



# Insight

Summer 2016

The Magazine of  
Coventry Christian Schools

Real *Life*



## THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE

These words, spoken by Christ, have become an integral part of our culture at Coventry Christian Schools. Jesus made the bold claim that He came so that we, His disciples, could have life. Over the past few years, we have echoed Christ in declaring *Ut Vitam Habeant* which is the Latin translation of this passage from John 10:10. At CCS we want, more than anything else, to share and illuminate the life that awaits our students in the fullness of Christ. In fact, we believe that the only way to experience a full life is in Him.

One of the most common retorts against Christian education is that it does not prepare students for “real life.” Unfortunately, in some Christian schools this is true. These schools seek to build a bubble around their students to protect them from all of the evils of this world and modern American culture. Although the intent may be good,



living and educating students out of fear is never a way to win souls and make disciples for Christ. Instead, we must help shape a comprehensive worldview with our students that illuminates why the life in Christ is so much better than the one outside of Him. To do this we must teach our students how to think, to reason, and to articulate the truth found in Scripture within the context of a society that has rejected Christ. This type of education cannot be accomplished in a secular school, nor can it be accomplished in a

school seeking only to shelter and “keep the world out.” The best way, and I would contend the only way, to truly prepare our students for “real” life is to equip our students to understand that all truth is God’s truth. Classical Christian education is the best way to accomplish this goal.

In this edition of *Insight* are several articles that articulate why we believe that CCS is the best way to prepare your students for Real Life. I hope and pray that this summer is uplifting for you and your family, and I look forward to seeing you in September!

God bless you and keep you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Niehls". The signature is fluid and cursive.

John Mark Niehls, MBA  
Head of School

## ADMINISTRATION

John Mark Niehls, M.B.A.  
HEAD OF SCHOOL

Jill L. Barton  
K-12 DEAN OF ACADEMICS

Kelly Conicelli  
PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR

Melissa Perich  
SUMMER DAY CAMP DIRECTOR/  
PRESCHOOL TEACHER

Mark E. Niehls  
DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT

Tina McIntyre  
BUSINESS MANAGER

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Bill McGee  
CHAIR

Navin Mathew  
VICE-CHAIR

Michael Molfetto  
TREASURER

Sarah Lohr  
SECRETARY

John Cutillo

George Gunn III

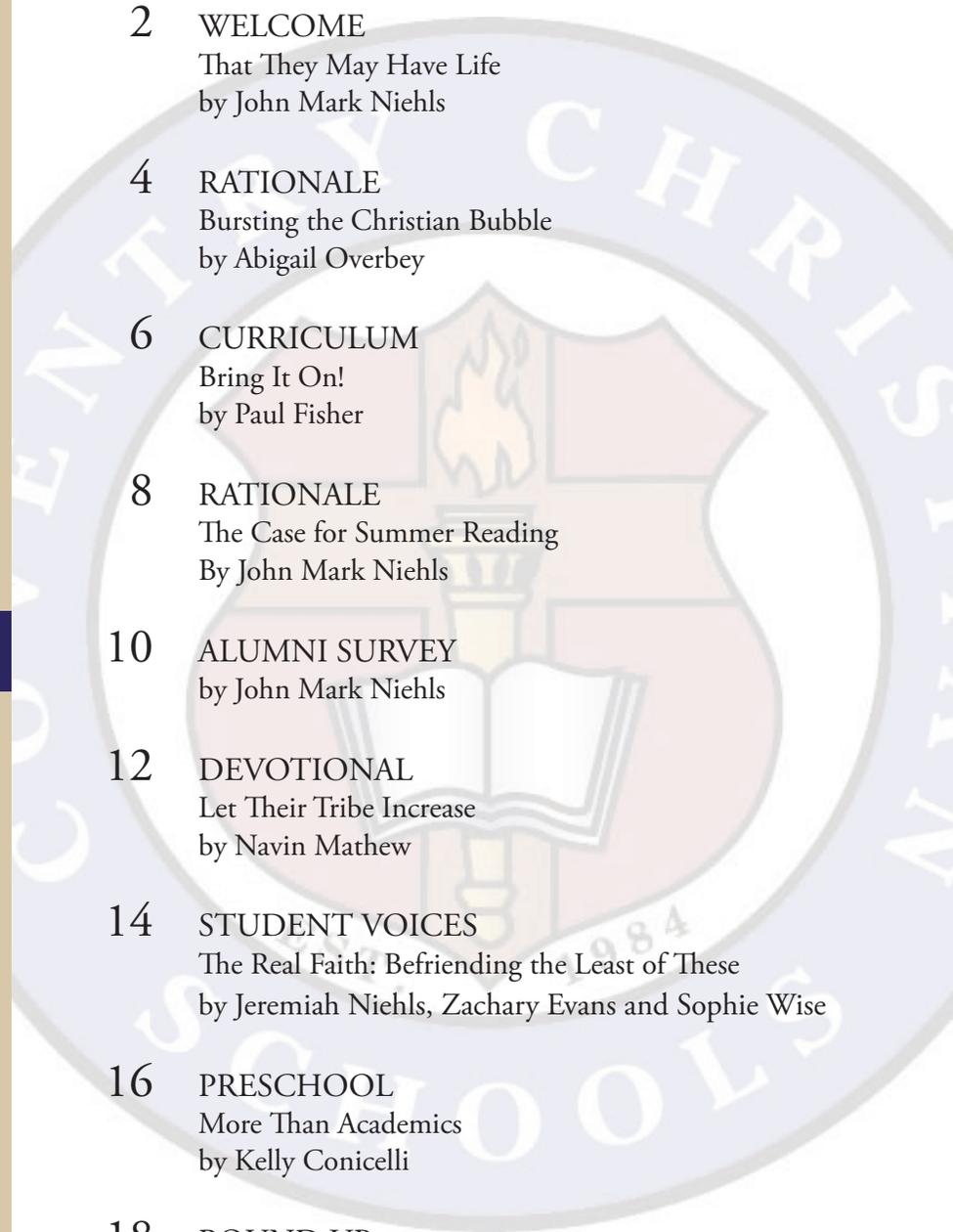
Patrice Mullen

Paul Vinod

Coventry Christian Schools  
699 N. Pleasantview Road  
Pottstown, PA 19464  
610-326-3320  
[www.coventrychristian.com](http://www.coventrychristian.com)

