

“SINE DOCTRINA VITA EST QUASI MORTIS IMAGO”

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VOLUME XX NUMBER III

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# CLASSIS

THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE  
ASSOCIATION OF CLASSICAL & CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

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AUTUMN, 2013

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## APPLE NAILING

*by Paul David Tripp, Paul Tripp Ministries*

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*by Ben House, Veritas Academy*

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*by Stephen Richard Turley, Tall Oaks Classical School*

## THE NECESSITY OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

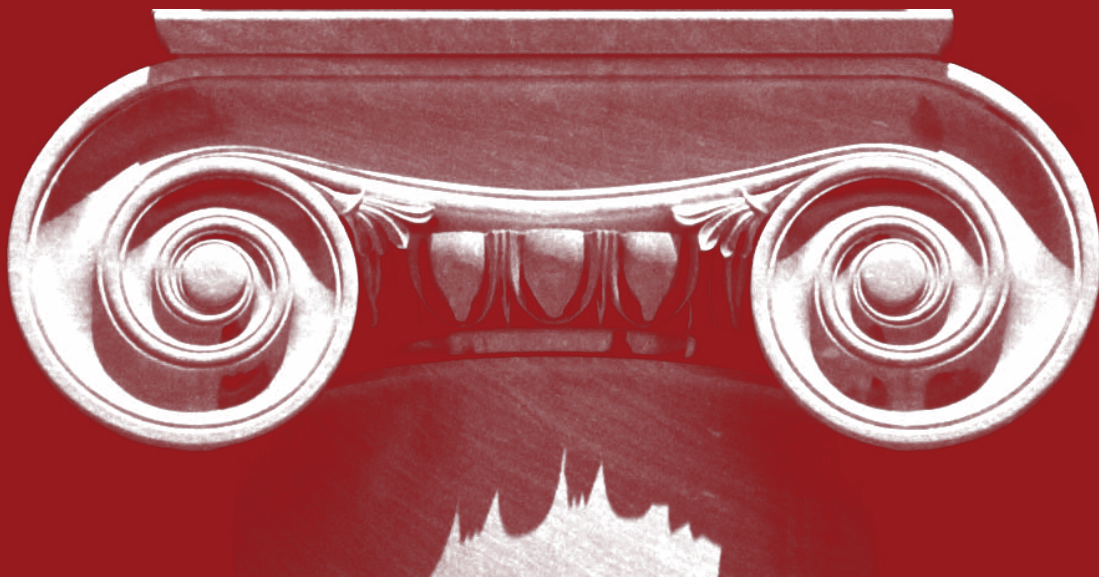
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### Classical Christian Education:

*The best possible education to help every  
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The primary mission of this association is to promote, establish, and equip schools committed to a classical approach to education in light of a Christian worldview grounded in the Old and New Testament Scriptures.

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# APPLE NAILING

by Paul David Tripp

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*This is the introduction to Paul David Tripp's series of messages "Your Christian School: A Culture of Grace?" to be given at the 2014 ACCS Annual Conference in Orlando, FL*

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If I were to watch a video of the last six weeks of your school—a nice comprehensive video of the last six weeks of your school—would I walk away saying, “This school is a culture of grace”? What would be the descriptive terms that I would use to capture what was on that video?

I’m very concerned about the state of Christian schools. I love Christian education. I love this moment. I love the thousands of people who have given time, money, and energy. I get a sense that many teachers are underpaid and undervalued. So I want you to know that I have great esteem and great respect for what you are doing. And here’s my concern: I’m concerned that in the way that we have structured Christian schools, we are asking the law to do what only grace can accomplish. We’ve fallen into thinking that if we have the right set of demerits, the right set of rewards, and a good system

of consequences, we can change the life and character of a child.

If the law had any possibility at all of changing a child, Jesus would have never had to come. That’s not in our model. We do not believe in systems of redemption, we believe in a Redeemer! Every other system is a system of redemption—it somehow buys into the hope that change can take place without the person and work of a redeemer. If we believe that, we wouldn’t be doing what we are doing. Now I’m not arguing, and I won’t argue, that we don’t need rules and regulations—we do. The law reveals sin. The law has some capacity to restrain sin, but hear this, it will never deliver your children from it . . . ever, ever, ever. And hear this, you are never, ever just dealing with the mind of a child. You cannot separate that mind from other parts of that child’s being. If education were just about the mind, your job would

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be so much easier. You know that it's not just about the mind.

Well, let's look at the first principle. The Bible says something very radical. The Bible says that your students live, act, speak, and respond out of their hearts. Now I'm going to tell you what that means; I'm going to take you to a passage of Scripture. That means you have to embrace this—that the behavior of your children is caused more by what is inside of them than by what is outside of them. The behavior of your children is more formed, shaped, directed, and caused by what is inside of them than what's outside of them. Now there is not a child in your classroom who believes that. Because if Georgie and Lisa are fighting in the cloakroom, and you ask Georgie what's wrong, who do you think he is going to talk about? Yes, Lisa. And if you ask Lisa what's wrong, who do you think she is going to talk about? Yes, Georgie. Georgie is not going to say, "Well teacher, I'm a sinner. And I happen to live out of the heart. And what I've just done I've done by what is inside of me. If you could help me with heart change, that would be wonderful." That Georgie doesn't exist.

Luke 6:43 is one of the more fundamental illustrations that Christ uses. It's paradigmatic. It's formative. It's foundational.

For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks (ESV, Luke 6:43).

