



THE COURIER

THE GENEVA
SCHOOL
NEWSLETTER
SUMMER 2006



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THE GENEVA SCHOOL CLASS OF 2006



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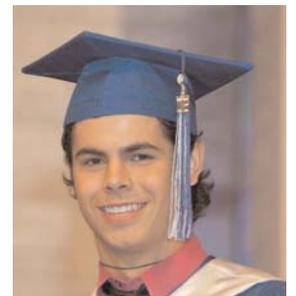
Rachel Maynard



Madison Meyer



Noelle Patton



Marco Randazzo



Liz Schutz



Christalyn Steers



Alison Stevens

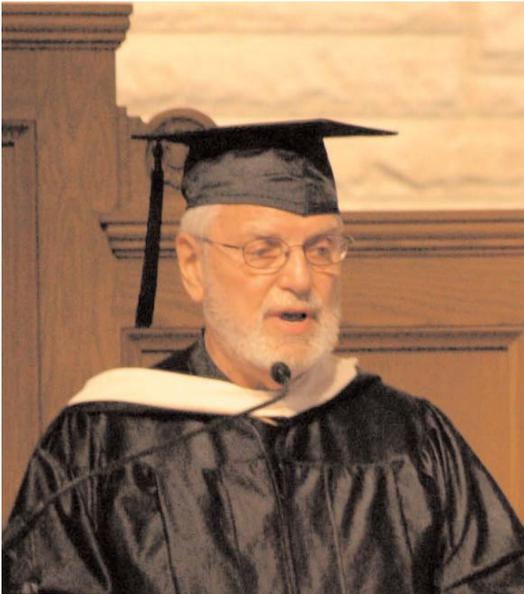


Daniel Stevens



Katy Storrs

YOUR GOD ~ NOW AND TEN YEARS FROM NOW



One of the satisfactions of teaching at a school like Geneva is the awareness I have that among my students are at least some who are, or who will be in time, my intellectual and moral and spiritual superiors. Their natural gifts are greater than mine, and their disciplined academic pursuits surpass my less assiduous efforts.

But complacency on the part of my students at this point could be a prelude to utter failure spiritually. During the past ten years since Mrs. King and I moved from northeast Ohio to central Florida, I have had many conversations with my boss-man, Mr. Ingram. I do not hesitate to tell you that Mr. Ingram would have no difficulty in naming more than one person who, thirty or forty years ago--as they finished their formal education and began their ministries--were looked upon as ones to whom the future of evangelical Christianity could safely be entrusted. But somewhere along the line they drifted into heresies: heresies that betrayed the very gospel they started out to defend and promote.

I am very grateful that so many of our Geneva students are on a sound track, morally and theologically. In what I say this afternoon I want to help you not only stay conventionally sound in the faith--I want to help you develop a muscular and mature faith: a faith that will enable you to help others resist the propaganda that surrounds us on all levels and seriously subverts the faith that the prophets, apostles, and our Lord himself have entrusted to us.

What I want to point you to specifically this afternoon is the prophet Isaiah--a prophet who is largely ignored in our day, even by those who are serious about their faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

First, let me suggest to you that you would do well to select a dozen or so of Isaiah's 66 chapters and read them over and over--until it becomes impossible for you to think of God apart from the exalted truths of God that Isaiah has set down for us with his distinctive emphasis.

For starters, read, reflect on, Isaiah, chapter 1, chapter 5, and chapter 40. Too many church-goers in our day seek a "user-friendly" God, a God they can "cozy up to." It is very difficult to seek this kind of God without drastically degrading the God Isaiah knew and worshiped--and would teach us to worship.

In the next several minutes I want to introduce many of you to chapter 5 of Isaiah. It is remarkably structured in three sections--or movements, each with its own dramatic music.

