the Lord’s Day, the pastor could go for years without mentioning Walt Whitman or Robert E. Lee. But now you can’t do this. You have to mention them every year at the appointed place in the curriculum. You have to teach these subjects, and require your students to learn and evaluate.

And you cannot evaluate like a Christian without coming to conclusions. Simply put, whether or not your school reiterates what the government schools teach or teaches something different, it is now necessary to land.

But given the official party line on all such issues, there is no way even to raise questions on such subjects without

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Included above are pictures from our hike at Mount Lassen, the dedication of our new building, and students in class, chapel and PE.



opponents bringing the charge of extremism. For example, this last year one evangelical writer attacked ACCS in print for being associated with people (including yours truly) who have raised and addressed some of these questions. If we don't knock it off, he argued, we are not "going to be taken seriously in the academic world in the long run."

My first response is that I hope we are not taken seriously in the academic world until that academic world starts taking some responsibility for the educational mess we are in. For example, it was the academic world that cooked up the scheme that resulted in the adoption of whole language instruction instead of phonics, which in its turn has given us a torrent of learning disabilities and illiteracy.

This same principle can be illustrated by a phenomenon that has happened in countless interviews with parents who are checking out private classical Christian schools. After a good interview with the principal, he asks them if they have any questions. "Yes," they say. "Is your school accredited?"

Now, before answering this question let us ask another one. Why are they there, checking out the school in the first place? It is because every accredited school within an hour's drive of their house is an educational helicopter crash. In other words, accredited doesn't mean what many people still assume, contrary to all the evidence.

Simply put, the academic world is no qualified arbiter of whether we know what we are doing.

The second response to this notion is that, pragmatic considerations aside, it reveals the root problem we have had in education for several centuries. Our fundamental goal should be to be taken seriously by God, and to present our work to Him, and have Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

If we have one eye on the praise of men, or honors from the establishment, we have already lost the battle in principle. How can you believe, Jesus asked, if you receive honor from one another?

There is only one safe way to receive praise from the academic world, and that is to live before God, not caring if that world praises you or not. Is this extremism? Some people think so.

Douglas Wilson is pastor of Christ Church, in Moscow Idaho, a founding member and an ex officio board member of the Association of Classical & Christian Schools, and a founding board member of Logos School in Moscow, Idaho. He is also a prolific author, and a much sought after speaker.

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