The Bible says that the way that we are hardwired as human beings is that we live out of the heart. Now it is very, very important that you understand the

language of the passage. I'm not going to assume that you do, so if this is review, please forgive it. The Bible essentially divides a human being into two parts, your outer man and your inner man. Your outer man is your physical self; it's your body. It's the house that God has designed for your heart while you are here on earth. You could literally call your body your "earth suit." Someday we are going to get a new suit; some of us are excited about that. And then there is the inner man. There are many words used in Scripture for the inner man: mind, emotion, soul, spirit, will. Those are all collected into one big basket term, the term "heart." That's the summary term for the inner man. That term is used in some 960 passages of Scripture; it's one of the most well-developed themes in the entire Bible. Now when you read in Scripture the word "heart," this is the definition that should be in your brain: **the causal core of your personhood**. Heart is the causal core of your personhood. Heart is the seat of your emotions, the seat of the thoughts, the seat of the desires, the seat of your values. The Bible attributes all of that to the heart. The heart is the causal core of your personhood. The heart is the steering wheel; the heart is the directional system.

Notice what it says here in the last sentence: . . . "out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks." Have you ever said to someone, "Oh, I didn't mean to say that?" What would be more biblical to say is "please forgive me in saying what I meant," because if it hadn't been in your heart, it wouldn't have come out of your lips. Sorry, it's true.

Now teachers, hear what I'm about to say—if you are going to believe this for your children, you must first believe it for you. When you are shaken on a given day, by the sin, weakness, and failure of your students, what comes out of you is what was already inside of you. And if you are going to get at heart issues of your children, you have to start with your own heart.

This is a radical passage because I think sinners are very, very skilled and very, very dedicated

environmentalists. We, when we think wrong, when we speak wrong, when we do wrong, we are very, very skilled at pointing to what's outside of us and saying, "If this weren't going on in my life, I wouldn't be doing this."

Let me give you an example. Maybe you are sitting in traffic, mind-numbing traffic. You are on a road that is not designed to be a parking lot. And you are pounding on the dash: "This traffic makes me so angry!" And that sounds legitimate. It sounds right to say, "I would be an un-angry person if it weren't for this traffic; my problem is the traffic." Except you look out the window next to you and the woman next to you has a makeup kit out, and she's putting on her lips, and has a big smile on her face and she's thinking, "God must love me because He's given me a few minutes to reach a higher level of gorgeousness before I face my day."

You see? Why are there two different responses to the same moment? It is because the second brings a different heart to the moment. Maybe you have a very important meeting that you think is going to contribute to your career and you are just ripping that the traffic is in your way. Or, maybe you are just a little self-sovereign and you don't like anything in your way. She, on the other hand, wants to be beautiful and is enjoying the opportunity to enhance what God has created. You see—that's the heart.

Let me illustrate it for you this way. Imagine holding a bottle of water with the top off. What happens if you were to shake the opened bottle? Some water would spill out of the bottle. Now why did water come out of the bottle? Well, the spontaneous response you would have is because you shook it. That seems to make sense. Let me change the question a bit. Why did water come out of the bottle? (Because it was filled with water.) If this bottle were filled with milk, you could shake it for eternity and water would never come out of it. You see, again, when that child is shaken by the things around him, what comes out of him is what was already inside of him. That's what Jesus was teaching. "The good man produces good." That's a profound insight I don't think

we believe. And so we're given to all kinds of external, structural kinds of changes because we think those will ultimately win the battle. **They won't win the battle unless they address the place where the battle actually exists: the heart.**

Now Jesus gives us a wonderful physical example here. I love this example; it's the example of a fruit tree. Pretend with me that in my backyard in Philadelphia I have an apple tree. And every year my tree grows hard, pulpy, dry inedible apples. Organic hockey pucks.

Now think about this. Before you go any further, think. When you see an apple tree, you recognize it's an apple tree by what? Apples. But you instinctively know, don't you, that that tree is "appleistic" all the way down to its core, all the way down to its roots. If there weren't "appleism" in its roots, it wouldn't grow apples as fruit, right? You will never plant peach pits and get apples.

And so my tree, that's meant to be an apple tree, grows these organic hockey pucks. And that happens year after year; it's very discouraging—you can't eat them. They just sort of rot and fall to the ground. And finally my dear wife, Luella, comes to me and says, "Paul, it doesn't make any sense for us to have an apple tree when we can never eat the apples. Can't you do something about our apple tree?"

Well, I think and I ponder and I say to Luella, "Saturday morning I'm going to fix our tree." She's a little bit confused, but she's excited. Saturday morning she looks out the back window and she sees me carrying these items: a big tall ladder, some branch cutters, a pneumatic nail gun, and three bushels of red delicious apples. And I lovingly cut off all of those organic pucks and with dedication and zeal, symmetrically nail onto that tree three bushels of red delicious apples. From 75 yards away, you would look at that tree and think, "This man must be the horticulturalist of the century." If you're my wife, what are you thinking? You are thinking, this is the big one; the doctor said he'd be this way if he lives.

Now what's going to happen to those apples? They

are going to rot because they are not hooked to the life-giving resources of the tree. But even more profoundly brothers and sisters, hear what I'm about to ask. What kind of apples is that tree going to produce next season? Dry, pulpy, hard, brown, inedible apples. The tree produces those apples because there's something systemically wrong with that tree down to its roots. And if you don't get at that you won't get to a harvest of good fruit.

**Now, I am deeply persuaded that most of what we do in Christian education to work change in children is nothing more or less than "apple nailing." And we are good at it.**

Apple nailing. There is no capacity at all whatsoever to change the heart of that child.

I'll give you the young classroom example. Somebody has done something unkind to another student in your classroom. Teacher goes to Jimmy and says, "Say you're sorry." He's not! Why would you say that to him? He says, "Sorry." You say, "Say it like you mean it." He doesn't, because he's not. "Say it like you mean it." So he says, "Sooooorryy." You say, "At least say a sentence." He says, "I'mmmm sorrrrrryyyy." And you say, "That's better." There's nothing better about that at all. Welcome to Pharisee University.

What he has learned is nothing about the love of his neighbor. What he has learned is how to jump through your external hoops. And when you turn and go down the hallway, Jimmy sticks his tongue out at his classmate, demonstrating that there has been no change inside of that boy at all. But he thinks he's in a better place because you have a system that has made him OK. He's not OK. And he's learned this deadly skill: stay inside the boundaries when an authority is watching. You don't get in trouble when you do that.