Isaiah begins with one of the most beautiful parables in the Old Testament, which you heard read a few minutes ago by the Rev. Mr. Shriner. As you re-read this parable in your private devotions, see how each of its seven verses adds critically arranged information. It starts out as a "love song" about a vineyard that was given the most exceptional care. Notice how the speaker in this parable shifts from the voice of the prophet to the voice of the covenant God of Israel. Let your soul be shocked with the ancient Israelites at the blunt revelation that concludes this parable--as you learn who is depicted in the beautifully cared-for, but worthless vineyard. The message of this parable is one that pervades the whole of Isaiah's prophecy: the God of Israel, who creates--and can dispose of what he creates--is not a God to be trifled with.

The last seven verses of this chapter remarkably balance the first seven. But rather than a vineyard love-song, these verses are a non-stop prophecy of divine judgment, presented in verses 24-25 in images of natural disasters, and in the remaining 5 verses in images of a relentless conquering army.

These concluding seven verses I will also entrust to your private devotions. As you read them take care not to miss the underlying cause for divine judgment: these ancient Israelites had "despised the word of the Holy One of Israel." In the remaining verses, note God's utter sovereignty: when he speaks to nations, they do his bidding. Note also, and be appalled at, the extreme discipline of the army that will execute God's judgment. Be aware, once again, that Isaiah's God is not a God to be trifled with.

In the seventeen verses between the vineyard parable and the depiction of devastating judgment, the prophet pronounces a series of six woes. Each woe describes a particular manifestation of depravity; the six descriptions, taken together, define the rebellious society that will not receive correction--and therefore cannot escape judgment.

As you listen to the LORD OF HOSTS proclaim judgment in the central part of this chapter, be aware of this: the speakers and writers of the New Testament will expand and enrich our knowledge of God. But any reception of New Testament teaching that diminishes the God of Isaiah is not a sound reception. We may more fully appreciate the richness of God's character in reading the gospels and epistles of the evangelists and apostles; but this enrichment ought not--and, properly received, does not--diminish the stature of Isaiah's God.

You will have no problem recognizing the depravities denounced in the first two woes. After these two woes, there is a five-verse "interruption" of the woes. In this interruption God emphasizes the humbling of man and the proper exaltation of himself before proceeding to the remaining woes. The sixth of these woes is a reiteration of the second woe--perhaps to guard against a cavalier dismissal of its first pronouncement. My climactic emphasis this afternoon will be on the third, fourth and fifth woes.

Hear now the first woe pronounced in this chapter.

Woe to those who join house to house,
who add field to field,
until there is no more room,
and you are made to dwell alone
in the midst of the land.

The Lord of hosts has sworn in my hearing:
Surely many houses shall be desolate,
large and beautiful houses, without inhabitant.
For ten acres of vineyard shall yield but six gallons,
and six bushels of seed shall yield but 3/5 of one bushel.
(Isaiah 5:8-10)

What is this sin that grieves Israel's God--and which he is about to punish? An irresponsible pursuit of wealth that has no higher aim than self-aggrandizement and that is utterly indifferent to the suffering inflicted on others.

Wealth, in itself, is neither good nor bad. It can be good when it is accompanied by a strong sense of stewardship--when, that is, the wealthy man recognizes that the earth and all that is in it properly belongs to the God who created it and sustains it. Whatever portion of it we have been able to acquire, we possess not as absolute owners, but as stewards of the God to whom we are ultimately accountable. When others suffer from--or are not blest by--our wealth, a serious perversion has occurred.

This is affirmed in Scripture again and again. I will cite only three examples. In the gospels, Jesus' account of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16 places the rich man in hell not because he abused Lazarus in any deliberate way: the destitute man whose sores the dogs licked was not even in the rich man's range of vision, even though he sat daily at the rich man's gate.

St. Paul writes to the Ephesians that the thief in their midst is to steal no more but to labor with his own hands so that he will be able to give to others, those in need, rather than steal from others. The apostle does not even hint that the ex-thief should turn straight so that he can hoard wealth and gloat in his acquisition of it.

