



# The Paideia

JANUARY 2011

PROVIDENCE CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

## Classical Language Study and Worldview by Bill Klousia

Language is “the emblem (or symbol) of its speakers,” says R. M. W. Dixon. “Each language determines a unique way of viewing the world. It encapsulates the laws, traditions and beliefs of its ethnic group.” Language is also a gift from God, an indispensable tool, without which it is impossible for people groups to function. Every language reflects a particular worldview, or a pattern of conceiving reality. God is the God of reality. He spoke into being everything that exists and therefore is a part of reality. At Providence Classical Christian Academy, students are immersed in a worldview in every discipline, yet every subject studied is done so through the lens of an overarching Christian worldview.

The study of the classical languages shows clearly the value and power of words. People need a vocabulary ten times larger for *thinking* than for talking, since the average person does much more thinking, pondering, meditating, cogitating,

ruminating on ideas and concepts than actually speaking. Memorization, one of the most precious human faculties, also comes into play here as students take permanent custody of the words they are studying. Yet memorization of Greek and Latin is much more than just adding data or information to the student’s mind as if it were an island

unconnected to anything. When students memorize, they link these objective facts to relevant issues, constructs, and so forth that feed their worldview; there is a pertinent cohesion involved.

Students at our school gain an interest for all great literature as they are driven back *ad fontes*

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## Why Pure Phonics?

by Julie Wagenmaker

How many times have you heard that the spelling of the English language is irregular, with many phonetic inconsistencies? Some have even asserted that English is not a phonetic language at all. These falsehoods are the results of the “whole-language”

approach to teaching the English language. Many of us learned how to read and spell with the “whole-language” approach: looking at words as units (i.e. sight words) instead of looking at words as being made up of individual sound-symbols. This approach basically assumes people can “catch” the principles of language. For example, a teacher using this method would simply show a child a word and say what it represents. This

leaves a child to only use his visual memory and it wrongly teaches a child that words are symbols similar to Chinese characters or Egyptian hieroglyphs. With this approach, all rules pertaining to word construction (spelling) are lost. Others of us have had a mixture of “whole-language” and some version of phonics. This approach tries to show that words are not just characters or

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## Why Pure Phonics? *continued*

symbols, but do have some phonetic aspect. Teachers will teach some of the sound symbols, but not all. For example, teachers will not teach that the symbols “a,” “o,” and “u” all have three different sounds. Or, the symbol “ough” will not be taught as a unit with six different sounds, but neglected or partially taught at best. Because this approach neglects some of the fundamental units of words, some of the rules, again, will be lost. Hence, even a hybrid whole-language/phonics approach will leave a child with an incomplete understanding of language.

As a result of this trend toward teaching English with this whole-language approach, the knowledge of the fundamental units (also called sound-symbols or phonograms) and the rules that guide how the units are put together have been mostly discarded. A pure phonics approach to

studying language incorporates learning the fundamental units and the rules connected to forming words. A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound people can hear in a word and a phonogram is the written symbol of that sound. When a student learns all 70 phonograms (with ALL of their sounds), they have at their fingertips the tools to sound out words instead of guessing. The rules, of which there are only 29, not only help students to know what sound the phonograms are making, but help them know how to spell as well. Students will not only become excellent readers and spellers, but will taste the beauty and richness of the language that God has so graciously given us.

*Julie Wagenmaker teaches first grade at PCCA and is a Spell to Write and Read (SWR) Endorsed Trainer.*

## Mark Twain Festival



We celebrated fall with our 3rd Annual Mark Twain Festival. The students and staff alike dressed in costume - lots of Aunt Pollys, Becky Thatchers, Tom Sawyers, and even a couple of Haley's Comets (Mark Twain was born and died under Haley's Comet)! The Jerome homeroom came out first in the famous raft race at Creve Coeur Lake. The Frog Race was enjoyed by all: First place frog owned by fifth grader, Madelyn P.



Mark your calendar for our festival next year. Everyone is invited to participate in this activity.

