In recent years, the Christian faith in America has seemed like little more than an enormous episode of Survivor. Far from attempting to build a society of justice, peace, welfare, and human flourishing (what the Hebrew authors called shalom), Christians have all too often seemed to hide in defensive positions, shutting themselves in metaphorical (and sometimes literal) bomb shelters as they await the end of the world. In his work *For the Life of the World*, Alexander Schmemman suggests that those who respond to secularism with “an almost Manichean rejection of the world” and who “morbidly rejoice in their apocalyptic doom” have a distorted view of Christianity.² Perhaps nowhere has this been more evident than in one of the more fundamental settings of American society—the college or university. Christians have often taken an attitude of survival, hoping (although this suggests an expectation of success that I think many lack) that they or their children will survive the university gauntlet of secularism and retain the Christian faith. For those that do, however, many leave a broken shell of what they once were; even at its best, this is far from human flourishing.

In response, Christians have often responded with one of two courses of action, neither of which has proven helpful in correcting this secularizing trend. On one hand, many Christians have abandoned intellectual life altogether. As Mark Noll has poignantly written, “Despite dynamic success at a popular level, modern American evangelicals have failed notably in sustaining serious intellectual life. They have nourished millions of believers in the simple verities of the gospel but have largely abandoned the universities, the arts, and other realms of ‘high’ culture.”³ This failure is not merely targeting Christian students, but also highlights the failure of Christian adults to have

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much sustaining or impactful influence in academia and the fine arts. A second attempt is at least initially more appealing, yet ultimately unsuccessful. This attempt is to reassert the “Christian” in college, marketing institutions as Christian environments for learning. Few Christians would object to a Christian environment, but often a Christian environment does little more than provide a “safer” environment in which to procure the same “secularized” education as their unbelieving counterparts. Indeed, Arthur Holmes is correct in asserting that we cannot even ensure a protective atmosphere, “for Christians believe that the source of evil is ultimately within the heart, not without.”

In response to these trends, many Christian colleges have begun to talk about an integration of faith and learning, taking seriously the fact that the removal of faith from education does not make it more objective; rather, it merely substitutes one faith (secularism, materialism, naturalism, etc.) for the Christian faith. As Arthur Holmes has asserted in his work The Idea of a Christian College, “all truth is God’s truth.” If all truth is God’s truth, then we should expect our Christian worldview to shine light on all disciplines.

But is there something more than simply integrating faith and learning, by which I mean seeing each discipline through a Christian worldview? It is my purpose in this essay to suggest that there is. A common analogy of worldview is a pair of glasses in which the lens through which we see represents our worldview. If we succeed in putting on the right lens, it enhances our vision, allowing us to see the world as it actually is. I have no particular problem with such an analogy; in fact, I have used it often myself. But let us extend the analogy further. Glasses, for example, have blind spots—our periphery, the edge of the frame holding the lens, and at times dust and other debris that obscure the clarity of our lens. Putting on a Christian worldview as if putting on glasses, then, does not guarantee success in the Christian educational enterprise. What we need is not the correct glasses, but the proper eyes. We need, if one will permit me the analogy, a spiritual Lasik surgery. Additionally, we need not only new eyes, but new hearts. My aim in this essay is to propose a way in which educators in classical Christian schools specifically (and Christian schools, colleges, and universities generally) can faithfully educate students so that they better become the type of Kingdom People that Jesus taught us to be. Far from lessening the academic rigor in each discipline, I propose that an education focused on becoming Kingdom People will inspire us to be the best educated, the most creative, and the most productive in any discipline. I therefore agree with Mark Noll in his work Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind when he argues that “coming to know Christ provides the most basic possible motive for pursuing the task of human learning” and that “evangelicals should be among the most active, most serious, and most open-minded advocates of general human learning.”

New Eyes and New Hearts

Speaking of a faithful education, although not saying less than the integration of faith and learning, does suggest more. If “all truth is God’s truth,” then a faithful education in any particular discipline

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5Ibid., 7.
6Mark A. Noll, Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), ix-x.
means more than incorporating faith—it means that a faithful education (i.e. both a Christ-centered and an honest and diligent education) would require correctly discerning God’s truth in one’s discipline, not merely importing it as if it were an alien concept. Rather than simply adding Jesus to the current content, truly faithful education begins from a recognition that all things were created through him and in him all things hold together (Col 1:16-17). C. S. Lewis explains this idea well in *The Weight of Glory*: “I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.”