© 2016 by Coventry Christian Schools, Inc.  
Permission to reprint articles may be obtained  
by emailing [johnniehls@educatingforlife.com](mailto:johnniehls@educatingforlife.com).

## CONTENTS

- 
- 2 WELCOME  
That They May Have Life  
by John Mark Niehls
- 4 RATIONALE  
Bursting the Christian Bubble  
by Abigail Overbey
- 6 CURRICULUM  
Bring It On!  
by Paul Fisher
- 8 RATIONALE  
The Case for Summer Reading  
By John Mark Niehls
- 10 ALUMNI SURVEY  
by John Mark Niehls
- 12 DEVOTIONAL  
Let Their Tribe Increase  
by Navin Mathew
- 14 STUDENT VOICES  
The Real Faith: Befriending the Least of These  
by Jeremiah Niehls, Zachary Evans and Sophie Wise
- 16 PRESCHOOL  
More Than Academics  
by Kelly Conicelli
- 18 ROUND UP  
Eagles Roundup  
by Mark E. Niehls
- 19 NEW PROGRAMS  
Grammar School STEM Lab Launch  
by Jill Barton

# Bursting *the* Christian Bubble

by Abigail Overbey

As a teacher, I think a lot about whether my students will be prepared for “real life” when they graduate from CCS. I want them to think critically and communicate well with others. I also want them to be prepared for whatever college or career they choose. However, even more than that, I want my students to stand strong in their faith, their feet planted on the Gospel as a firm foundation in the midst of a contrary culture.

**I**NFLATING THE CHRISTIAN BUBBLE  
Christian schools like CCS face a unique challenge. We strive to equip graduates for life after the diploma both academically and spiritually. In a culture that is increasingly hostile to the Christian worldview, spiritual preparation becomes all the more vital.

It is natural to want to protect our students from anti-Christian morals and ideas. We don't want our children to adopt the culture's views of family, identity, and sexuality. Instead, we want to teach them about the love of Christ and His Gospel. After all, that's one of the reasons many of our CCS families opted out of public education in the first place.

However, in doing this, a Christian school has to resist the temptation to turn a safe learning environment into a full-blown Christian Bubble. In a Christian Bubble, students are shielded from anything that's perceived as non-Christian. This seems like a great idea, but it

poses problems in the areas of practicality, priority, and profession.

## **BURSTING THE CHRISTIAN BUBBLE**

First, the Christian Bubble is not practical. It is impossible to shield children from every evil or tempting thing in the world. American culture, particularly through advertising, showcases a highly-sexualized, instant gratification worldview from every angle. Students will absorb unbiblical messages through the media and their peers.

Recognizing this practicality is important. However, it should not drive us to cynicism or despair.

As a teacher, I need to confront the ugliness of the world with the beauty of the Gospel. As my senior Omnibus class studies Song of Solomon, I teach my students about the beauty of God's design for sex and marriage. I want them to see that God's plan for our lives is better for us than what the world has to offer.

Additionally, I want my students to appreciate God's love of words so that they value encouragement over gossip and praise over profanity. I cannot control my students' hearts, but I can give them a glorious glimpse of a world being redeemed by Christ.

Second, the Christian Bubble promotes skewed priorities. Often, the Christian Bubble mentality is rooted in fear. We fear that, if we don't shield children from immorality and anti-Christian ideas, they will be seduced from the faith by the glitz and glamor of a godless world.

Scripture reveals a God who is sovereign over every event in human history. Nothing escapes His notice, including a culture that rejects His decrees. He knows His people and will protect them with His fierce covenant love.

If we explicitly teach our children to fear the secular world, we could implicitly teach them that he who is in the world is greater than He who is in us. In my classroom, we read Freud, Camus, Huxley, and others, and we compare their ideas to God's Word. Doing so in the safety of a Christian school allows my students to explore the world's mindset under the authority of Scripture. This shows that we trust God's ability to protect His children. We need to engage with the world's ideas rather than shrink from them.

Third, the Christian Bubble ill prepares students to profess their faith to unbelievers. Assumptions and misunderstandings about Christianity abound in academia and popular culture. Christianity is under direct attack by those who see it as an outdated, oppressive religion.

The Christian Bubble tempts us to seclude our children from these attacks. But in doing so, we leave them to absorb or create further false ideas about non-Christians. Then, when they meet a non-believer who defies their stereotypes, they may not know how to respond. They then can be tempted to compromise what Scripture says because they have a false view of non-Christians.

In my classroom, we often discuss our culture's perspectives on a variety of issues such as sexuality, race, and individuality. In addition to reading God's Word to determine our viewpoint, we talk about how we would present our beliefs to a non-Christian in a way that is compassionate yet uncompromising.

We need to teach our children about other beliefs so that they can speak God's truth in love to a sin-soaked world.

