



THE
COVENANT
PREPARATORY
SCHOOL

EST. 1993

PARENT EDUCATION MEETING

Classical Schooling in an Age of Progressivism

Friday, November 10, 2017

The Covenant Preparatory School is a school dedicated to providing students in Grades Pre-Kindergarten through the twelfth grade with a rigorous education that reflects a commitment to “The Three C’s”:
Christian, Classical, and College-Preparatory.

It is critical that we clearly define each of these particular categories.

As a Christian school, we embrace the following three principles:

Counter-Cultural Nature of Classical Education

Formative versus Informative Purpose

Focus on the Development and Mastery of Skills

Development of the Whole Child

Definition of Terms: What is *Progressivism*?

Progressivism, as a contemporary educational paradigm, emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as a result of multiple factors, to include an increasingly industrial economy and efforts of men such as John Dewey and Charles Peirce.

- Secularist in its worldview (A belief that education is *religiously neutral*)
- Pragmatic at its root (“Pragmatism is America’s only homegrown philosophical movement.” R.C. Sproul)
- According to Littlejohn and Evans (*Wisdom and Eloquence: A Christian Paradigm for Classical Learning, 2006*), *progressivism* is usually characterized by at least three priorities:
 - It places the student at the center of the educational process, displacing or ignoring the cultural tradition in which he or she stands. (thus, equating activity with education)
 - It educates students according to deterministic assessments of aptitude prescribing college-preparatory tracks for some and vocational education for others.
 - It generally “vocalionalizes” the education process, training students primarily to function in the economy.



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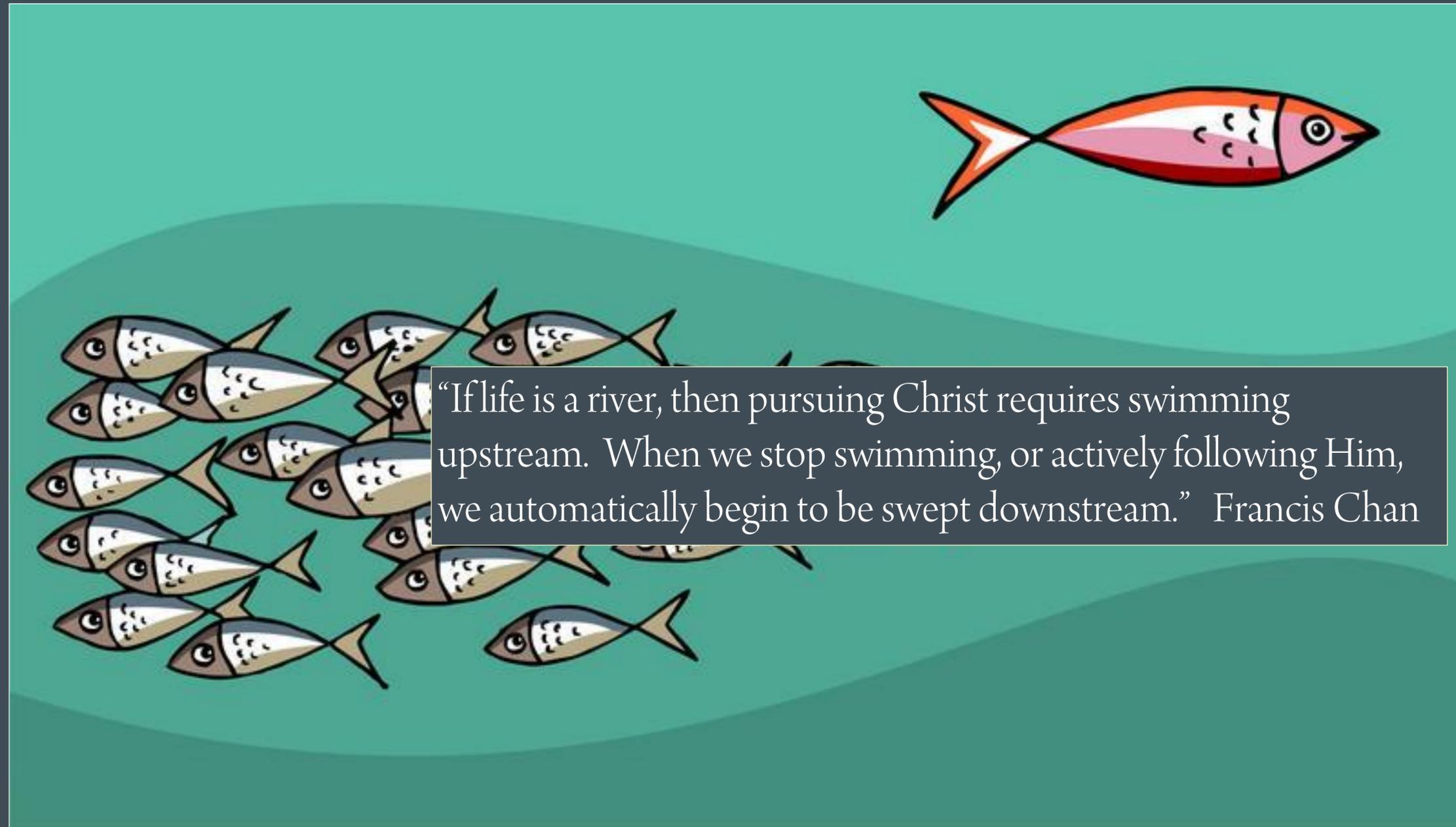
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Counter-Cultural Nature of Classical Education