That's neither godly nor moral. It's not. It's apple nailing.



# MISSION: CHANGE THE WORLD. CHILDREN WELCOME.

*by Ben House, Veritas Academy*

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Our children, by God's grace, are to go from the environment of our homes and change the world. That is a big assignment. It entails writing on the front and back of the paper, if necessary. God often gives impossibly large homework assignments.

Consider:

We are to pray for His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10).

We are to be light to the world and salt to the earth (Matthew 5:13–15).

We are to go and make disciples of all the nations (Matthew 28:19).

Why does God give so much homework? Why does He give such huge assignments? He gives us

these cosmic, universal assignments because He expects us to be working together. Yes, you can help each other out on the cosmic projects. Yes, you can and must work together. Our God is not a solitary being, but a Triune God. The Great Three-in-One has brought us together in communion with Himself. We (plural) are commissioned. We (plural) are salt and light. We (plural) are praying for and working for the Kingdom.

God also lets us use the Book. In fact, we have to use it to have success. As one teacher, named Joshua, told his students, "Bring your Book to class." His exact words were: "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but

This excerpt is from a book manuscript titled *Seeing Beyond the Horizon: An Appeal to Parents for Classical Christian Education* by Ben House.

you shall be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous (meaning, get your assignments done), and then you will have good success (meaning, pass the test).

Along with working together and using the Book, God expects us to recruit help in completing the assignments. Paul explains this principle in 2 Timothy 2:1–2. In verse 1, Paul tells Timothy, "You, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ." Timothy was Paul's eyes, ears, and hands in the church at Ephesus where he was sent. Paul delegated part of his homework as an apostle to his faithful student Timothy. Next, Paul tells him this: "And the things you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will teach

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others also.” Paul is telling Timothy to read back over his lecture notes, and then find some new students to learn the same material. These students will then recruit more new students. It is a pyramid principle; it is multilevel Christianizing of the world. This is multigenerational mentoring discipleship. This is Christian education.

God gives the big, impossibly big, assignments to us. Then He sets us in a small corner of the earth to fulfill the assignment. God says to take the Gospel to all nations, then He places most of us in marriages where, after a time, these marvelous little creatures start showing up in our homes every year or so. They arrive incomplete. They have to be taught language, evangelized, instructed about God. They have to be civilized as well. They have to learn culture and manners. They also have to learn to read and be potty-trained. Unlike baby birds which fly out of the nest within weeks of birth, our children grow and learn slowly.

God tells us to be world changers and then confines us to a mailing address, a local church, an office or a workbench, and a supper table with little faces all around it. In a world of seven billion people, God puts us face-to-face with somewhere between one and ten little people. None of this is said to minimize big ministries, vast evangelistic

endeavors, large outreach programs, mega-churches, or massive works that God may have included you in.

Christians need to witness more. We need to send out more missionaries in our communities and throughout the world. We need to promote more churches and Christian ministries. We need to address social ills, injustices, and immorality in our culture. But Christian families are central to all of this.

Christian family life calls for strong relationships between husbands and wives. Good marriages are essential to spiritual growth and a godly witness. There are lots of resources on Christian marriage—books, seminars, studies—but that is not our focus. Christian family life calls for good parenting skills. The children themselves also have to embrace the faith. God has no grandchildren. There are lots of materials concerning child raising, discipline, and family life. Your bookshelf or Kindle better have some Christian child-raising books (well-used ones) and your church better have direct, pointed, convicting teaching and preaching on child raising in the Christian home.

But here the focus is the matter of educating our children. The defining term that explains your life in regard to your children’s lives is “therefore.” Our children

are our “therefores.” They live out the implications of what we have said, and even more importantly, what we have lived out in front of them. Our children will absorb, imbibe, smooth out, roughen up, build upon, or reject the world we raise them in. Their lives will say, “My mother and/or father was like \_\_\_\_\_; therefore, I am \_\_\_\_\_.” That is scary and hopeful.

Paul tells fathers to raise their children in a Christian culture. The words in Ephesians 6 are usually translated as something like this: “Bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” Training and admonition are good words; however, they might imply that parental oversight means a list of rules and a few exhortations. The Greek implies much more: “Fathers, bring them up in the *paideia* of the Lord.” *Paideia* means culture. Some people associate the word culture with classical music and having tea while dressed in fine clothes. Actually, culture means all of life. Culture is the atmosphere—spiritual, physical, intellectual—of our environments. Culture or *paideia* is as close, vital, and present as the air we breathe.

Children are to be brought up in a Christian world. They are to have Christian thoughts, Christian answers, and Christian ethics. We want the Faith to be

central to all their decisions. Preferably, our Christianity will impact our children's books, music, conversations, and companions. Christian principles will affect their career choices, their marriage choices, and every part of life. If possible, we even want them to eat Christian oatmeal.

Our children, our "therefores," will, God willing, live beyond our lives and go beyond us. The famous Richard Weaver book title says *Ideas Have Consequences*. So do children. So does education. Our goal should be that our children will stand on our shoulders, that they will see farther than we see, that they will go farther than we have gone. They will not only see the horizons we point to, but they will, by standing on our shoulders, see beyond our own horizons.

We and their teachers can benefit from what John of Salisbury in the twelfth century said of his own teacher, Bernard of Chartres:

Our own generation enjoys the legacy bequeathed to it by that which preceded it. We frequently know more, not because we have moved ahead by our own natural ability, but because we have been supported by the [mental] strength of others, and possess riches that we have inherited from our forefathers. Bernard

of Chartres used to compare us to [puny] dwarfs perched on the shoulders of giants. He pointed out that we see more and farther than our predecessors, not because we have keener vision or greater height, but because we are lifted up and borne aloft on their gigantic stature.