Only when we understand each discipline from the vantage point of Christ as the creator and sustainer of all things can we rightly see the world, which is why we need more than simply the right lenses—we need the eyes of Christ.

Lewis gives another interesting perspective on this concept in *The Magician’s Nephew*. Through the voice of the narrator, Lewis explains why Uncle Andrew could not correctly understand what was happening in the newly created Narnia: “For what you see and hear depends a good deal on where you are standing; it also depends on what sort of person you are.”

Not only do we need the right eyes (i.e. the right vantage point from standing in the right place), we also need the appropriate character—we need the right heart.

In *Desiring the Kingdom*, James K. A. Smith suggests that we would be more effective in Christian educational endeavors if we recognized that we are “more concretely homo liturgicus,” by which he means that we are “loving, desiring, affective, liturgical animals who, for the most part, don’t inhabit the world as thinkers or cognitive machines.”

Smith goes on to argue that as primarily loving and desiring beings the concept of worldview, at least those that see a Christian worldview as a set of propositions and knowledge to be learned, misses the mark. Smith suggests the following instead:

> I suggest that instead of thinking about worldview as a distinctly Christian ‘knowledge,’ we should talk about a Christian ‘social imaginary’ that constitutes a distinctly Christian understanding of the world that is implicit in the practices of Christian worship.

> Discipleship and formation are less about erecting an edifice of Christian knowledge than they are a matter of developing a Christian know-how that intuitively ‘understands’ the world in the light of the fullness of the gospel.

Smith’s point is well-taken in that we so often act according to our desires in a specific moment, often desires that we know are wrong, unwise, or unhelpful. Smith’s critique of worldview, moreover, is not unique. Karl Barth argues that a focus on worldview (*Weltanshauung*) reduces the Christian faith to a specific time and place that is therefore inevitably inadequate. Despite these legitimate warnings, Philip Graham Ryken argues that “we can learn from these and other criticisms

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10Ibid., 68.

without jettisoning the vital project of articulating a Christian view of the world.” He adds, “while it is true that what we love often shapes what we think, it is also true that the biblical remedy for disordered affections is for God to speak his truth to the mind.” Ryken is correct, and it highlights the most glaring omission in Smith’s otherwise excellent work—the importance of knowledge and the life of the mind. Smith proposes that since we are primarily loving beings Christian education should focus less on Christianity as a system of beliefs and rather seek “to discern the shape of Christian faith as a form of life.” This way of life is to desire the kingdom. Moreover, Smith recognizes that everyone, believer in Christ or not, desires a kingdom, it is just not the same kingdom. Herein lies the problem, for the goal of Christian education certainly implies pointing students to the right kingdom, but one can only pursue the right kingdom if he or she has a proper knowledge and understanding of the kingdom being pursued. Smith does not provide an answer to this question in the work. What Smith does provide, however, is a strong case against the notion that teaching students a Christian worldview that consists only of a comprehensive set of beliefs will be enough to lead students to faithful living. Rather, Christian institutions must develop counter-liturgies that will establish practices and rituals and behaviors that will cultivate virtues that will lead to faithfulness. In this I think Smith is correct.

How, then, can Christian institutions faithfully educate their students? It seems that faithful education must be an education of the head, the heart, and the hands, that is an education that focuses both on how all truth is God’s truth (the head), how to rightly order our desires toward the kingdom (heart), and how these come together in faithful discipleship in the present (hands). I suggest that if we allow a distinctly biblical liturgy to inform our view of the kingdom and what we desire, then it will manifest itself in living out the cultural mandate as individuals created in the image of God.

**Faithful Education in the Classical Christian School**

As a professor of Christian worldview at a classical Christian high school, it would seem obvious that I integrate faith with learning and teach from a Christian worldview. However, this is where speaking of faithful education is more accurate and more helpful than the integration of faith and learning. The integration of faith and learning means bringing faith into the classroom, but for some that means little more than prayer and a devotional before getting on to the material. Nothing is fundamentally different about the way the material is taught or understood by the students. Similarly, some incorrectly assume that a Christian automatically holds a Christian worldview. It is not even certain that those who teach Christian worldview hold a Christian worldview. In this way, even teaching Christian worldview at a Christian school could be done unfaithfully. Moreover, Smith

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13Ibid., 28.

14Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 134.

15Ibid., 54.

16This is not to suggest that Smith does not have an answer, neither is it to argue that Smith does not value the life of the mind. He certainly does. Rather, the point is that he does not provide such answers in the book, so I mean to build upon some of his work and fill in the gaps.
warns of the possibility that we could "offer a Christian education that is loaded with all sorts of Christian ideas and information—and yet be offering a formation that runs counter to that vision."\textsuperscript{17} I fear that this may be all too common.

The term faithful education, however, provides a sort of double entendre, referring both to the faith which is the foundation of the educational enterprise and to instructing students faithfully, that is honestly, diligently, and truthfully. In the previous section I proposed that although Smith is correct that we are more fundamentally loving and desiring beings (\textit{homo liturgicus}) than thinkers or cognitive machines, we nonetheless must train our minds toward the right vision of the Kingdom, which begins with a right vision of the King, and moves ultimately to an understanding of our role as Kingdom People. In the sections that follow, I aim to explore five areas in which classical Christian educators specifically (and all Christian educators generally) can better train students to live as Kingdom People in the present Kingdom as we worship the King and desire the coming Kingdom. In each of these five areas I aim to maintain the balance between our eyes (by which I mean our minds, worldview, and perception) and our hearts (by which I mean our desires, virtues, and character) so that we may be like Aslan and not Uncle Andrew, those who stand in the right place and are the right sort of people.

\textbf{1. Formation and Information}

The balance between traditional worldview approaches focused on knowledge and Smith’s proposal of counter-liturgies is likely nowhere more significant than in a discussion of the purpose and \textit{telos} of a classical Christian education. Do we, as classical Christian educators, put our emphasis on the information to be taught to the students or the formation wrought in the students? I would argue that our \textit{telos} should be faithful Christian discipleship to the glory of God. If we fail to train students in how they should live as part of the cosmic story, if we fail to encourage and spur them on toward such living, and if we fail as educators to model such living ourselves, then we have ultimately failed in our educational task, regardless of how much information they accumulate in the process.

Two clarifications are in order, however. First, we must recognize that we are not ultimately in control of any student. We cannot choose for the student, and they may decide to follow a different direction. Additionally, it is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of each individual that brings about conviction, repentance, and growth. God may use us in the process, but we are not the determining factor. Nevertheless, we must do everything we can to help provide students with the best curriculum, environments, and life examples to remove obstacles to growth in Christ. As C. S. Lewis writes, "While we are planning the education of the future we can be rid of the illusion that we shall ever replace destiny. Make the plans as good as you can, of course. But be sure that the deep and final effect on every single [child] will be something you never envisaged and will spring from little free movements in your machine which neither your blueprint nor your working model gave any hint of."\textsuperscript{18} If we are faithful to do our best with each student, we need not be devastated

\textsuperscript{17}Smith, \textit{Desiring the Kingdom}, 31.

(though we should be grieved) by those who reject the faith, but we likewise should not be surprised (nor can we take credit) when God does an amazing work in a student’s life.

The second clarification is that we must not assume that an ultimate telos of discipleship means that we fail to engage in rigorous academic work and provide a significant amount of information. Recall that Noll suggests our relationship with Jesus Christ should motivate us to serious learning. Precisely because we have put our hope and life in Christ we should be seekers of truth in every discipline, seeking to understand the world that Christ has created, entered into, redeemed, and holds together. Additionally, it is necessary for our discipleship to be founded upon truth, and truth is often presented as information, things to be learned, memorized, and discussed. It is therefore not a decision of formation or information, but formation and information. Arthur Holmes provides a helpful connection between information and formation. He suggests that our approach to education should not be what we can do with the information we receive, but rather what will the information we receive do to us.\(^1\) We simply give priority to formation, recognizing that the information is not the end in itself, but part of the journey of Christian formation.

2. The Value of History

One of the more dangerous lies we can believe in our day is that time inevitably leads to progress. This idea that our present day is smarter, wiser, and more advanced than previous cultures simply on the basis that we have come after them has been termed “chronological snobbery.” Lewis was once accused by a friend of chronological snobbery, and he obviously learned his lesson for Lewis later gives one of the best explanations of progress in Mere Christianity. “If you are on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road; and in that case the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive man.”\(^2\) Similarly, in his introduction to Athanasius’s On the Incarnation Lewis argues for the value of reading old books. Lewis writes:

> Every age has its own outlook. It is specially good at seeing certain truths and specially liable to make certain mistakes. We all, therefore, need the books that will correct the characteristic mistakes of our own period.\(^3\)

Reading old books is thus one way of ensuring that we do not uncritically accept the worldview of our own time and culture. Old books will help us see the errors of our ways, but it may also help us see the errors of their day and how we can ensure that we do not fall into similar problems.