We must not forget that Classical schooling is, by nature, counter-cultural. Therefore, it should not surprise us when certain elements of this paradigm run counter to what we initially understand to be *right* or *true* about educational goals, methods, or curriculum.



“If life is a river, then pursuing Christ requires swimming upstream. When we stop swimming, or actively following Him, we automatically begin to be swept downstream.” Francis Chan



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Counter-Cultural Nature of Classical Education

At Covenant, we embrace a time-tested paradigm of education that will often feel not only counter-cultural, but at times even archaic and outdated. However, we are confident that it is a paradigm that most effectively yields the results we seek in our students.

- Christian (not secular) in our Worldview
- Gospel-centered (not Pragmatic) at its root
- Places particular values at the center of the educational process (not the student). Therefore, it is the instructor who leads the student out of ignorance, and into light (*educare*: “to lead out of”). The student conforms to the norms and expectations, not the other way around (i.e., consider the concept of *Electives*).
- We educate students in accordance with the Liberal Arts (not deterministic assessments).
- We embrace the well-rounded student (not the pursuit of “vocalionalizing” the educational process) and reject the progressive practice of specialization.



Formative versus Informative Purpose

Perhaps the greatest benefit of a Classical, Christian, Pre-K to 12 education is the preparation of a young adult to fulfill the Cultural Mandate.