Parents, you cannot do the homework assignment that God has given you. God gives work that is too hard, too great for us. There is not enough time, nor do you have the abilities you need. Jesus said, "Without Me, you can do nothing" (John 15:5). If no other area of life brings us to realize the truth of what Jesus has said, raising children will. We must be faithful parents. We must secure the best education for our children. School for your children is not about social status. It is not about economic ease (a.k.a. "free" public education). It is not about getting a prestigious college scholarship or high-paying job, although either or both have their benefits. It is not about extra-curricular activities.

The most important thing about school, which is often overlooked, is that school is primarily about education. I sometimes comment on a restaurant after a meal by saying, "It was great except for the food." Obviously, if a restaurant fails in the food area, it has a big problem.

If Mordor High School has great programs and facilities, if it has a plethora of great course offerings, if it is just two blocks away and free, but it does not educate—and specifically educate in the fear of the Lord—it is not a school. To say Mordor High School is a great place except for the education is to say that they have failed to be a school. And when we as parents send our children, our "therefore," our homework assignments, there, we have failed also.

# CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND PUBLIC WITNESS

by Stephen Richard Turley, Tall Oaks Classical School

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*This article was originally published in The Imaginative Conservative.*

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On Thursday, February 28, 2013, two school districts in Delaware voted on whether to approve a significant increase in property taxes to make up for state shortfalls in school funding. While both referenda were rejected soundly, the weeks leading up to the vote threw into relief the question of the relationship between public education and Christian witness. With 90% of children in the U.S. attending public schools, the modern pulpit appears generally indifferent on the issue of private vs. public education for its parishioners; indeed, one might say pastors are generally supportive of public education. However, I believe that this affirming orientation is indicative of a much larger problem facing the church today. In what follows, I want to explore the nature of faithful Christian witness in public life in order to determine the extent to which that witness has been compromised in our modern context.

First, it is essential to understand that the public/private school dichotomy which prevails in our social arrangements and discourse is extremely misleading. This is because *all education is public*: all education seeks to cultivate within students an appreciation of shared values that constitute the common good of a community. There is simply no such thing as an education that is

entirely private. There is, however, education that is coercively funded and non-coercively funded; there is an education system that depends on the compulsory nature of the state versus one that depends on the voluntary tuition paid by willing participants. Leaving aside the moral dilemma such a distinction potentially poses, the question that emerges is not whether we are going to support public education, but whether we are going to support the kind of public promoted by state-financed education.

In a word, the defining attribute of that public order perpetuated by state-funded education is *secular*. It is claimed that a secular society is one that neither favors nor discriminates against any particular religion. Religion and politics simply do not mix in a modern secular society. While variant religions remain highly significant for people, this significance is maintained and expressed in the private sphere of life. By privatizing faith, it is suggested that all peoples are able to participate equally in economic, political, and sociological life without religious discrimination. And tax-funded schools, as an extension of this vision of the public, have carved out neutral space so as to allow people of all religions to come together and learn facts and data

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common to everyone.

Now, this certainly sounds reasonable. The public promoted and perpetuated by the secular state neither favors nor discriminates against any particular religion. But what if it turns out that it was in fact the secular state that *redefined* religion this way? What if our understanding of faith and religion as that which belongs in one's private life rather than in the public square is itself the social invention of the secular state? What if religion has been redefined by the very institution that claims to "protect" it?

In contrast to our modern religious sensibilities, classical Christianity understood the church as offering to the world an alternative public distinct from that offered by the Jewish and Greco-Roman worlds. The church was a civilization, the city-state of the New Jerusalem. In fact, Augustine goes so far as to call the church a "republic" in his *City of God*. Indeed, the term *ekklesia*, the Greek word for "church," was not what we would call today a "religious term" such as *thiasos* (worship of a particular deity); *ekklesia* was in fact a political term that designated the assembly of adult citizen males who had the ultimate decision making power in a city-state. Hence, the gospel was not a promise of personal and private salvation; the gospel was instead a declaration announcing that the entire cosmos had been incorporated into Christ's transformative life, death, and resurrection, which was expressed in shared life-worlds of mutuality, self-giving, and fellowship. As such, the "truth of the gospel" was considered a thoroughly public truth. Truth was not merely personal persuasion; truth was, in fact, a revelation of reality which was socially recognized as absolute and unquestionable.

By the third century, educational institutions were considered integral to this public witness of the church. In cities such as Alexandria and Antioch, Christian education adopted the frames of reference of classical education which sought to cultivate within the student a

sense of what classical scholars call "cosmic piety": every person born into the world is born into a world of divine obligation. Classical education thus sought to instill within students the transcendent values embedded in the created order, namely, the True, the Good, and the Beautiful as they configured around Christ the Logos. It was believed that by embodying these cosmic values, students cultivated a virtuous soul. Classical Christian education was therefore a project by which the student was initiated into a public order that materialized or substantiated a cosmic piety, which in turn enabled the student to fulfill his or her divine purpose and thereby become truly human. And this vision of education remained normative up to the end of the nineteenth century.

However, by the beginning of the twentieth century, things had changed rather dramatically. A few centuries earlier, the Treaty of Westphalia in effect consigned the church to an organ of the state, which concentrated unprecedented power around local regents. As nation-states started to emerge in Europe, the burden on universities was to produce more civil servants than clergy, a process that Perry Glanzer has labeled the "nationalization of the universities<sup>1</sup>." This transformation of the university into a servant of the nation-state led to the reconception of knowledge that foregrounded science at the exclusion of the church. Consequently, there emerged a whole new definition of *religion*: religion was no longer a public expression of cosmic piety and social obligation; instead, religion was simply something that one personally believed but could not know, it was that by which one cultivated a sense of private meaning and existential satisfaction. But religion had no public—that is objective—value *at all*.