In conclusion, it is the responsibility of classical Christian schools like CCS to resist the temptation of the Christian Bubble as we hope to train thoughtful, loving students who carry the Gospel into the "real world" after graduation.

*...it is the responsibility of classical Christian schools like CCS to resist the temptation of the Christian Bubble as we hope to train thoughtful, loving students who carry the Gospel into the "real world" after graduation.*

# BRING IT ON!

*Putting Primary Sources in Students' Hands  
Equips Them for the "Real World"*

*by Paul Fisher*

Christian schools are often accused of failing to expose their students to divergent views, leaving them ill-equipped to function and to thrive in a diverse population. In truth, many Christian schools have sought to censor curriculum, telling only their side to every story. Classical Christian education defies the stereotype of the overprotective “bubble” so often attributed to Christian schools by affording students the opportunity to vicariously experience immersion in divergent ideas, beliefs, and lifestyles through an integrated humanities approach to

treat their ideological opponents' views with compassion, discernment, and persuasion. Finally, it helps students to discern and appreciate the substantive differences between the actual views and experiences of those with opposing views rather than drawing comparisons and conclusions based upon stereotypes and assumptions.

The classical Christian approach acknowledges and explores the complexity of social, political, and philosophical issues by having students read proponents of divergent views in their own voices. In contrast, the prominent approach

in American schools is to provide students with history, sociology, and political science textbooks that present the who, what, and when, interpreting the voices of history for students while never letting students handle the primary sources that contain those very voices in their own words. Students are not permitted to check out the facts and to decide for themselves by wading through the views of others, considering their merits, and drawing their own conclusions. Instead, they are told how to interpret history through the lens of the textbook.

Americans place great faith in textbooks as a means of providing their children with an understanding of history. To a significant extent, textbooks define and determine what is important. Yet textbooks do not deserve their reputation as impartial educational tools that simply teach students facts and skills.

History textbooks incorporate attitudes and ways of looking at the world. In making judgments about what should be included and what should be excluded, and how particular episodes in history should be summarized, textbook authors assign positive or negative interpretations to particular events, thereby asserting a set of values. The fact that these values are often not declared explicitly, but remain implicit, does not make them less powerful. In the classical model, students are led in reading primary sources from divergent views on difficult and complex issues, empowering them to seek to understand nuance and to gain wisdom to handle conflicting views and lifestyles.

history, literature, theology, and philosophy. In essence, we say, “Bring it on!” We love to engage divergent views and to hear their arguments against ours. We do so by utilizing primary sources and the very best authentic arguments for divergent views penned by the intellectual giants of those views themselves. This approach provides students with a multi-dimensional view of complex social, political, and philosophical issues rather than the oversimplified and biased explanations most often provided by both Christian and secular textbook authors and editors. It exposes students to more of the world, teaching them to



For example, when students have to grapple with the arguments that were made by those who contributed to our political system, they experience something that is impossible with a textbook. A textbook will describe the Virginia and New Jersey Plans from the Constitutional Convention (also possibly mentioning Alexander Hamilton’s plan), then explain the Great Compromise that led to state equality in the Senate. That is good information for students to know, but why not just read the plans and the arguments raised for and against them? Admittedly, it is more difficult to delve into the arguments for and against the convention plans than to simply jump to the historical outcome, but by taking the debates seriously, students can see firsthand the difficulties in defining the nature of the new Union. There was a wisdom worked out through deliberation and compromise, and that wisdom is ultimately more important than the final product. Imagine asking students who have taken a course in American politics why California and Wyoming have the same number of senators. The A student who learned from a textbook can probably explain the reason why, but not the reasoning. The A student from a classical class will have read a portion of the convention notes and will therefore not only know the answer but will also understand the statesmanship that went into working out that detail—the wisdom gained through a great debate.

Rather than being sheltered by a censored curriculum, classical Christian school students are exposed to more of the world than most students and taught to consider

*We love to engage divergent views and to hear their arguments against ours. We do so by utilizing primary sources and the very best authentic arguments for divergent views penned by the intellectual giants of those views themselves.*

the views of their opponents so that they can become compassionate, discerning, and persuasive participants and leaders in a diverse, “real world.” Reading primary sources and embracing great debates models for students how to engage divergent views winsomely and compassionately because they have put on someone else’s glasses to view the world and the specific issue from the other’s vantage point. In the Christian classical school, this helps students identify the Gospel bridges that can be built between those viewpoints and experiences and their own Christ-centered ones.

Because they walk through the great debates in the shoes of those with opposing views and differing experiences, they are able discern and appreciate the substantive differences between the actual views and experiences of those with opposing views from comparisons and conclusions based upon stereotypes and assumptions about them. This is effective because it teaches students to view the questions of life through the lens of different worldviews before they consider the lens of the biblical worldview (their own). That process of hearing directly from the source rather than an editor or interpreter, seeking to understand the context and the person before responding—walking in their shoes, understanding it from 21st Century perspectives in contemporary society, and then applying the biblical lens to it, helps students to be sophisticated at adeptly encountering ideas and experiences different than their own. When our students graduate, they and their parents can confidently say to a diverse and even antagonistic world, “Bring it on!”