Faithfully educating students in classical Christian schools would mean taking seriously the fact that we are an historical people. The Church was not born yesterday, and we would do well to consider regularly how the Church has sought to live out its faith in various contexts. Whether it is Christian worldview, history, literature, science, mathematics, or the arts, a faithful Christian education will approach the subject from an historical perspective. As G. K. Chesterton wrote in Orthodoxy, “it is obvious that tradition is only democracy extended through time. It is trusting to a


consensus of common human voices rather than to some isolated or arbitrary record.”\textsuperscript{22} Learning from history, particularly from the great ideas and the great books, removes us from isolation and helps us hear the consensus of common human voices throughout history, voices that transcend specific eras, cultures, and languages. As the book of Ecclesiastes says, “there is nothing new under the sun,” and we would do well to heed that advice and recognize that whatever issue we encounter in our day has likely had numerous precursors in history from which we can learn. It is precisely because there have been precursors in history that looking to the past is so helpful. Stratford Caldecott argues that “for every great change, every rebirth or renaissance in human culture, has been triggered by the retrieval of something valuable out of the past, making new, creative developments possible.”\textsuperscript{23} If we want to encounter faithfully the specific problems of our day, looking to history may help trigger in us a recognition of a common problem that spurs us on to creative solutions appropriate to and necessary for our context.

There is yet another point regarding history worth mentioning. Louis Markos argues that “one of the main roles of education and the arts used to be the instilling of stock responses.”\textsuperscript{24} Whether in the name of progress or some other reason, this no longer seems to be the case. The abandonment of stock responses seems to be a product of postmodernism and the relativizing of truth. If there is no universal truth binding for all people in all cultures at all times, then stock responses would indeed be worth discarding. Yet as Christians we fully affirm universal truth, arguing that all truth is God’s truth, that there is objective and knowable truth, and that we ought to seek truth and embrace it once found. From a Christian perspective, then, we should expect that there are indeed stock responses, and we would do well to accept, discuss, learn, and repeat them, not abandon them.

An example of a stock response that classical Christian schools should revive is the Apostle’s Creed. James K. A. Smith says the Apostle’s Creed “functions like the church’s pledge of allegiance.”\textsuperscript{25} The Apostle’s Creed provides a unifying message, a statement of faith and allegiance, an organizing principle for theology, and a constant reminder of the God we love and serve. I would argue that it is therefore a great example of a stock response that should play a vital role in Christian education, and I would propose that both faculty and students should memorize and regularly recite the creed together.

Once again, some cautions are in order. First, chronological snobbery can work both ways. While it is a particular danger in our culture to elevate the present over the past, it can be a peculiar danger of classical Christian schools to elevate the past above the present such that we never read or discuss modern works. We certainly must be careful, and we also want to recognize that modern works have not yet had the chance to stand up to the test of time, but part of engaging our culture

\textsuperscript{22}G. K. Chesterton, Orthodoxy, Barnes & Noble Library of Essential Reading (New York: B & N, 2007), 39.

\textsuperscript{23}Stratford Caldecott, Beauty for Truth’s Sake: On the Re-enchantment of Education (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009), 12.

\textsuperscript{24}Louis Markos, Restoring Beauty: The Good, the True, and the Beautiful in the Writings of C. S. Lewis (Colorado Springs: Biblica, 2010), 27.

\textsuperscript{25}Smith, Desiring the Kingdom, 190.
and living as Kingdom People in the present means we must be familiar with the thoughts and ideas of the present. Yes, classical Christian education rightly emphasizes old books and primary sources, and they are right to do so, even to the point of reading far more old books than new ones; but it must remain at the forefront of the mind of the educator that he or she must not dismiss any modern book or idea out of hand, much as other have discounted the past as outdated or disproved merely because they are old. We must be equally charitable and critical of new and old books and ideas alike.