With the advent of liberal democracies throughout Europe after World War I, there was in effect a massive recalibration of the totality of social and economic life around the state. And it is here that secularism plays a key role, for it is through secularization that the state is

able to perpetuate and protect its monopolization over the public square. And the primary mechanism by which such monopolization is maintained is the redefinition of religion and the consequent marginalization of the church to the private sphere of life. The state effectively marginalizes the church (or any other competing vision of the public) by *reinventing our conception of faith and religion* in accordance with secular norms: faith and religion are little more than instrumental means by which individuals find personal meaning and purpose for their lives.

Hence, the role of education in a public defined by secular norms is to maintain the state's monopolization over the public square by perpetuating a dichotomy between the public and the private, science and religion, fact and faith, knowledge and belief; in short, state-funded education perpetuates and promotes the secularization of society. It is this public/private dichotomy that is profoundly detrimental to the witness of the church, for it in effect denies the church its distinctly *public* witness. The church's unique vision for a humane society is reduced to merely one of innumerable options for private recreation: yoga class on Saturday, youth group on Sunday. Because the church has been consigned to private belief rather than public knowledge, it has been stripped of the distinctly public frames of reference by which its truth claims are demonstrated to be more trustworthy than any other competing private belief. Consequentially, objective Christian commitments embodied in the shared life of the church collapse, and the integrity of the gospel is inexorably compromised.

Moreover, by insisting upon this dichotomy between science and religion, modern education must *by definition* turn students away from the classical vision of cosmic piety, cutting them off from encountering the cosmic values of the True, Good, and Beautiful. Indeed, today, both in our schools and wider society, the True, Good, and Beautiful are now whatever one

wants them to be. There is simply no divine obligation apart from that which each person chooses to impose upon him or herself.

If Christians are to remain faithful to the biblical gospel, we must once again affirm the public witness of the church, particularly in the field of education. For such an affirmation not only awakens the soul to the True, the Good, and the Beautiful, but in embodying the Truth, it exposes the state-financed educational system which denies Truth for what it is: *a lie*. We cannot teach our students that Truth is relative and expect our politicians to be honest; we can't claim that the Good has been replaced by situational ethics and expect Wall Street executives to ground their business decisions in anything other than profit, greed, and expediency; and we cannot relegate Beauty to personal preference and then feign shock when we encounter a urinal as part of an art exhibit.

Christians will never expose this lie as long as they support and fund it. Classical Christian education offers nothing less than a parallel public, a revelation of Truth that in its social splendor awakens wonder and awe in teacher and student alike, as together they fellowship in Him who is the divine renewal of all things.

## NOTES

1. Perry L. Glanzer, "The Role of the State in the Secularization of Christian Higher Education: A Case Study of Eastern Europe," *Journal of Church and State* 53, 2 (2011): 161-82.

# CLASSICAL EDUCATION AND HUMAN HAPPINESS

by Trenton D. Leach, Cair Paravel Latin School

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Aristotle stands in between two giants of history: his teacher, Plato, and his student, Alexander the Great. As both a student of a great teacher and a teacher of a great leader, Aristotle's insights and understanding of education deserve our attention. Though there is no work on "education" in the received writings of Aristotle, the topic comes up sporadically throughout his writings. Rather than pulling together these various comments, I will explore the *ends* of education based on Aristotle's theory of means and ends in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Today there are several strains of educational theory which each offer their own views on the means and ends of education. So, just what might Aristotle have to say about these theories?

In Book I of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle begins his discussion of ethics with the observation that whenever a person acts, they always act with some end in mind, some purpose, goal, or good. Further, he observes that the ends we have in mind are mostly means to other ends. For example, I brush my teeth. This is not done, however, without purpose. Clearly there is a good I have in mind for the action, for otherwise I would not brush my teeth. People may brush their teeth with different goods in mind. For example, one person may do it in order to avoid gingivitis, others to have a "clean" feeling in their mouths. Either way, the end in

mind is a means to another end. In the former case the end is health and in the later it is pleasure.

Aristotle links the chain of means and ends and asks, is there something towards which all actions aim?<sup>1</sup> That is, is there a "last end" or a "highest good" that we have in mind when we act? Aristotle asserts that the end we all have in mind is "happiness."<sup>2</sup> That is, whatever we do, we do because we think it will make us happy. All people, says Aristotle, agree on this, but that is as far as the agreement goes. Just what is meant by "happiness" is highly disputed. Some might say that happiness is found in wealth, some that it is found in pleasure, others that it is found in honors. Is there any way to settle this dispute? Aristotle thinks so.

The question of "what is human flourishing or human happiness" must be defined in terms of what it means "to be human." For, to find the "good" of anything, we must know its function. For example, the good of the computer rests in its functioning as it was designed to function (compute) and it reaches its "good" when it functions (computes) according to the way it was designed to function. The guitarist is a "good" guitarist when he plays the guitar in the way it was designed to function. So, if a human being has a function, the human being's ultimate "good" will be functioning according to its nature (i.e., we will find fulfillment—our good—

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when we function according to our essence). Yet, how might we determine the human function?<sup>3</sup>

To determine an object's function one needs to discover what distinguishes it from all other objects. What is it that makes it, it? What is it, within humans, which makes them "human" and not "whales" or something else? Aristotle claims that the human function is "the soul's activity that expresses reason [as itself having reason] or requires reason [as obeying reason]."<sup>4</sup> That is, it is the ability to think or to know that is unique and the principle element that makes a human, a human. However, it is not merely "thinking" but rather reasoning and acting in accordance with reason. Furthermore, it is not just thinking and acting, but thinking and acting well; that is, excellently or virtuously. Aristotle concludes, "Each function is completed well when its completion expresses the proper virtue. Therefore the human good turns out to be the soul's activity that expresses virtue."<sup>5</sup> Happiness, therefore, "is an activity of the soul expressing complete virtue."<sup>6</sup>

So, what has all of this to do with education? Education itself is an action and therefore may be analyzed with regards to its means and ends. The central dispute in contention is two different theories as to the end of education, and how these relate to the end of human "happiness."<sup>7</sup>

On the "progressivist" view of education,<sup>8</sup> the primary purpose of education is vocational in nature. For example, the United States Department of Education's stated purpose is "to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access."<sup>9</sup> No doubt, the competition to which this statement refers is "jobs" or "careers." The consistent message from politicians with regard to education is that students need to be prepared to enter the "workforce," and that we must be more "competitive" in math and sciences so that Americans will not be displaced by foreign competition in the job market. So, when the question

is put forth as to the end of education, the answer is "to secure a career."