CURIOUS GEORGE  
**Odyssey**  
 BEOWOLF  
 LITTLE BEAR  
 Children’s Homer  
**DIARY OF ANNE FRANK**  
**The Hobbit**  
**Pilgrim’s Progress**  
*Paradise Lost*  
 SONG OF ROLAND  
 YANKEE DOODLE BOY  
 TOM SAWYER  
 THE GOLDEN GOBLET  
*The Hiding Place*  
 THE SECRET GARDEN  
**MOBY DICK**  
 CHARLOTTE’S WEB  
**SAGA OF THE VOLSUNGS**  
 & *Canterbury Tales*  
 GREAT GATSBY  
**Little Woman**



# The Case for Summer Reading

by John Mark Niehls

Ahhhh... summertime. A time for relaxation, turning off the brain, and for re-charging. There are few things more ingrained into American culture than summer vacation. But what if some of our basic assumptions regarding summer vacation are wrong?

## *The Summertime Gap...*

In his book, *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell reviews a study by Karl Alexander, a sociologist from Johns Hopkins University, on students in the Baltimore public school system. The students were broken into three socioeconomic groups and then tracked from 1st through 5th grade. The goal was to analyze the achievement gap between low and high socioeconomic students. As might be expected, students from the lower socioeconomic group performed lower than the high socioeconomic students, and this gap in achievement grew consistently as the students aged. By the time the students reached the 5th grade, the low group was scoring a full two grade levels behind the high group.

Class	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade
Low	329	375	397	433	461
Middle	348	388	425	467	497
High	361	418	460	506	534

\*Reading scores by socioeconomic class for elementary school. Source: *Outliers* by Malcom Gladwell, Page 255

The results from this study, at first glance, are disheartening. They reveal the very real disadvantage that students growing up in low-income homes and neighborhoods face. However, the assumptions that many of us make about the cause of the disparity in socioeconomic classes is anything but accurate. When we take a closer look at the data we find that the low-income students actually out-perform their high-income counterparts during the school year. The cause of the achievement gap is that the low-income students actually regress during the summer while the high-income students continue to progress. These results are most apparent in the reading scores. Gladwell's conclusion is that the low-income students fell behind because they were not being taught, while the high-income students continued to be educated either directly by the parents or indirectly through programs and activities that the parents arranged.

Class	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade	Total
Low	55	46	30	33	25	189
Middle	69	43	34	41	27	214
High	60	39	34	28	23	184

*\*School year score growth by class for elementary school. Source: Outliers, by Malcom Gladwell Page 257*

### ***A Data Explosion...***

In 2015, Christopher Surdak, a telecommunications expert, wrote an article on FUTURE TECH in which he reviewed factors that are going to drive the telecommunications over the next five years. One of the statistics Mr. Surdak cited was that in 2016 data traffic will be 200 times greater than voice traffic. That traffic is expected to grow exponentially in the coming years as more and more people get connected. Not only are individuals carrying several devices but the things (our lights, TVs, robotic vacuums, drones, heating/cooling systems, microwaves, ovens, etc.) we use everyday are quickly being added to “the grid.” The speed at which our world is changing is breathtaking.

This ever changing world presents us with a striking conflict. We have more ways to entertain and distract ourselves than ever before, but critical thinking skills have never been more valuable. Our minds do not learn how to think critically by become passive consumers of popular media. Instead, we must engage our minds presenting new ideas and concepts which stretch us and help us grow. The student who becomes an active participant in the learning process, who develops a love

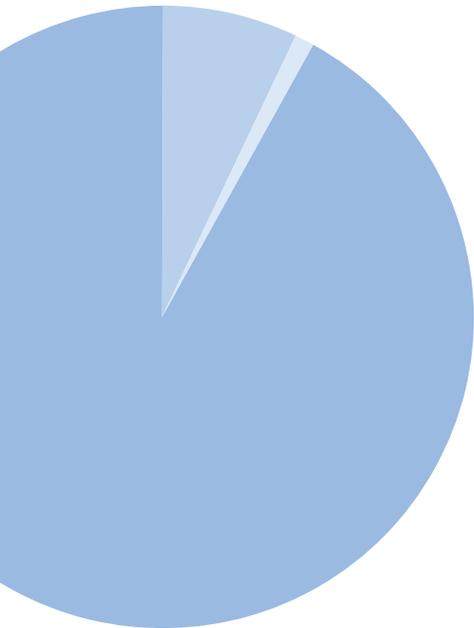
for learning and applies it...he will be best positioned for success.

### ***In Conclusion...***

How does this study of Baltimore city students, summer vacation, an explosion of data, and the CCS summer reading program relate? The answer lies with what we believe about learning — how it happens, and what is its goal. At CCS we believe that learning is far more than just a test or report card grade. Instead, our goal for education is that it becomes a lifelong journey, one that our students become active participants in, not recipients of. The best type of education is one where the parent and the school are synchronized with one another and where the student is taught truth, beauty and goodness.

Our summer reading program is meant to provide parents with a foundation of learning for the summer months. We encourage you to build upon it and to expand it. Take this time to make learning fun for your children. Find ways to incorporate learning into your vacation plans, and provide your children with the blessing of knowledge and wisdom — something that is nearly impossible to receive passively through the TV or iPad.