We have already identified one problem, chronological snobbery, that leads some to ignore history and old books altogether. We have also considered the caution that this can work in reverse. A second caution, however, is for those who study history, yet do so simply as a thing to be studied. Markos suggests that “to defend the past merely as a thing to be studied is like defending Christian doctrine as nothing but a set of rational propositions.” Even for those who study history, they may do so as though it is something lifeless, merely a collection of old information to be dusted off and used as necessary. Rather, history is a living and breathing reality. When one opens an old book, say Virgil’s Aeneid, we ought not say that Virgil said this or that; Virgil says it, he is still saying it, for we are (or should be) still hearing it as if the words had just been uttered. The beauty of old books is that we can still encounter them as living, as capable of speaking directly to us today as they did to their original audiences. That is why Chesterton is correct when he says that “the man who lives in contact with what he believes to be a living Church is a man always expecting to meet Plato and Shakespeare tomorrow at breakfast.” I am reminded of this kind of reality in Out of the Silent Planet, the first novel in Lewis’ space trilogy, when Dr. Elwin Ransom first enters “space.” He thinks of space as emptiness, but he soon realizes that it is teeming with life and energy.

But Ransom, as time wore on, became aware of another and more spiritual cause for his progressive lightening and exultation of heart. A nightmare, long engendered in the modern mind by the mythology that follows in the wake of science, was falling off him. He had read of ‘Space’: at the back of his thinking for years had lurked the dismal fancy of the black, cold vacuity, the utter deadness, which was supposed to separate the worlds. He had not known how much it affected him till now—now that the very name ‘Space’ seemed a blasphemous libel for this empyrean ocean of radiance in which they swam. He could not call it ‘dead’; he felt life pouring into him from every moment.

As Christian educators, we must teach history and instill stock responses in students, but we must not do so as something dead, but as something alive, something more like an “empyrean ocean of radiance,” for only something alive can go beyond information and lead to formation.

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26 Markos, Restoring Beauty, 161.

27 We of course must keep in mind when interpreting that we are in a different cultural context, but I speak here not of interpretation but experiencing the work as an act of communication.

28 Chesterton, Orthodoxy, 147.

29 C. S. Lewis, Out of the Silent Planet (New York: Scribner, 2003), 34.
3. The Good, the True, and the Beautiful

The phrase, *the good, the true, and the beautiful*, has become something of a motto in classical Christian education. The phrase, rightly understood, has much to commend itself and serves as a helpful reminder for Christian educators. Not only do we aim to teach students to see the good, the true, and the beautiful in the world, but desire for them to learn to create it themselves. Part of educating for formation and not merely information is teaching students to evaluate that which is good, to think critically and to discern truth amidst untruth, and to discover and create beauty in a world that is increasingly controlled by what Louis Markos calls the “Cult of Ugly.”

Douglas Wilson has used a metaphor of a river. We are not trying to (nor could we ever hope to) teach students all about the river; rather, we are teaching students how to navigate the river for themselves that they might find the good, the true, and the beautiful on their own.

But for many students, I expect they do not understand what we mean when we tell them to embrace the good, the true, and the beautiful. It may be helpful as educators to explain this terminology if it is our hope that they will live this way. Mortimer Adler has argued that beauty is a synthesis, a kind of combination of aspects of the true and the good. “I think it is more like this, that truth and goodness come first and are coordinate with one another; and that beauty is somehow derived from these two or somehow dependent on these two. Somehow beauty is not of the same order as truth and goodness.” Straford Caldecott argues similarly, suggesting that “beauty is the *radiance* of the true and the good, and it is what attracts us to both.”

This suggests several things about Christian education. First, we must put significant emphasis on the truth. As Holmes has argued, all truth is God’s truth wherever it is found, so we need not fear where the truth will take us. The Christian worldview alone allows us to look objectively at reality because we are not afraid of what we will find in any discipline. Second, we must include in our education an emphasis on the good. We must communicate biblical truth about morality. Morality, like truth, is not subjective; there is objective moral truth, and there is one place it is grounded—in the character and nature of God Himself. Any other attempts to ground morality fail to provide any objective standard, and students must understand both this truth and its attendant implications and consequences. Finally, we must teach students about beauty, and we must ground it in the true and the good.

