



Oratio

Studium

Labor

The Standard

A publication of St. Andrew's Academy

The Price of Apathy

“You have been lied to.” With this statement, Dr. John Seel opened his address to the students of St. Andrew's Academy and guests on October 31. The lie he referred to? Simply this: that success can be gained without effort, without discipline, without commitment, and can be sustained indefinitely on those terms. This lie takes many forms: among them, the idea that we can borrow money indefinitely, and never have to pay it back, and that young people raised to be lazy and undisciplined can enjoy the kinds of lives their harder-working parents (and grandparents) had. We don't need to work hard, love faithfully, nor study diligently.

Eventually, however, reality “comes home to roost,” as Dr. Seel put it. Economies crash, jobs are lost, children go astray, and marriages fail.

And who has perpetrated this lie? “People like me. People my age, in suits and ties.” And so he set out to undo the tangled web of this deception. Once we find out we have been lied to, it is hard to turn around and find the right road—hard, but not impossible. Dr. Seel encouraged the students to do just this, and gave them some pointers on how to do so.

First, find a passion, and stick with it. It takes about 10,000 hours to become an expert at something, or roughly ten years.

So we should find what we love early, and then set about loving it well.

Work hard, and with honor. In this global economy, there will always be someone else who wants the job we aim for. Be excellent. Stand out for doing the best. Pay attention to details, and don't let failure stop us. His address hit home not only with the students, but with the faculty and the parents present.

Dr. Seel's work has been in many fields, and he brings a remarkable energy wherever he goes. He was headmaster of the Cambridge School of Dallas, and instructor at Stony Brook School in New York State. Currently he is the president of TRI Corp. Entertainment, which provides extreme-computing solutions to the entertainment industry, particularly in computer-generated images and visual effects. He also serves as Senior Advisor to the investment firm Wedgwood Circle, and as Senior Fellow both for Cardus, a Canadian think tank, and for The Clapham Institute, a consulting firm.

The community of St. Andrew's greatly enjoyed the visit from Dr. and Mrs. Seel, and, as always, look forward to the next visit! (podcast available at standrewsacademy.org.)



Dr. and Mrs. Seel

Interns at St. Andrew's

This year has brought two interns to St. Andrew's Academy as part of the Lindisfarne House program (see the school website for more info.). The first was Mr. Marc Duval, a 2004 graduate from St. Andrew's, and the second is Miss Colleen Woolsey, hailing from the Dallas, Texas area.

Mr. Duval grew up in Chester and attended St. Andrew's from eighth grade onward. After attending college in Redding, California, he returned for the summer of 2009 to join the St. Andrew's choir for a California trip, and work in public relations, recruiting, and administrative areas for St. Andrew's. He now serves the U.S. Army in intelligence and will continue in that job for the next few years.

Miss Colleen Woolsey met St. Andrew's Academy members in 2007 at the Anglican Way Institute Conference (anglicanwayinstitute.org) in Dallas, Texas. She signed up for the year-long Lindisfarne House commitment, and intrepidly packed her bags in the late summer of 2009 to drive to California and join the ministry team of the Academy. Her focus is mainly office administration and aiding in the 1st form classroom. Colleen is a real blessing and a positive addition to the St. Andrew's community.

Both these interns have served with cheerful willingness, and we have been so glad to have them!

FACING UP TO DUMBNESS

by John Seel, Ph.D.,

St. Andrew's Academy College Guidance Counselor

The battle over what fills my iPod is not nearly as important as what fills my mind, but they are closely related.

C.S. Lewis wisely observed, "Unless the measuring rod is independent of the thing being measured, we can do no measuring." This is routinely applied in science and business, but becomes murky when it comes to things like music and education. Here the measurer determines the measurement, as in "Like, my music rocks because I say it rocks." Oxford musicologist Julian Johnson writes, "To an earlier age, our contemporary idea of a complete relativism in musical judgment would have seemed nonsensical. One could no more make valid individual judgments about musical values than about science. Music was no more 'a matter of taste' than was the orbit of the planets or the physiology of the human body. From Plato to Helmholtz, music was understood to be based on natural laws, and its value was derived from its capacity to frame and elaborate these laws in musical form."

Not so today. The claim that beauty should be based on objective value is met with the blank stare of incomprehension. The man-on-the-street assumptions are 180 degrees different from someone living as recently as 100 years ago. The fact that I "like" my music is all that is necessary to claim that my music is "good." Personal preference determines aesthetic value.