## Upcoming Events

**Jan. 22 • 10 a.m.**

**Open House**

**Jan. 28 and 29**

**Upper School Play**

A dramatist's adaptation of Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, staged, designed, and presented by PCCA's Upper School under the direction of Miss Serena McCarthy.

**Feb. 3 • 10 a.m.**

**Open House**

**Feb. 25**

**13th Annual Auction Gala**

All are welcome to attend this event for an evening of fun and to help raise much needed funds for Providence Classical Christian Academy.

**March 8**

**Spring Program**

**March 21 - 25**

**Spring Break**

**April 11 - 13**

**CAT 5's**

**May 3 - 6**

**5th Grade Williamsburg Trip**

**May 13**

**Field Day**

**May 20**

**Last Day of School  
Graduation**



**Get ready for a fun night at  
Providence's annual auction on  
Friday, February 25.**

Join in on the excitement of the  
silent and live auctions –  
we're working on some great packages!

**One-Week Trip  
to New England for Two**

**Florida Vacation**

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and complimentary wine. The cost is  
\$50 per person. For more information,  
visit the auction page on our website:  
[www.ProvidenceStL.org](http://www.ProvidenceStL.org).*



## *march in the park* 2010

### ***We are so thankful for our students!***

The school had a very hefty goal, \$12,500 – our largest goal ever. Not only did the students rally and make this goal, they beat it bringing in over \$14,000!

On October 29, the entire school descended on Forest Park and marched from the History Museum to the Art Museum. We were blessed with beautiful weather and enjoyed a pizza lunch on Art Hill.

### **CONTEST WINNERS:**

- Homeroom bringing in the most \$\$:  
Herodotus (They won lunch off campus at TGI Friday's!)
- Grammar School  
Lunch with Mrs. Taylor: Olivia V. - Kindergarten
- Grammar School  
Headmaster for a Day: Olivia V. - Kindergarten

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## Classical Language Study and Worldview *continued*

“to the original sources.” Latin and Greek students learn the general principles of language construction. Their word power increases dramatically, as does their knowledge of synonyms, nuances of meaning, and etymology. By reading the primary sources and learning classical languages, students receive an historico-linguistic link between the present and the past that serves to provide timely perspective to events recurring in modern times. They get the sense of “a relatively stable and enduring cultural core,” says James Fowler. All this, in turn, shows the relevance of a credible historical and cultural worldview.

Study of the classical languages also enhances analytical skills and critical reasoning abilities as students learn and exercise the logical arts of induction and deduction as they observe a constant interchange taking place. Students are enabled to consider the data before them from multiple points of view simultaneously and, from this, to be decisive and precise. This process, especially concerning the classical languages, naturally enhances the inter-disciplinary integration of subject matter that is already occurring in the curriculum.

Classical language students furthermore learn to habituate truth in their lives as they encounter

the virtues of the classical world, such as prudence, justice, courage, and temperance (and others), which enliven the mind and shape character, affirms Tracy Lee Simmons. The Greeks identified the totality of the virtues as *arête*, which pointed to the best of anything, to its perfection. David Hicks asserts that through the enculturation process of *paideia*, that tension between the pursuit of teaching the necessary skills (training) and teaching for cultural and intellectual strength (liberal education), they sought to change who the learner was by fostering a certain kind of human being.

Taken from classical pagan *paideia*, Christian *paideia* is transformed by transcendent principles of holiness, love and humility as truth and virtue are conjoined through inquiry within the framework and worldview of the Word of God wherein students encounter the one Hero, the Ideal Man, Jesus Christ, who is deity but who also exemplifies fully expressed humanity. This environment of a fully rounded education (encyclopaedic) is ripe for producing the whole person.

*Bill Klousia teaches classical languages  
in the Upper School at PCCA.*

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A general gift is used to meet the most pressing needs and priorities of Providence. General gifts are useful because of their flexibility.

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If you have a desire to support a specific program, such as our athletic program or tuition assistance for needy families, please specify this when you make your donation.

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