That beauty is rooted in the true and the good has significant implications, especially for the Arts, for if beauty is merely in the eye of the beholder, then it lacks truth in any objective sense. But a faithful Christian education, I suggest, must maintain that beauty is not an entirely subjective concept. Art is primarily objective, not subjective as we tend to believe. We must differentiate

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33By the Arts, I mean things like visual art (drawing, painting, sculptures, etc.), music, theater, dance, architecture, and related disciplines.
between aesthetic subjectivism and aesthetic objectivism, and I argue we must accept the latter.\textsuperscript{34} Aesthetic subjectivism asserts that aesthetic judgments (e.g. that song is lovely, that painting is ugly, etc.) do not state facts about the world, but merely reflect an observer’s response to some aspect of the world. Conversely, aesthetic objectivism asserts that judgments of beauty are not “in the eye of the beholder,” but rather have an objective standard. Aesthetic objectivism is the better option for at least four reasons. First, if subjectivism were true, we cannot say one work is better than another, however obviously true it is (e.g. \textit{Mona Lisa} vs. my daughter’s b-day card for me). Second, if subjectivism were true, we cannot explain why certain works have stood the test of time as aesthetically pleasing works in different times and cultures. It would be an unbelievable coincidence. Third, if subjectivism were true, then we cannot argue about which movie, for example, is better. Forget the Oscars, since all movies are simply preference. It would be like having an awards show for flavors of ice cream and awarding it to mint chocolate chip, then having articles in magazines, newspapers, and the internet the next day arguing for the merits of vanilla and the terrible choice by the Ice Cream Committee. Fourth, if subjectivism were true, then terms like beautiful, sublime, gaudy, refined, delicate, elegant, dramatic, and powerful would make no sense since they would only be individually subjective rather than public, objective, and therefore shared ideas/terms. As Christians, we must maintain that beauty is an objective standard, though we can certainly allow for individual preferences and tastes. That is why we can consistently agree on literary works that are classics, without all enjoying them equally (my preference for British over American literature, for example). Although space does not permit further discussion here, the implications of an objective understanding of beauty are far ranging and worth exploring.\textsuperscript{35}

Ultimately, Markos sums it up well when he writes that “the good, the true, and the beautiful are all action words that call us to take a quick glance backward and then trudge on with hope toward the distant land that is our true home.”\textsuperscript{36} May we set our eyes on what is true, live our lives according to the good, as we wait for the revealing of true beauty in our King and the coming Kingdom.

4. Imagination

The first three areas discussed foundational aspects of education and the approach of the educator. We must focus on formation in addition to information, we should utilize history and the old books to build up stock responses and help correct errors of our day, and we should point students to the true, the good, and the beautiful. We now move to the final two areas, each of which relate to the mindset and attitude of the student in the learning endeavor. If we are to bring about formation,

\textsuperscript{34}The following points are drawn from the chapter “Aesthetics: What is Beauty?,” pages 418-450 in Steven B. Cowan and James S. Spiegel, \textit{The Love of Wisdom: A Christian Introduction to Philosophy} (Nashville: B & H, 2009).


\textsuperscript{36}Markos, \textit{Restoring Beauty}, 11.
reading old books and telling them to love the true, the good, and the beautiful is simply not going to be enough. Since we are loving beings, we are motivated most often by desire. In order to bring about Christian formation, we need to awaken the right kind of desire in students, and awakening desire requires an awakening of the imagination.

I am not sure that I exaggerate when I say that the most significant negative effects of the Enlightenment were convincing people that serious learning meant that science was more fundamentally academic than science fiction; that fairies were meant only for fairy tales and fairy tales meant only for children; and that fiction and myth meant untrue. G. K. Chesterton is right when he says that we have “sinned and grown old” and that fairyland (or elfland) is a good deal more real than the scientific naturalism espoused today. In Heretics he writes: “People wonder why the novel is the most popular form of literature; people wonder why it is read more than books of science or books of metaphysics. The reason is very simple; it is merely that the novel is more true than they are.” So long as we maintain a cold, scientific rationalism that rejects the ability of literature and the arts to awaken our imagination to wonder and truth, we will fail to educate students from a Christian worldview. Caldecott agrees, arguing that imagination is necessary to the Christian story: “When Adam fell from grace, the whole creation was somehow dis-graced, or put out of joint. The healing of the world therefore cannot be envisaged without a reordering and a healing of the inner world of imagination, intelligence, and will.” Daniel Russ and Mark Sargent argue similarly. “As heirs to the great tradition of Christian witness, we are called to consider how the teachings of Christ and the apostles can edify the church, shape ethics and behavior, and transform modern culture. Such faithfulness requires imagination, not simple prescription of routine.” In short, redemption requires the re-awakening of the imagination.