## HOW WELL DID CCS PREPARE YOU FOR COLLEGE?



**92%** PREPARED OR VERY PREPARED

**7%** NOT SURE

**1%** NOT PREPARED

## TYPE OF COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY ATTENDED



**62%** CHRISTIAN OR CATHOLIC

**20%** PUBLIC

**16%** PRIVATE / NON-RELIGIOUS

**2%** JOINED THE MILITARY

## WHAT FIELD GRADUATED?



**40%** SCIENCE & HEALTH



**17%** BUSINESS



**14%** EDUCATION



**11%** IT & ENGINEERING



**5%** ARTS



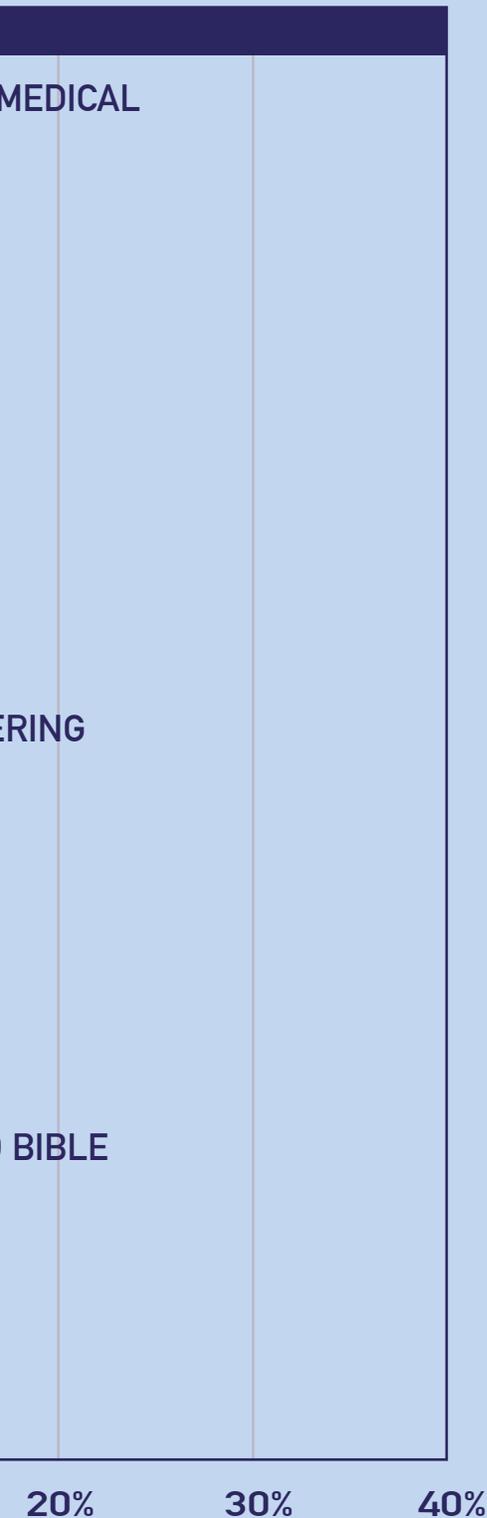
**4%** RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY



**9%** OTHER

0% 10%

# WHY DO OUR ALUMNI ENTER?



**88%** OF ALUMNI FINISH THEIR **BACHELORS DEGREE WITHIN 5 YEARS** OF THEIR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

MORE THAN **44%** OF CCS ALUMNI GO ON TO PURSUE A **MASTER'S DEGREE**

**55%** OF ALUMNI GO ON TO PARTICIPATE IN **REGULAR SERVICE & CHARITY WORK** AFTER GRADUATION

**74%** OF ALUMNI ARE **ACTIVE MEMBERS** IN A CHRISTIAN CHURCH

CCS ALUMNI ARE **GLOBAL!**  
OUR ALUMNI ARE LIVING IN MORE THAN  
**11** COUNTRIES & **20** STATES



Let Their Tribe

# INCREASE

by Navin Mathew

**M**any years ago, I took up a position that would have made academia everywhere cringe, were they to be aware of it – I conducted ‘labs’ every evening at our church Vacation Bible School. I was addressed as ‘Professor Navin’ by the kids and I took full advantage of the prestige for those fleeting evenings. On the second evening, when my experiment to demonstrate the principle underlying the working of a geyser failed to make the water ‘rise’ despite several attempts, all hopes of tenure sank with it.

If you are thinking “What were you trying to accomplish with a science experiment at a VBS, the lesson had to do with the natural means through which God very likely provided Moses and the Israelites water when they were wandering in the wilderness. God had asked Moses to strike a rock to bring forth water and then later to do so by speaking to it. A point that needs to be made is that while God can obviously use miracles (and does) to prove and provide for his people, there are many instances when he providentially guides his people to accomplish all that they need through natural means. There is no compelling reason to say that a belief in God negates the necessity of the scientific method as is often charged. In fact, a belief and trust in God and his Word should only propel us to understand God’s world to the best of our ability. “It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings” (Prov 25:2). It is often stated in secular academia that when we study science, we should only search for natural causes and that the purview of science is limited merely to that. Therefore, the claim is that science cannot speak to matters of faith, existence of God, etc. as it deals only in the realm of nature (natural causes involving matter) and reason, as opposed to the ‘supernatural’ and ‘faith.’ Many scientists take a position

of NOMA (non overlapping magisteria), a term coined by the late Harvard paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould to express the thought that science and religion speak to different subjects and have no common meeting point. This is to implicitly devalue religion as a matter of ‘blind faith,’ and not one of ‘reason,’ which cannot be falsified, and is hence a pseudoscience.

The presuppositions that a person ‘brings’ to any subject vastly affect what he ‘gets’ out of it. This is true in science just as in any other field of study. Let me explain. I recall being taught in my textbooks (and it may still be taught) that Joseph Priestley is the discoverer of oxygen. What is not mentioned is that while he did conduct experiments to isolate oxygen, he vehemently denied the existence of oxygen until his death! Both he and Antoine Lavoisier conducted similar experiments but because of their presuppositions, came to completely different conclusions. Priestley believed in the theory of phlogiston articulated by Johann Becher, that anything that burns contains phlogiston (Greek for ‘burned’ or ‘set on fire’). Therefore, in an experiment where a lit candle dies out shortly after being placed under a glass globe, he said that is because the jar is now saturated with phlogiston. It could not hold any more phlogiston. The experiment proved his theory. Lavoisier on the other hand said that the candle stopped burning because the oxygen in the air was fully consumed and since oxygen is necessary to burn, the candle burned out. Same experiment but presuppositions caused the scientists to infer entirely different conclusions.

