



Quo Vadis?

*Doce me Domine viam tuam.
(Teach me thy way, O Lord.)
(Psalm 86:11)*

Volume 1, Issue 1; Fall, 2003

Where Have We Been? Where Are We Going?

As the new year approaches, let's take a few moments to reflect back upon the mercies and graciousness of our Lord in the years of this ministry to Christian families in Cochise County.

In the spring of 1999, Dr. Thomas Askew, then principal of Shiloh, began sharing with some of his teachers the vision he had for establishing a classical and Christian school in Sierra Vista. Shiloh gave us their blessing as we began to formally plan this new school. Soon Calvary Chapel and Grace Church joined in this mission and became supporting churches. By December of 1999, Veritas Christian Community School was recognized by the state of Arizona as a 501(C)3 non-profit corporation, and our search for a home began.

We were welcomed by the staff and congregation of Sierra Vista Baptist Church and started making the physical preparations necessary in order to open our doors in August of 2000. Staff and students joined members of SVBC in painting, patching, wall removal, tile removal, etc. The Sierra Vista Baptist Church, Calvary Chapel and Grace Church as supporting churches have been instrumental in the formation and continuation of Veritas. Without the support of these three churches we would not have been able to continue with the vision for Veritas. A hearty "Thank You!" to the leadership and congregations of these three churches for your faithfulness to the calling of God to train up our children in the ways of the Lord.

As we sought guidance from those more experienced than we were in starting a new Christian school, we were told to start small, kindergarten through third grade. However, it is our understanding that we are to instruct our children within the parameters of a Christian worldview from beginning to end. Therefore we jumped right in with a full kindergarten through twelfth grade program. Besides, many of our own children were of junior and senior high age. In August 2000, having furnished our rooms with used furniture and equipment from a closing school, we welcomed our first students and staff members. And so our incredible journey began.

That first year flew by as we diligently applied what we were learning as classical teachers amidst the usual activities of school, i.e. spelling bees, sports competitions, programs, etc. At the completion of our first year, we marveled at God's goodness to us as we clearly saw the wisdom in the advice to start small and yet were incredibly blessed at God's sustaining love and power. We all were very tired but all the more convinced of the importance of this ministry.

The 2001-2002 school year found Dr. Askew as Headmaster of Cornerstone Christian Academy in Tucson and Mrs. Karen

Bolton as the Head of School at Veritas. Some of our original founding teachers moved to new locations as well, but the Lord filled every position left vacant with someone well suited for our mission. As our second year progressed we began to see the fruit of a classical Christian education; not only among the students but the teachers as well.

It is said that if a school can remain open for at least three years and still be in the black financially it is doing well. In fact, the Association of Christian Schools International won't let a school begin the accrediting process until after its third year; giving some assurance that it is stable and will be here after the process is completed. Although 2002-2003 had a reduced enrollment, mostly due to an unusually high number of Army transfers, we completed the year on solid ground. In fact, among the staff it is considered our best year yet, characterized by a peaceful spirit as we placed our trust in God alone. The following August we opened with an increase in enrollment of about 20% over last year and all our faculty returning. We have been operating at or near capacity since.

Here we were, a group of committed Christians from all walks of life, housewives, teachers, missionary, florist, military, accountant, seeking to teach using the classical method, yet none of us had been taught classically. It was and is a daunting task, and yet it has become an opportunity to show the truth of 1 Corinthians 1: 26-31: *Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things-and the things that are not-to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God-that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."*

Although our primary goal is to equip Christian youth to be effective ambassadors of the Lord, our graduates have made their mark academically. We have graduated thirty-five students in our first ten years, among them one National Merit Finalist, two Commended students, one Military Academy at Westpoint appointee.

It is tempting to measure success by the things one can see, however, we measure our success by the intangible, the things not easily seen or understood. Simply put, our success lies in this: we have remained steadfast in our vision to train up Christian children who are able to think clearly and are able to discern truth from falsehood with the ability to reason soundly, all the while representing Jesus Christ to a fallen world. The following quote from Francis Schaeffer in *Back to Freedom and Dignity* sums up our vision well: "Christians should prepare to take the lead in

giving direction to cultural change. And if it goes poorly, as well it might in the post-Christian world, then we should be consciously preparing the next generation for the new battles it will face.”

The times in which our students are growing up are more difficult in many ways than in the youth of their parents and grandparents, more difficult especially in the realms of morality and spirituality as humanistic worldviews continue to infiltrate even Christian institutions. Our primary goal is simply this, that when they are faced with temptations and persecution our students will be found standing firm in their faith with the desire and ability to be used by God to bring as many into His kingdom as possible.