In an age of scientific rationalism, it is often difficult to get students excited about learning. Too often education, even from its earliest stages, is simply preparation for a career. Elementary school must be completed to advance to middle school, then middle school to junior high and high school, then high school leads to college, and college is where the student gets the vocational training necessary to get a job. In this conveyor belt, industrialized educational system, we see teachers excising the dreams of the dreamers and programming all students to do the work, get the grade, and move on. True, there are some students who lack discipline as a result of their wild imagination, but C. S. Lewis answers this well. “For every one pupil who needs to be guarded from a weak excess of sensibility there are three who need to be awakened from the slumber of cold vulgarity. The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles but to irrigate deserts.” Indeed, as Christian educators our job is to irrigate deserts, to feed the malnourished mind, and we

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37 Chesterton, Orthodoxy, 51.
38 G. K. Chesterton, Heretics (Nashville: Sam Torode Book Arts, 2011), 82.
39 Caldecott, Beauty for Truth’s Sake, 108.
can do so through the re-awakening of the imagination. We must awaken students to the beauty around them, to the wonders of the search for truth, to the joy of living in accordance with the good. Imagination comes in many forms, but perhaps none better than through stories. We must rekindle a love for reading, particularly fiction, so that students can see truth in a new and exciting way. Reading about Narnia, for example, is not an escape from reality but an invitation to a truer picture of reality, for in many ways Narnia is what we are meant to be.\footnote{Markos says it well when he says “Narnia is what our world would be if it were worthy of itself.” Markos, \textit{Restoring Beauty}, 30.}

In \textit{The Confessions}, Saint Augustine has an interesting comment about education. He writes, “It is evident that the free play of curiosity is a more powerful spur to learning these things than is fear-ridden coercion; yet in accordance with your laws, O God, coercion checks the free play of curiosity.”\footnote{Saint Augustine, \textit{Confessions}, Vintage Spiritual Classics, trans. Maria Boulding (New York: Vintage, 1998), 18.} After considering why he hated learning some subjects but loved others, Augustine realized that a free curiosity was a more powerful spur to learning; nevertheless, discipline (or coercion) was in place to provide proper parameters. We, too, must revive this understanding of learning for classical Christian education. While we as educators must put in place the proper parameters, must teach some subjects or lessons that they may not enjoy but we know are necessary, we must awaken their imagination and provide freedom for imagination and curiosity to take hold, for in this students will not only learn more in the present, but they will more likely love learning, for in it they see its ability to lead us to what is true, good, and beautiful.

5. Joy

The final area for discussion is joy. Of the many valuable insights from Alexander Schmemann in his book \textit{For the Life of the World}, one of the most pointed and significant discussions is on joy. Schmemann suggests that “from its very beginning Christianity has been the proclamation of joy, of the only possible joy on earth[...].Without the proclamation of this joy Christianity is incomprehensible. It is only as joy that the Church was victorious in the world, and it lost the world when it lost that joy, and ceased to be a credible witness to it.”\footnote{Schmemann, \textit{For the Life of the World}, 24.} He goes on to argue that “joy was given to the Church \textit{for the world}—that the Church might be a witness to it and transform the world by joy.”\footnote{Ibid., 55.} Schmemann’s point is that the failure of Christians to be joyful is a failure to engage the world as God has prescribed. Too often Christians look like the rest of the world, struggling to make sense of the problems of this world and how the suffering and pain and evil can be compatible with the loving God they claim to know. They struggle to “rejoice in the Lord always” (Phil 4:4) in the face of such serious problems. But Schmemann counters, arguing that Christians “have ceased to believe that the feast, the joy have something to do precisely with the ‘serious problems’ of life itself, may even be the Christian answer to them.”\footnote{Ibid., 53.} Chesterton recognizes this dilemma as well, and he too argues that “everything human must have in it both joy and sorrow; the only matter
interest is the manner in which the two things are balanced or divided.”\(^\text{47}\) For Chesterton, as for Schmemann, the answer is clearly joy. Chesterton continues, “man is more himself, man is more manlike, when joy is the fundamental thing in him, and grief the superficial. Melancholy should be an innocent interlude, a tender and fugitive frame of mind; praise should be the permanent pulsation of the soul.”\(^\text{48}\)