This demonstrates why educating our children is a precious trust. The parent should (and does) play a critical role in shepherding a child’s heart and in filtering the inputs that a child uses to ‘view’ the world. The word ‘education’ comes from the Latin root ‘educare’ and the prior root ‘educe’ which means ‘to lead out of/from’ (remember Mussolini was called Il Duce – the Leader). But out of what? As theologian R.C. Sproul says, the purpose is to lead a child out of ignorance. The purpose is to ‘educate’

a child as the ancients said in the mind and morals. Education of the mind inputs facts and explains logic (how to think about the facts). Education of morals teaches right from wrong, good from evil, and how to use the mind for the 'purpose of life.' As Peter Kreeft of Boston College explains, education leads a child out from darkness to light, from folly to wisdom.

Good parenting presupposes and requires us to be careful students ourselves of the True, the Good and the Beautiful. We must choose teachers who are in loco parentis – in the place of parents. But how many of us check to see if the schools and the teachers our children sit under, hold the core views we hold? Given the same information, we may be raising our children up to certain conclusions in life, but the teacher, another person in a position of authority, could just as well be leading them to a diametrically opposite conclusion. Why? Because the presuppositions a person brings to the table plays a role in permitting and disallowing conclusions. But when we look for schools, what we are looking for are 'facilities' – a gym, sufficient computers, classroom size, faculty/student ratio, opportunities for learning musical instruments, etc. Important as these are, they are the nonessentials.

Ray Vander Laan, a teacher who highlights the Bible with a Hebraic perspective explains that in Jesus' day, the teacher or 'Rabbi' was a title of respect and honor given by the community. Commonly called 'Torah teachers,' rabbis had memorized the Torah and become master storytellers. Nevertheless, they were limited to teaching only the accepted interpretations of other rabbis. Some brilliant rabbis were recognized as having *s'mikeh*, the authority to introduce new teachings. They achieved special recognition and wisdom and taught their own interpretations, and were trusted to provide new insights from God's Word. The people of his day recognized Jesus as being a *s'mikeh* rabbi. As Matthew 7 records, "the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law."

Vander Laan explains that "a talmid (disciple) did not follow a rabbi as a student. They desired to gain the rabbi's knowledge, but for a greater goal; they wanted to become like the rabbi himself. A disciple followed the rabbi all the time, often without knowing or asking where the rabbi was going. The talmid rarely left his rabbi's side for fear that he would miss a teachable

moment. He watched the rabbi's every move, noting how he acted and thought about a variety of situations. The disciple's deepest desire was to follow his rabbi so closely that he would start to think and act like the rabbi himself." This is a far cry from most modern student/teacher relationships. And yet, the teachers we place our children under need to be able to educate both the mind and the morals.

Surely Jesus is *sui generis* (unique). We don't expect to find another teacher like him for our children. Nevertheless, as a parent, I want to place my children under the guidance of a teacher whose worldview leads him to teach in a manner that ultimately points them to the Great Teacher Himself.

The Russian Nobel laureate Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn started his Templeton Award address thus: "More than half a century ago, while I was still a child, I recall hearing a number of older people offer the following explanation for the great disasters that had befallen Russia: Men have forgotten God; that's why all this has happened. Since then I have spent well nigh fifty years working on the history of our Revolution; in the process I have read hundreds of books, collected hundreds of personal testimonies, and have already contributed eight volumes of my own toward the effort of clearing away the rubble left by that upheaval. But if I were asked today to formulate as concisely as possible the main cause of the ruinous Revolution that swallowed up some sixty million of our people, I could not put it more accurately than to repeat: Men have forgotten God; that's why all this has happened."





# THE REAL FAITH: *Befriending the Least of These*

*By Jeremiah Niehls, Zachary Evans and Sophie Wise*

Growing up as a young Christian has its struggles, especially in a world where Christianity is becoming less prominent and Christians have become more and more persecuted. Many young Christians go to a public school where their faith is tested every day; they are constantly putting the faith that they learn at church or at home into practice. As CCS students, however, we are often surrounded by other Christians who support our faith. We are constantly learning about Christ's teachings and how they can be applied to our lives, but rarely is our faith tested on a daily basis. It can be hard to spread the Gospel to unbelievers when almost every person we have daily contact with is a believer.

### THE REAL FAITH: PUTTING IT INTO ACTION

Project Purpose provides students at CCS a chance to put the faith that we learn about into practice and live the life that Christ calls us to live. It gives us a chance to talk to underserved kids who have never heard the story of Christ, or have misconceptions about what a Christian looks like; we can show them the love of Christ by simply being there for them. We can help them with struggles that we have gone through before and provide a different perspective on the problems they are facing. Christ calls us to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, and Project Purpose gives students at CCS an opportunity to be that light of the world and show God's love to our neighbors in the community through tutoring, mentoring, and simply making friends.

### THE REAL FAITH: LOVING OUR FRIENDS

John 15:13 says "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." As students at CCS, we have heard this verse countless times. The words themselves are common knowledge; however, it is difficult to teach in a classroom how to actively live this verse out. Working with students at Project Purpose allows us to see the true application of love.