The same assumptions dominate education. The overriding premise of K-12 education in North America is that the measure of education is to be determined by the ability of the child. It is not the teacher or the curriculum or the discipline, but the child that determines the standards of mastery. Canadian educator Kieran Egan writes, "The central belief—the most fundamental tenet—of progressivism is that to educate children effectively it is vital to attend to children's nature, and particularly to their modes of learning and stages of development, and to accommodate educational practice to what we can discover about these."

But what about the proliferation of federally and locally mandated achievement tests? They are stopgap solutions that seek to address symptoms without addressing the politically incorrect cause of education's demise: progressive pedagogy. Moderns have an allergic reaction to standards, to hierarchy, to difference. We are populist egalitarians to the core. We have wrapped an ineffective educational philosophy in the rhetoric of democratic individualism.

When one talks with teachers about demanding high educational standards, almost immediately therapeutic language and the fear of elitism will raise their hoary heads. We eschew distinctions. We prefer the myth of sameness. Mediocrity is the inevitable result.

When one's core assumptions are out of synch with reality, in time reality will win. Thinking one can fly may give one the momentary feeling of freedom, but it will in time be met with the harsh realities of gravity, velocity, and mass. Thinking otherwise will not change the result.

And so it is that the April 2009 McKinsey & Company report, "The Economic Impact of the Achievement Gap in America's Schools," finds American schools wanting. The economic cost of this gap is larger than the US recession of 1981-82. "These educational gaps imposed on the United States are the economic equivalent of a permanent national recession." The longer a student spends in an American school the wider the gap becomes. In short, increased exposure to American classrooms makes one increasingly uneducated.

Debates over educational policies, whether achievement tests or school vouchers, largely miss the point. We need to stop comparing ourselves to each other. In a globalizing economy, it is only international standards and international comparisons that matter. The facts are in and it's not a pretty picture. "The program of International Student Assessment is a respected international comparison of 15-year-olds by the OECD [Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development] that measures 'real-world' (applied) learning and problem-solving ability. In 2006 the United States ranked 25th of 30 nations in math and 24th of 30 in science," the McKinsey authors report. And yet, the United States spends more than any other country on education.

Educators are noted for finger pointing. Effective learning is the fruit of myriad sources—genetic, parental, social, cultural, and yes, instructional. But too often in modern America, we don't hold students accountable to high standards. Progressive assumptions prevail. Instead, we rescue, drug, track and eventually pass unqualified students. The idea that no student should matriculate until he or she had a measurable mastery of the subject—say an 80% score on a cumulative exam over the subject taught—strikes most students, parents, and teachers as draconian discrimination against the weaker student. Nonetheless, we don't live in a fail-proof world. Reality is harsh; easy street is over. This is a lesson that we need to bring back into our classes, back from the athletic playing fields where coaches have never given into the progressive mumbo-jumbo about feeling good about oneself and self-esteem. Reality doesn't work that way—and neither does *American Idol* nor the global marketplace.

It's time to let people fail, to hold students accountable, to resist grade inflation, to celebrate the hard teacher and the tough principal. We do no one a favor by giving young people the impression that discipline, hard work, and perseverance aren't necessary ingredients for success.

Won't children be left behind? Here's C.S. Lewis' answer:

'And what,' you ask, 'about the dull boy? What about our Tommy, who is so highly strung and doesn't like doing sums and grammar? Is he to be brutally sacrificed to other people's sons?' I answer: dear Madam, you quite misunderstand Tommy's real wishes and real interests. It is the 'aristocratic' system which will really give Tommy what he wants. If you let me have my way, Tommy will gravitate very comfortably to the bottom of the form; and there he will sit at the back of the room chewing caramels and conversing sotto voce with his peers, occasionally ragging and occasionally getting punished, and all the time imbibing that playful intransigent attitude to authority which is our chief protection against England becoming a servile State. When he grows up he will not be a genius, but the world will still have room for a great many more Tommies than geniuses. There are dozens of jobs (much better paid than intellectual ones) in which he can be very useful and happy. And one priceless benefit he will enjoy: he will know he's not clever. The distinction between him and the great brains will have been clear to him ever since, in the playground, he punched the heads containing those great brains. He will have a certain, half amused respect for them. He will cheerfully admit that, though he could knock spots off them on the golf links, they know and do what he cannot.

We need to put the brutal honesty of *American Idol* judge Simon Cowell in the classroom and once again call a spade a spade.

The Oracle

An Academic Calendar insert for *The Standard*.

Upcoming Events at St. Andrew's Academy for the months of

November 2009 through January 2010

Please call the school if you need more information.