F.A.Q.s about Veritas and Classical Education

Q/A's regarding classical ed. adapted from interview of Dr. G. Grant; Gileskirk School, Franklin, TN.

Q.) Is Latin an absolute must for the classical student?

A.) Yes. Latin provides the foundations for all Language study – including English. When a student studies Latin, he or she gets inside Language structure in a way almost nothing else can enable him or her to. And since Language is the basis for the transfer of all knowledge, it is a vital aspect of a Christian education.

Q.) How does classical education create a love of learning in a student that today's school, public or private, may not?

A.) The idea of classical education lies less in the actual curriculum – though that is certainly important – and more in the way that curriculum is communicated: as a moral philosophy through discipleship. In short, it is an intensive mentorship rather than merely taught.

Q.) What is wrong with the education provided by public and some even some Christian schools? Why have they failed?

A.) Part of the problem is ideological and theological – if a school is committed to the ideas of humanistic modernity it will fail to provide the firm foundation of a God-centered worldview. Also, by trying to adhere to the fallacious notion of neutrality they violate the Biblical idea of sphere sovereignty – taking from the parents the responsibility of education. Due to the increasing pressure of the accreditation process and the accommodation to the world of Christian schools, some Christian schools have even failed at this, becoming little more than tamer versions of the public schools – albeit with Bible classes tacked on.

Q.) What should be the difference between a Classical Christian school and regular Christian school?

A.) There should be several differences: 1. Discipleship emphasis; 2. Moral philosophy integration in the curriculum; 3. Latin, Rhetoric, and the other disciplines of classical education to forge the thinking, and discerning skills necessary for a Biblical model of success; 4. Modeling servant leadership from the top down.

Q.) How should history be taught, and why is it important?

A.) Instead of a collection of dates and dead people, history should be the biblical worldview taught by example. In other words, it must not be a social science but a moral philosophy.

History should be taught for several reasons: 1. Because it is the primary way God teaches us (re: most of the Bible is history); 2. Because it is the telling of stories and we always learn best by way of narrative; 3. Because history includes every other subject and every other discipline and every other endeavor.

Q.) Will Veritas be around for my child's entire education?

A.) We have never considered closing our doors. We are small; there's no denying that. But, it would not matter if we had but a dozen students; we are utterly convinced of the need and call of this ministry. The Lord has repeatedly shown us His hand upon this ministry and we will be here as long as He continues to bring children to teach.

Q.) Does Veritas teach a specific doctrine?

A.) We are founded upon the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone. A more complete Statement of Faith is available in the school office. We believe that God has given the responsibility of educating children to their parents and therefore, we refer any divisive or controversial issues back to the home.

The following books are excellent sources for learning more about classical education:

Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning, Douglas Wilson

Repairing the Ruins, Douglas Wilson

Classical Education, Gene Edward Veith, Jr. and Andrew Kern

Wisdom and Eloquence, Robert Littlejohn and Charles Evans

What about fundraising?

Like any other ministry we are dependant in part upon the generosity of others. In an effort to keep our tuition within reach of most families, we support activities such as sports, art, trips, etc. with separate fundraisers. As much as possible we have tried to keep away from any door-to-door sales for fundraisers. Here are the different fundraisers we now are participating in. Please take a moment to read and consider how you might help in this ministry.

eSCRIP – Go to www.escrip to sign up, and Veritas will receive a percentage of your purchases. If you shop at Safeway this is an easy way to benefit the school.

SCHOLARSHIPS - Many are unaware that we have a general scholarship fund. As funds are available in this account scholarships are awarded to students whose families are experiencing hardships or unexpected setbacks.

TAX CREDIT SCHOLARSHIPS – This has been a tremendous blessing to many families of Veritas who otherwise would not be able to afford to send their children here. Make a donation to CCSTO, a local scholarship organization, the scholarship is awarded to a student and you receive a dollar-per-dollar credit on your state taxes. Donation forms available from the school office.

GENERAL GIFTS – General gifts are used to meet the most immediate needs and priorities of Veritas.

DESIGNATED GIFTS – Donors may specify how their donation is to be used, such as scholarship, sports, missions, equipment, etc.

MATCHING GIFTS – Many employers have a matching gift program through which they match individual gifts. Veritas will be happy to work with your employer to set up such a program.