"Greater love has no one than this..." Project Purpose is a source of God's love for the underserved students of Rolling Hills; for some of them, the only source. Our job as tutors is not simply to help with homework, but to show love through our actions. As our students grow, we desire for them to understand what is taught in school, as well as a more important lesson: how to love others.

"...to lay down one's life for one's friends." Working with Project Purpose is a sacrifice in many ways. One of the biggest things we must learn to give up is time. Most people in today's culture rush from one place to the next, picking and choosing how to spend their time; more specifically, how to spend their time on themselves. Selfishness becomes a first priority for most of us. Project Purpose is an opportunity to lay down our own lives and think about the lives of others. Not only does it show the children that they are worth the time we give, but it also displays the final part of the verse. Regardless of the fact our students may be younger than us, we honestly state that these children are our friends. Our role in their lives is one of importance, one that will impact them in the future. In the

same way, these children have become tools of the Father; He has used these little children to show us how to love another.

Christ calls us to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, and Project Purpose gives students at CCS an opportunity to be that light of the world and show God's love to our neighbors in the community through tutoring, mentoring, and simply making friends.

### THE REAL FAITH: FACING CHALLENGES

While serving the kids at Project Purpose is a fantastic way to serve the community and lay your life down for another, it is not always rainbows and sunbeams from heaven. Working with at-risk kids is can be difficult because, after all, they are kids. At times, they are well behaved and ready to learn, but other times they are antsy and need a great deal of patience. Sometimes the hardest part of serving is getting our students to start working and stay focused. This can be challenging, so it is vital that we stay patient with them and love them. By being patient and kind, we are able to show these kids Christ's patience and love. We serve even when it is difficult because we understand that Christ never said following Him would be easy. Yet, He has called us to serve and love these children. Serving with Project Purpose allows us to learn how to have faith and love the "least of these" even during the difficult times.

The three of us have served with Project Purpose for over three years. We have come to love all of the kids in Project Purpose! One of our favorite parts about a Wednesday night of tutoring is simply getting to fellowship with the kids. Whether it's Jeremiah playing soccer with Mekhi, Sophie jumping rope with David and Kylie, or Zach showing the kids a seemingly impossible magic trick, we love being friends with these kids. It brings us great joy to be able to show a child Christ's love, and in doing so, make their day better. Being friends with the kids of Project Purpose allows us to love them and show them the love of Christ. It is an opportunity to put our faith into action; an opportunity to make our faith real.





## *More than Academics:* **REAL LIFE**

Recently, one of our teachers had a CCS mom come to her asking for prayer for a tough life situation she was encountering. The mom was in tears and desperate for someone to listen and pray with her. She came because she knew that CCS was a safe place. This wasn't a mother of any of the teacher's current preschool students. The teacher had taught her little girl several years earlier. This mom came back, years later, because she remembered that the teacher had always been willing to listen and pray with her while her daughter was in the class.

**P**reschool education is essential. Not only do hundreds of studies suggest that the benefits of preschool are real and continue throughout the rest of a child's education, but early childhood education also proves to be a sound investment for the entirety of a child's life. One of our goals in the CCS preschool is to prepare our kids for rigorous academics.

Yet beyond learning the letters, shapes, and numbers, I've come to see another essential element that our preschool program provides: real-life community. In the tough circumstances of life that arise, CCS

provides a sense of family that, many times, has a foundation built in the early years of preschool.

From opening at 6:00 in the morning and closing at 6:00 in the evening to having a line of parents waiting in the hallways together while class is ending, there is a wide array of opportunities for parents and staff to connect and to build friendships. For a few months this year I was working until 6 p.m., spending a consistent fifteen to twenty minutes with the same five to ten kids at the end of each night. One of our staff, Lucette Coughy, has been doing this for many years. What an incredible opportunity to talk to kids

# COMMUNITY

By Kelly Conicelli



about their days, asking what they have learned, the highs and lows, etc. The same is true in the wee hours of the morning, when Melissa Perich opens up the preschool at 6:00 a.m. and is able to sit and talk with parents and kids.

So many staff have witnessed children grow up, from when they were in diapers to watching them graduate high school. Even more so, there are some former students that are now starting their own families. There are currently seven preschool parents who attended CCS as children and are now sending their own kids here. What a beautiful picture of the CCS family that continues to grow!

Often I will greet parents as they come to pick up their children after our morning preschool classes. A few weeks ago, one mother walked in with another mother, carrying the other mom's son. Both moms come every day at noon to pick up their preschoolers. They also have older kids attending CCS and younger kids who will attend CCS in the

near future. These moms, and so many others, are given an incredible chance to form community and relationships that extend beyond having a child in the same class. There is much more involved than just the daily greetings. It is about sharing life as their children grow alongside one another.

Just imagine the beauty of preschool field day. Preschoolers, parents, grandparents, and staff come together for fun activities and games to celebrate the end of another school year. Then the day ends with a shared picnic lunch. In that moment, not only are there children who will eventually grow up side-by-side and walk across the stage at graduation together, but there are also parents who will attend birthday parties, soccer games, and field trips together for many years to come. Through the years they will share stories, joys, and heartaches, all the while creating community. CCS is a place that fosters and encourages real-life community, and it is a blessing to witness the foundations of many of those communities formed within the preschool.



*CCS is a place that fosters and encourages real-life community and it is a blessing to witness the foundations of many of those communities formed within the preschool.*



# Eagles Roundup

*by Mark E. Niehls*

## COMPUTER NETWORK UPGRADE COMPLETED

Last summer and into the fall, a complete makeover of the school's computer network was completed. Enhancing the technical support of educational opportunities available to our students has been a priority for administration, faculty, board of trustees and parents.