On the "classical" view of education,<sup>10</sup> the primary purpose of education is to rear children into adults. Education by this view has the whole of the person in mind, to train boys to become men and to train girls to become women. It is not taken for granted that as children grow they will naturally mature into adults. This begs the question of what we mean by "adult." There are a range of answers to this question, but invariably the classicist will answer along the lines of Aristotle outlined above. The classicist holds that the end of education is to train the child to think and act well in accordance with virtue. Says Aristotle, "Excellence, then, being of two kinds, intellectual and moral, intellectual excellence in the main owes both its birth and its growth to teaching (for which reason it requires experience and time), while moral excellence comes about as a result of habit . . ."<sup>11</sup> Habits themselves are trainable and we must, through education, come to learn "to enjoy the things we ought and to hate the things we ought."<sup>12</sup>

So, which of these two views of education is most consistent with the end of "human happiness?" The progressivist view of education, while it may prepare a student for a job, has confused the means with the end. For if it is asked, why do we want people to have careers? the answer, most assuredly would be, so that they can be "happy." How exactly having a career *ipso facto* makes one happy or just what "happiness" is, is never quite addressed, especially given how unhappy so many people are in their careers. It isolates a single part of life and leaves the children to fend for themselves in all other things.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, it eliminates even the possibility of educating for "happiness" precisely because it attempts to remain neutral with regard to the definition of "humanity." Thus, progressive education is reductive by its very nature, treating children not as humans who need to be nurtured, but as animals that need to be trained.



Contrariwise, the classicist has in view an education that creates, not young adults who are prepared for a specific career, but adults who are prepared to live well no matter what their career. For “career” is not an end itself, but a means to an end.<sup>14</sup> Occupation is but one part of life and unless the child is taught to think and act well, even with an occupation, the child can never be fully “happy.” Furthermore, classical education allows the student to stand before and judge all things, thus preparing the child for whatever may come. The carpenter, who has received only training in carpentry, may be able to judge what is or is not a good wardrobe, but not what is or is not a just society. Such judgments, however, are necessary for the fully formed human. For, to know, to judge, and to act well is what it means “to be human.” As Aristotle says, “Now each man judges well the things he knows, and of these he is a good judge. And so the man who has been educated in a subject is a good judge of that subject, and the man who has received an all-round education is a good judge in general.”<sup>15</sup>

Given this, it seems unlikely that Aristotle would have endorsed many modern schools. The education which Aristotle endorsed was one which conforms to the purpose of human beings, contributes to their proper functioning, and enables the child to grow into adulthood. An education that only equips the student to accomplish a single task is not meant for the free, liberated man. Without the ability to stand before all things and judge, the child is at the mercy of those who can. What needs to be assessed now are the best means by which to accomplish this end as well as the more robust definition of what it means to be human.

## NOTES

1. Though Aristotle does not explicitly make the argument in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Thomas Aquinas argues that there must necessarily be a last end to action, otherwise there would be no action in the first place: “For that which is first in the order of intention, is the

principle, as it were, moving the appetite; consequently, if you remove this principle, there will be nothing to move the appetite . . . Now the principle in the intention is the last end . . . Consequently, . . . if there were no last end, nothing would be desired...” See St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2007), I-II, Q. 1, Art. 4.

2. Aristotle uses the word “eudaimonia” which is misleadingly translated as “happiness,” and notoriously difficult to define. Etymologically, “eudaimonia” means “well-spirited” but may best be translated as “flourishing,” “blessed,” or “fulfilled.” The English word “happiness” is derived from the Old Norse “happ,” which means “chance” or “luck.” Clearly this cannot be what Aristotle has in mind. See Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, Bollingen Series, vol. 2, *Nicomachean Ethics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1099b9-17.

3. I will here presuppose that humans do, in fact, have a function or a nature, contrary to the modern existentialists who argue that in man “existence precedes essence.” For philosophers like Jean-Paul Sartre, the fact that humans do not have a nature means there is no right and wrong way to be human and, consequently there is no objective meaning to any of our actions. See Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Human Emotion (A Philosophical Library Book)*, reissue ed. (New York: Citadel, 1987).

4. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1098a7-8.

5. Ibid., 1098a15-17.

6. Ibid., 1102a5. Though not within the scope of this paper, an argument could be made that this is consistent with a biblical definition of humanity. For a full treatment of this, see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, Q.1-5.

7. Here and throughout, I will not assess the means (i.e., methods and materials) by which the two views on education attempt to reach their ends, but only the ends themselves.

8. Because it is beyond the scope of this essay to offer a robust definition of “progressive education” I will assume the broadest definition of the term. Roughly speaking the “progressive” view of education is identified with the works of John Dewey, the educational reforms he instituted, and those who carry on his view and work.

9. U.S. Department of Education, “About ED: Overview and Mission Statement,” <http://www2.ed.gov/about/landing/jhtml>.

10. Like with “progressive,” the term “classical” cannot be fully defined and defended here. For my purposes the term “classical” refers to the pre-Dewey views on education most closely associated with liberal arts education, Renaissance humanism, ACCS, or Mortimer Adler’s *Paideia Program*.

11. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1103a14.

12. Ibid., 1172a22.

13. “What is simple and indivisible in its own nature, human miscalculation divides and drags away from the true and the perfect to the false and the imperfect.” Ancius Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy: Revised Edition* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1999), Bk III, Ch. 9.4–6.