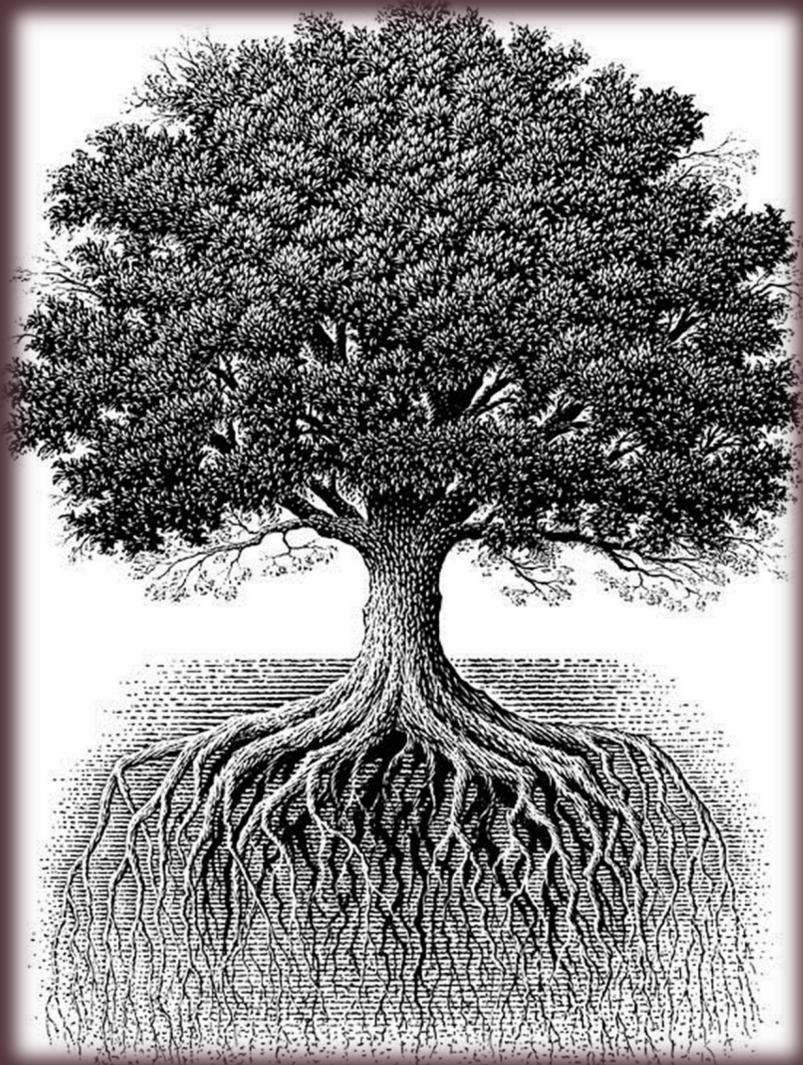


“And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’”

Genesis 1:28

Focus on the Development and Mastery of Skills

At Covenant, we focus on the development and mastery of skills through the Liberal Arts.



THE QUADRIVIUM (“The Four Ways”)

The Quantitative Arts

Discrete Quality or Number

Music: The Application of the Theory of Number

Arithmetic: The Theory of Number

Continuous Quantity or Number

Astronomy: The Application of the Theory of Space

Geometry: The Theory of Space

THE TRIVIUM (“The Three Ways”)

The Language Arts

Rhetoric: The Art of Communication

Logic: The Art of Thinking

Grammar: The Art of Inventing and Combining Symbols

Christ is the One who unifies all of life, to include the academic disciplines.

Focus on the Development and Mastery of Skills

“The reason we educate is that in ways not always easy to articulate, our students will become more fully what they were created to be in the image of God. That is, they will have the capacity to deduce, analyze, synthesize, criticize, theorize, hypothesize, organize, conceptualize, articulate, introspect – will learn to exercise those gifts essentially and uniquely human ... After his abilities to worship and to love, his ability to think is perhaps the best evidence of his having been created in the image of God ... It is time we were honest with ourselves and said, ‘The training of minds ... is a legitimate and Christian calling, and it is our calling.’”

Richard Reissen, in his book *Piety and Philosophy: A Primer for Christian Schools*



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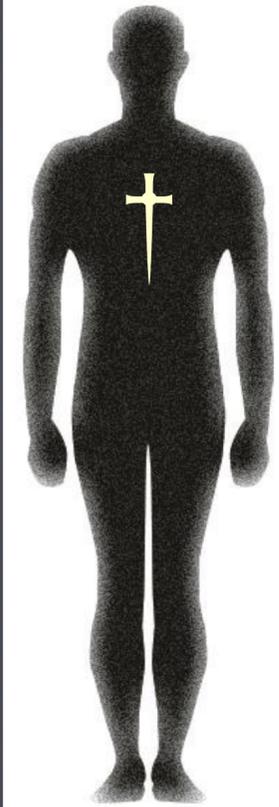
Development of the Whole Child

SPIRIT

BODY

At Covenant, we are committed to the development of the whole child: mind, body, and spirit.

MIND



“As creatures made in God’s image, we are composite beings – unions of soul and body. A full curriculum must cultivate the good of the whole person, soul and body ... Christian classical schools ought to be the last schools to undervalue physical education.”

The Liberal Arts Tradition: A Philosophy of Christian Classical Education, by Ravi Jain and Kevin Clark



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Thank you for your time and support of Covenant.