It all began with laying a foundation of a strong physical layer also known as the structured cable plant. The Cat6A copper and fiber optic cabling that was installed will support 10gbps of throughput making it absolutely future proof for any child that is currently enrolled at CCS.

## SPEECH MEET LAUNCHED

Grammar school students practiced for an in-school competitive speech meet which determined the school's representatives at the regional Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) Speech Meet in March. This was the second year this grammar school enrichment program was added to the curriculum.



## BOYS LACROSSE ADDED TO LINEUP

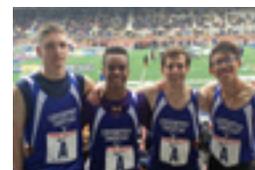
For the first time in school history, Lacrosse was offered as a spring sport at CCS. In its inaugural year, 13 boys



got out on the practice field and began learning how to cradle, throw, catch, and of course hit! What began as Saturday morning practices over the winter, turned into weekly practices on the field once spring arrived. The team learned a lot, and everyone is planning to return next year to continue building this team sport at CCS.

## SPRING TRACK AND FIELD

The coed Track and Field Team competed in seven meets! CCS fielded a sprint and distance team, but also had a couple of middle school hurdlers as well as some high school throwers. The javelin throw was added for the first time this year. While this program is still developing, our students have shown great improvement and obvious talent this year.



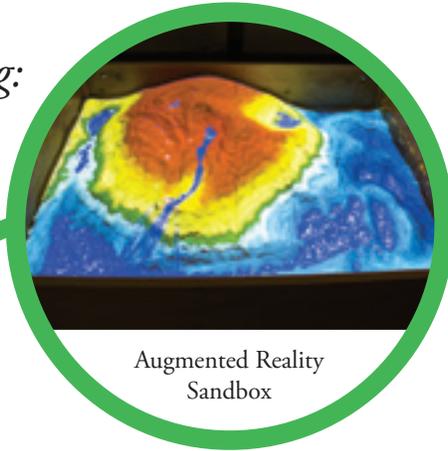
## GIRLS SOCCER REPEATS AS LEAGUE CHAMPS!

The Middle School Girls soccer team put in a lot of hard work during the pre-season which paid off with a string of seven consecutive wins to begin the season. The young team played fantastic soccer throughout the season and beat a number of much older teams in convincing fashion. The middle school girls went on to win the league championship for the second year in a row with a 1-0 win over Upper Bucks. Congratulations coach Jeff Hunsberger and Middle School Girls Soccer!



# CCS announces the opening of our Grammar School STEM Lab!

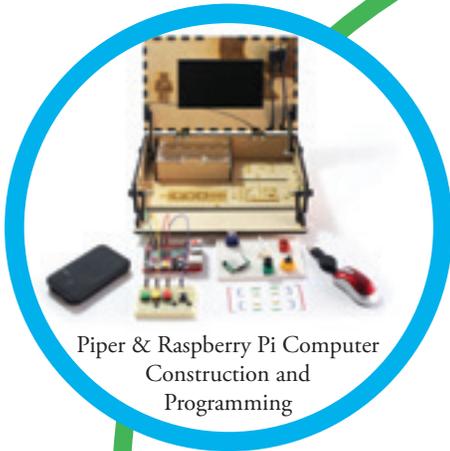
*Featuring:*



Augmented Reality Sandbox



Vermiculture



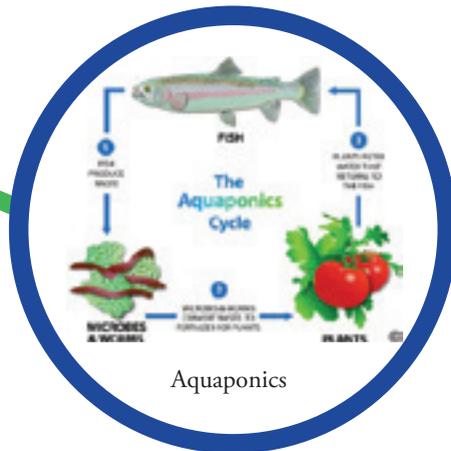
Piper & Raspberry Pi Computer Construction and Programming



The Charlotte Mason ("hands on") approach to nature study



Microscopic Discovery



Aquaponics



699 N. Pleasantview Rd.  
Pottstown, PA 19464-2615

Non-Profit  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Pottstown, PA  
Permit No. 194

# Mark Your Calendar for our Founder's Dinner

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2016

FEATURING DENNIS PRAGER

FOUNDING PRINCIPLES - *How the Bible served as the source code for western civilization*

DENNIS PRAGER is a best-selling author, columnist and nationally syndicated radio talk show host based in Los Angeles. His radio show is heard by over 2 million listeners on 150 stations across the country.

A highly sought-after speaker and frequent cable news show guest, Dennis has lectured all over the world including Europe, Asia, Israel, and Australia. His New York Times best-selling books include *Think a Second Time*, *Happiness is a Serious Problem* and *Still the Best Hope: Why American Values Must Triumph*, and *The Ten Commandments: Still the Best Moral Code*. In 2016, Simon and Schuster released a revised and updated 3rd edition of his highly praised book, *Why the Jews: The Reason for Anti-Semitism, the Most Accurate Predictor of Human Evil*.

His latest venture, Prager University, is a virtual university on the Internet with a powerful twist – all the courses are five minutes long. In 2015, Prager University courses had over 70 million YouTube and Facebook views. That number will double this year. Faculty members include George Will, Arthur Brooks, Walter Williams, Robert George, Alan Dershowitz, Bjorn Lomborg and Bret Stephens among many others.