14. Technically speaking, no classical author would refer to a “career” as a part of happiness. Rather, a certain level of independence is created by a stable career in the modern world and this independence is an aid to happiness. See, for example, Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, Bk. III, Ch. 8–9.

15. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1094b27–95a1.

# THE NECESSITY OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

by Dr. J. Gresham Machen, Westminster Theological Seminary

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*This is a reprint of a lecture given by Dr. Machen at the Educational Convention held in Chicago under the auspices of the National Union of Christian Schools, August, 1933.*

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## TWO REASONS FOR THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

The Christian school is to be favored for two reasons. In the first place, it is important for American liberty; in the second place, it is important for the propagation of the Christian religion. These two reasons are not equally important; indeed, the latter includes the former as it includes every other legitimate human interest. But I want to speak of these two reasons in turn.

In the first place, then, the Christian school is important for the maintenance of American liberty.

We are witnessing in our day a world-wide attack upon the fundamental principles of civil and religious freedom. In some countries, such as Italy, the attack has been blatant and unashamed; Mussolini despises democracy and does not mind saying so. A similar despotism now prevails in Germany; and in Russia freedom is being crushed out by what is perhaps the most complete and systematic tyranny that the world has ever seen.

But exactly the same tendency that is manifested in extreme form in those countries, is also being

manifested, more slowly but none the less surely, in America. It has been given an enormous impetus first by the war and now by the economic depression; but aside from these external stimuli it has its roots in a fundamental deterioration of the American people. Gradually the people has come to value principle less and creature comfort more; increasingly it has come to prefer prosperity to freedom; and even in the field of prosperity it cannot be said that the effect is satisfactory.

The result of this decadence in the American people is seen in the rapid growth of a centralized bureaucracy which is the thing against which the Constitution of the United States was most clearly intended to guard.

## THE ATTACK UPON LIBERTY

In the presence of this apparent collapse of free democracy, any descendant of the liberty-loving races of mankind may well stand dismayed; and to those liberty-loving races no doubt most of my hearers tonight belong. I am of the Anglo-Saxon race; many of you belong to a race whose part in the history of human freedom is if anything still more glorious; and as we all contemplate

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the struggle of our fathers in the winning of that freedom which their descendants seem now to be so willing to give up, we are impressed anew with the fact that it is far easier to destroy than to create. It took many centuries of struggle—much blood and many tears—to establish the fundamental principles of our civil and religious liberty; but one mad generation is sufficient to throw them all away.

It is true, the attack upon liberty is nothing new. Always there have been tyrants in the world; almost always tyranny has begun by being superficially beneficent, and always it has ended by being both superficially and radically cruel.

But while tyranny itself is nothing new, the technique of tyranny has been enormously improved in our day; the tyranny of the scientific expert is the most crushing tyranny of all. That tyranny is being exercised most effectively in the field of education. A monopolistic system of education controlled by the State is far more efficient in crushing our liberty than the cruder weapons of fire and sword. Against this monopoly of education by the State the Christian school brings a salutary protest; it contends for the right of parents to bring up their children in accordance with the dictates of their conscience and not in the manner prescribed by the State.

That right has been attacked in America in recent years in the most blatant possible ways. In Oregon, a law was actually passed some years ago requiring all children to attend the public schools thus taking the children from the control of their parents and placing them under the despotic control of whatever superintendent of education might happen to be in office in the district in which they resided. In Nebraska, a law was passed forbidding the study of languages other than English, even in private schools, until the child was too old to learn them well. That was really a law making literary education a crime. In New York, one of the abominable Lusk Laws placed even private tutors under state

supervision and control.

## TEMPORARY RELIEF

It is true that no one of these measures is in force at the present time. The Lusk Laws were repealed, largely through the efforts of Governor Alfred E. Smith. The Oregon School Law and the Nebraska Language Law were declared unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court, and Justice McReynolds in the decision in the latter case gave expression to the great principle that in America the child is not the mere creature of the State.

Even such salutary decisions as that are not to be contemplated with unmixed feelings by the lover of American institutions. They are based, I suppose, upon the great “Bill-of-Rights” provisions of the Constitution of the United States. But the original intent of those provisions was that they should be a check upon Congress, not that they should be a check upon the states. The fundamental rights of man were to be guaranteed, it was assumed, by the constitutions of the individual states, so far as the powers reserved to the states are concerned. It is a sign of appalling deterioration when the Federal Supreme Court steps in to do what the state courts ought to do. Nevertheless we cannot help rejoicing at the result. For the present at least, such an excess of tyranny as was put into effect in Oregon and has been seriously advocated in Michigan and other states is postponed.

Yet the forces inimical to liberty have not been discouraged by these temporary checks. They are at work with great persistency just at the present time, busying themselves particularly in the advocacy of two vicious measures, both of which concern childhood and youth. . . .

Read the rest of Machen’s address online at <http://www.accsedu.org/school-resources/journal-and-newsletter>. See *Classis*: Current Issue

# IN AFRICA WITH THE RAFIKI FOUNDATION

*by Karl Mason, Tall Oaks Classical School*

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It is common to deride teachers with the sarcastic dismissal: “At least you have the summers off!” Certainly, teachers generally do possess in large amounts during the summer what many Americans can only dream of: plenty of free time. It is also common for busy Christians to wish they could do something more directly related to the Lord’s work other than what God has called them to do in their vocations. Again, teachers at Christian schools are uniquely blessed with the opportunity to serve Christ in the instruction of covenant children.

Now, teachers at ACCS-accredited schools have an even greater opportunity to follow their vocations in Africa for the summer, serving in short-term missions

work while doing something they are already equipped to do. A new scholarship opportunity has become available for classical Christian school teachers to work in ten African countries for the purpose of modeling classical pedagogy for African teachers. Over the past decade, the Rafiki Foundation has built ten orphanage-schools, called “villages,” in Liberia, Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, and Malawi. The directors of Rafiki (the word means “friend” in Swahili) are designing and implementing a classical Christian curriculum for every school in Africa. African teachers typically have only been through their national education training programs, so Christian

teachers who are experienced with the classical model are in high demand as this new model (to Africans) is introduced to a new continent.