Part of faithfully educating students in a classical Christian school, particularly as it relates to formation, is to remind them that despite the trials of life, joy ought to be a dominant characteristic. This is not to say that students must always be happy, but they should always be hopeful. First Peter 3:15 says that we should always be prepared to give a defense for the hope that is within us. I often wonder why it is that so few Christians have ever had occasion to answer such a question, for their lives have never demonstrated a hope worth inquiring about. Schmemann and Chesterton are correct—the Christian life should be characterized by joy that is for the world, a joy that does not belittle the struggles of the world but demonstrates a hope that transcends the struggles. As classical Christian educators, part of a faithful education aimed at forming disciples to the glory of God must include encouraging, fostering, and modeling a life of joy. But this is by no means an easy task, for simply talking about the need for joy and teaching about joy is not the same thing as possessing and living out joy. Joy is perhaps one of the most unexplored areas of Christian education, and I do not make any claims at answering all of the issues, but the following are some hypotheses of what might help. First, as both Schmemann and Smith have argued, we must create a distinctly Christian cultural liturgy; joy cannot merely be an add-on or occasional outcome, it must become, in Chesterton’s words, “the permanent pulsation of the soul” of our institution. Prayer and participation in corporate worship together, including recitation of the stock responses like the Apostle’s Creed, are a good start. Second, the administration and faculty must model joy for the students, and this must be vulnerable enough to share the challenges we face so that they may see our joy despite (or, sometimes because of) our difficult circumstances. Third, we should encourage students in their expressions of joy, reminding them that as they enjoy God, the creation, and the life to which He has called each one, they are fulfilling their chief end.

It is one of Schmemann’s first statements about joy that perhaps sums it up best of all. “At some ultimate point, within some ultimate analysis, we inescapably discover that in and by itself action has no meaning. When all committees have fulfilled their task, all papers have been distributed and all practical goals achieved, there must come a perfect joy.”\(^\text{49}\) When our students graduate, paper in hand and practical goals achieved, will we have trained them to live lives of joy, joy that is for the world by bringing joy to the world? Faithful education, I think, requires that we have at least done our best.

**Conclusion**

Faithful education at a classical Christian school is a topic of great significance, particularly with the growing number of students in classical Christian education. I have suggested that faithful

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\(^\text{47}\)Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, 150.

\(^\text{48}\)Ibid., 151.

education in this discipline requires an emphasis on formation that nonetheless takes seriously the importance of communicating information that helps students in this formative process. Second, I proposed that history was a necessary component of classical Christian education because it provides us with stock responses and helps us guard against the characteristic errors of our present day. Third, we should teach students to understand and seek after the good, the true, and the beautiful, of which part of the task is teaching them to navigate the river of knowledge themselves. Fourth, the imagination of students must be awakened, their curiosity piqued, and the opportunity to explore these areas of interest and curiosity should be regularly encouraged. Finally, I proposed that faithfully educating students in the classical Christian school must include an emphasis on joy, whereby students learn that despite the struggles of life, we can live with joy in light of the hope of the coming Kingdom promised by the King.

In *The Weight of Glory*, Lewis provides some advice that serves as a fitting conclusion to this discussion on how to faithfully educate at a classical Christian school. “The only people who achieve much are those who want knowledge so badly that they seek it while the conditions are still unfavourable. Favourable conditions never come.” As classical Christian educators, we may often find ourselves overwhelmed, unqualified, or otherwise not up to the task of this rigorous form of education, for it is indeed difficult. But the same trials facing us are facing our students as well; there is too much to read, too much to learn, and sometimes simply too much to do, and we admittedly are never quite prepared enough for the task. But Lewis reminds us that none us are fully equipped. In fact, he writes that “if men had postponed the search for knowledge and beauty until they were secure, the search would never have begun.” Therefore, let us bless the kingdom as Schmemann says, which is “to declare it to be the goal, the end of all our desires and interests, of our whole life, the supreme and ultimate value of all that exists. To bless is to accept in love, and to move toward what is loved and accepted.” Let us move toward formation as Kingdom People, learning from the past as we hopefully and joyfully trudge on toward the future Kingdom, letting our imagination run wild as we seek after the good, the true, and the beautiful, knowing that one day we will find it perfectly in our King.

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51Ibid., 49.

Bibliography