Wednesday, Nov. 25 - Friday Nov. 27

Thanksgiving Break

No School

November 30

Patron Saint Festival:

Mass for the Feast of St. Andrew

St. Andrew's Academy, 7:35 am

Monday, Dec. 7 - Thursday Dec. 10

Final Exams

Thursday, Dec. 10

Colloquy

St. Andrew's Academy, 1 pm to 2 pm

Thursday, Dec. 10

Advent Lessons & Carols

Chester Methodist Church, 7 pm

Friday, Dec. 11 - Friday, Jan. 1, 2010

Christmas Break!

Saturday, Jan. 2, 2010

Winter Ball

Lake Almanor Country Club Clubhouse

5:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Monday, Jan. 4

Hilary Term Begins

Friday, Jan. 8

All School Field Trip

Details to be announced

Saturday, Jan. 9

Hilary Lectures

with Father John Boonzaijer of Dallas,

Texas, more details to be announced

Wednesday, Jan. 13

St. Hilary Mass

St. Andrew's Academy, 7:35 am

Grammar Students

Attend Symphony

by Sophia Williams and Aidan Foos, 2nd Form students.

On Thursday, September 24th, we went to the North State Symphony at Chico State University. Doctor Noize and his friend, Mr. Beethoven, were at the concert. Doctor Noize was really funny. He brought a bassoon out in the middle of Beethoven's song. We were excited to see a bass, cello, trumpet, drums, a grand piano, a flute, clarinet and violin too. The Symphony was about two hours long and packed with

lots of laughter. Doctor Noize sang a funny "Banana" song. The concert ended with a very fast song.

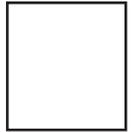
We were sad the concert was over. Then we went to the park to eat and play. We were sad when we had to go home, but we loved the music we heard. Beethoven's songs are amazing to the whole world. We wish that everyone could have seen this concert with the St. Andrew's grammar school.

Summer Choir Mini-Tour

The week before July 4th, six travelers from St. Andrew's Academy set out for the southern regions of our state to sing for a church synod located in Oceanside. Two graduates, two students, and two faculty members departed Saturday, June 27th, from Lake Almanor and drove to Fresno, through scorching 105° weather.

The first night, they stayed in the parish hall of St. James' Cathedral, the Cathedral of Bishop John David Schofield in the Diocese of San Joaquin, now part of the Anglican Church of North America. The following morning, they arose bright and early to sing 8 o'clock and 10:30 services for this parish. What an encouragement when one church member emailed later to say, "Thanks again for being with us last Sunday. The service was to weep for!"

Sunday evening found them near Santa Clarita, and the next morning in Manhattan Beach, where they picked up two



St. Andrew's boarding students (home for summer vacation) to add their voices to the choir. Then, after lunch at In 'n' Out, the group made its way to Oceanside and Synod, at the Prince of Peace Abbey.

Once at Synod, the choir members not only attended a few speeches and meetings, but led two evensongs and sang for one Holy Communion service. In addition, Father Foons was asked to address the synod on the theme, "Inspiring Our Youth," and showed a brief DVD about St. Andrew's Academy. He and both graduates received questions afterward.

Wednesday the group got a chance to relax by the ocean, eat ice cream, and walk the long pier at Oceanside. Then it was back to San Marcos, where they had been staying the past two nights, about thirty minutes from Oceanside. The Anglican Church of the Resurrection welcomed the choir to eat with them at their monthly fellowship dinner, and joined them for evensong.

Thursday, after bidding farewell in Manhattan Beach to the two boarders, the rest of the choir continued north toward Stockton, this time on the scenic—and much cooler!—coastal highway. In Stockton, St. John's Episcopal Church joined the choir for evensong, joining in the four-

part harmony of the choristers. Afterward there was a delicious Cajun gumbo (made by the rector himself!), and visiting with members of the parish.

Friday afternoon, the six tired but cheerful St. Andrew's choristers returned to beautiful Lake Almanor with stories and memories from another successful trip.

l-r: Mr. Shelby Howe, junoir; Miss Steinberg; boarding students and brothers Peter, freshman, and Josiah Bartel, sophomore; Father Foons; JoAnna Waterman, junior; Rebekah Waterman, class of '08; Marc Duval, class of '04.



St. Andrew's Academy can be reached at:
Snail Mail: 3814 Hwy A-13
Lake Almanor, CA 96137
Phone: 530-596-3343
email: admin@standrewsacademy.org
Web: www.standrewsacademy.org
Editor: Father Brian Foons

The Standard is a publication of St. Andrew's Academy. ©2009 All rights reserved. Permission is granted for electronic editions (found on web site) to be copied and forwarded complete. Please contact St. Andrew's Academy for permission to use material in any other way.