I left Philadelphia International Airport on the evening of Saturday, July 6, and arrived at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi, Kenya, on the following evening. Rafiki sent a shuttle to pick me up, and I stayed the night in a hotel in central Nairobi. Around 10:00 the next morning, the same driver, James, arrived at the hotel and we drove out to the orphanage, which is located on the outskirts of the city. James gave me some good advice as we drove out: “Look for the beauty in Kenya, and don’t let the dirt and poverty blind you to it.” At first I wasn’t sure what he meant, since central Nairobi has a cosmopolitan feel, though traffic and air pollution choke even its central arteries.

As we exited the very modern Thika Road Superhighway, things

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quickly changed. Paved roads remained, but declined dramatically in quality. Side streets were dirt lanes, rocky, and even more—if possible—full of potholes than the main road. People were everywhere, and poverty was inescapable. I found

where prayer was very powerful, where God is doing great things, and where real positive change can and will take place through the power of the Gospel.

The village administrator, Yeen-Lan, met me at the gate with a

I worked with the English teachers from grades six through ten, who audited most frequently, but teachers from all subjects and grades visited my classroom throughout the month. It was humbling to know that other teachers, many with



out later that these neighborhoods were not even the poorest slums, but lower middle class. James was right, though. There was much beauty of spirit, energy of soul, and strength of character in the midst of seemingly chaotic poverty. Despite the drastic difference in living conditions, the teachers I worked with from this place were uniformly polite, warm, and welcoming to foreigners, and many gave clear evidence of deep devotion to Christ. Throughout my time there, I was constantly challenged in my Christian walk to work more diligently and to pray more faithfully. I felt I was in a place

warm welcome. After lunch and orientation with Rose, the headmaster of the school, we began to sort out what I would be doing in the coming weeks. The month would be busy and full of opportunities to serve. As a dialectic English teacher, I would be working mainly with the sixth grade class for two hours every morning. In addition, I would teach four other literature classes for grades seven through twelve, and each class would run twice a week.

Each day I taught in Kenya, I tried to provide an example of good teaching practice in the classroom for observing teachers. Particularly,

more experience than I possessed, would be watching in class each day. This made my preparation times more meaningful as I considered not only the content and methods of presentation, but also whether classical instruction methods would be clearly seen by my adult audience.

What was a typical day at Rafiki Kenya like? Every morning, after a staff devotional and prayer time, all teachers and students marched to the flagpole by class to hear a short morning lesson from the headmaster, to sing Kenya's national anthem, and to pray. Then we walked to our classrooms. My first class with

the sixth grade ran from 8:30 until 10:30 every morning, and then we took a break for recess and tea for the teachers. After that, I would have some spare time to prepare for whichever literature classes were scheduled for that day, or to do some grading. At lunch, I would either walk to the dining hall to eat with the children, or (when I was in a hurry or felt the need of some American food) I would prepare lunch in the guesthouse that I shared with other volunteer missionaries. Classes were over by 3:30 p.m., although older students often stayed until 4:30 to do homework. Dinner was served at 5:15, and I often was scheduled to share in Bible study with one of the orphan cottages at 7:30. In the evening, I might do some reading or lesson preparation. For me, “missionary midnight” came quickly around 9:30 or 10:30 p.m. At the end of a tiring, yet rewarding day, it was good to fall asleep.

Besides the teaching, I also conducted four in-service sessions of about an hour and a half each, covering topics that the headmaster thought would be beneficial to the staff. I gave an overview of classical education, explained John Milton Gregory’s *Seven Laws of Teaching*, covered lesson planning with reference to the seven laws, and demonstrated the Socratic method of instruction. Lesson planning was

the most interactive session, and teachers enjoyed working to include the seven laws in their plans while I answered their questions.

Outside the classroom, the village administrator worked hard to make the short term missionaries’ lives more delightful. On Tuesdays, we were invited to the weekly Rafiki staff meeting, made up of all the missionaries. This was an encouraging time of singing, Bible study, prayer, and sharing village news and announcements. On Saturdays, a missionary might drive us into Nairobi to do some shopping or sightseeing, and on Sundays, we were invited to accompany one of the missionaries to a local church. Nairobi has much to offer in the way of good restaurants and tourism, and in the course of my five weeks in Africa, I visited a giraffe sanctuary, an elephant orphanage, a bartering market, the home of author Isak Dinesen, the National Museum, and saw an exhibition of traditional dance, just to name a few of the local attractions. Kenya boasts some of the most spectacular wildlife and scenery in Africa, and I had the chance to take a short weekend safari as well.

On the day I was planning to fly out, August 7, a fire destroyed the international terminal of Jomo Kenyatta Airport. That day, I was on the road with a missionary, David, and the assistant to the

village administrator, Geoffrey. We were visiting local schools that have adopted Rafiki’s Bible study program for religious instruction. Together, we marveled how God had changed the hearts of students in one school where this program had been effectively carried out. I was also wondering how I was going to get home, but even as I was tempted to worry, the power of the gospel was so clear that it was impossible to feel powerless. Sooner than I ever expected, the airport reopened. Four days after I was scheduled to leave, I was able to catch a flight (I should say, about four flights altogether) home. Seeing the way God works in the circumstances in our lives was made clear throughout my time in Africa.

Looking back, it was most rewarding at the end of the month to have formed bonds with missionaries, with teachers, and with students. The missionaries warmly welcomed all volunteers, inviting us to their homes, and we formed friendships that will not be forgotten. I will miss many students there, especially my sixth grade class. That’s why I hope to return next year, if possible.

Go to Africa with Rafiki. Your soul will grow as you experience God’s word at work in the lives of children.



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