

All to the Glory of God

by Patch Blakey, ACCS

What is the goal of classical Christian education?

Is it to have our children accepted into the best universities so they can be better positioned to obtain the best jobs and to enjoy a life that is better than that of their parents? Is it to produce great statesmen for the next generation who can understand the times and are able to stir the hearts of the people to pursue justice and righteousness, and in the process hopefully set our country on the right path? Is it to develop erudite scholars who are lifelong learners and who will write stirring, persuasive and inspiring books, letters, and essays, or who will deliver moving and informative lectures, raising the bar of knowledge and academic achievement? Is it to deepen and broaden the artistic and musical appreciation and skills of our children so that they will love and perhaps even create great works of art, write great plays, or compose beautiful arrangements? Is it to train skilled artisans who will design and build great edifices, communities which include the infrastructure resulting in glorious and peaceful urban centers adorned in a bucolic style?

I have no doubt that, by the grace of God, all of these things will happen, albeit not without intensive labor, investment of time, and incredible wealth. After all, one of the aspirations of parents is for their children to do better than they did. Our nation today is in desperate need of great statesmen. We are starved for real education, not indoctrination or propaganda. There is a dearth of great art and a paucity of appreciation for the

good, the true, and the beautiful. Our metropolitan areas and even our rural towns suffer from the blight of billboards, a tangle of overhead wires, and lowest-bidder buildings while what remains of an earlier era is crumbling.

But is this, even in a representative way, the goal of classical Christian education?

To some degree, we may be inclined to lean towards the affirmative, but perhaps in a tangential fashion. Man is created in the image of God, and our first indications of the nature of God reveal that He is a creator of good things. Genesis describes the first seven days of the universe and of our world. In completing this vast incomprehensible opus, God decreed that it was all good, a word denoting extremely high praise indeed. We should not then be surprised or reluctant to believe that man would follow in the footsteps of his Creator, although in a manner that reflects our fallen and finite nature. As the world comes increasingly under the sway of the gospel, we should hopefully expect to see the outworking of the gospel in all that mankind does. Christ's kingdom is perpetually pressing forward, even if in various local pockets it is regressing. And for all of this, I rejoice and give thanks.

However in another sense, I am compelled to affirm the negative. Speaking of the Lord God of Israel, Malachi said that "He seeks godly offspring" (Malachi 2:15). The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). From these

two verses, among many others of a similar vein, we conclude that our primary goal for classical Christian education is to help parents raise up godly offspring to the glory of God. All of these other things listed in the paragraphs above, while of great value and benefit to mankind, are actually the fruits of pursuing the primary goal. The fruits are not to be despised or rejected as though they were somehow evil, but they are to be received with thanksgiving and praise, for we know that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

May the Lord grant us mercy and grace as we apply ourselves diligently to repair the ruins. To that end, we have several thoughtful, encouraging, and provoking articles in this issue of *Classis* to hopefully stir us on to "press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14).

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