We all know what the defining sin of Sodom was in the book of Genesis. But that was not the only sin for which God rained the judgment of fiery destruction on Sodom. Listen to Ezekiel 16.49 as the prophet denounced Judah's sins--sins grievous enough to make Jerusalem a "sister city" to Sodom:

Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom:
she and her daughters had pride,
excess of food, and prosperous ease,
but did not aid the poor and needy. *(Ezekiel 16:49)*

No doubt some of you seniors hope for prosperity after college. Do not forget this: the greater your prosperity, the greater your stewardship. It is possible that you will forget this. Be assured that it is not possible for God to forget. Heed carefully the counsel of the psalmist: "if riches increase, set not your heart on them" (62:10).

Hear now the second woe in Isaiah 5.11-12

Woe to those who rise early in the morning,
that they may run after strong drink,
who tarry late into the evening as wine inflames them!
They have lyre and harp,
tambourine and flute and wine at their feasts,
but they do not regard the deeds of the Lord,
or see the work of his hands. *(Isaiah 5:11-12)*

You seniors will remember from rhetoric in your junior year--I'm an optimist!--the rhetorical trope called synecdoche. It specifies a part of something to designate the whole of that something. When St. Paul writes of certain "enemies of the cross of Christ whose god is their belly," he may be making a kind of literal statement: those enemies are gluttons, they themselves are consumed by their appetite for good food, it is life's *summum bonum*. Or the apostle may, by synecdoche, be saying these enemies are devoted to fulfilling all their fleshly appetites, of which their love of food is the most conspicuous.

In a similar way, in Isaiah 5:11 the prophet may be singling out abuse of wine as one of Judah's most flagrant sins--or he may be using excessive indulgence in wine to represent the Jews' utter abandonment to the pleasure principle. Lavish nonstop feasting and party-going was, to them, the "good life."

In their manuals of good living, perhaps. Not in God's. Parties, in themselves, are not evil. Jesus himself, on occasion, honored festive parties by his attendance. But those who are defined by their drinking and party-going need to heed the urging of George Herbert as he invites an array of repentant sinners to avail themselves of the benefits of Jesus' blood as they partake of communion:

Come ye hither All, whom wine
Doth define,
Naming you not to your good;
Weep what ye have done amiss,
And drink this,
Which before ye drink is blood.

We are stewards of our time and our talents as well as of our wealth. Frivolous expenditure of time and talent in excessive partying is poor stewardship. It invites God's judgment--and will receive it.

Before addressing the third, fourth, and fifth woes, I will cite here the sixth and final woe. The repetition it contains is surely deliberate (some warnings need to be repeated!): but there is here a significant addition, a corollary sin, as God sees the social situation. Here it is. Listen to it carefully. Perverse addiction to wealth and to the crazed pursuit of pleasure leads, quite naturally, to a perversion of justice in a nation's courts:

Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine,
and valiant men in mixing strong drink,
who acquit the guilty for a bribe,
and deprive the innocent of his right!
Judicial bribery is a heinous perversion. God will rain down
harsh judgment upon it. (*Isaiah 5:22-23*)

At any given moment in your life and mine--mostly by imperceptible degrees--we are moving toward a greater reverence for God, or away from that fear of God that is the foundation of true wisdom. The prophet Isaiah, throughout his prophecy, can help move us toward a reverential worship of our Creator.

When we move away from a spirit-nourishing fear of God, we risk, both individually and corporately, reaching a point where we not only speak carelessly of him compared to whom the greatest nation is a drop in the bucket; we risk lapsing into outright mockery. That had happened in Isaiah's day. The prophet's cynical countrymen heard prophets like Amos and

Micah and Isaiah warn of devastating divine judgment and said, jeeringly,

"Let [God] be quick,
let him speed his work
that we may see it;
let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near,
and let it come, that we may know it!" (*Isaiah 5:19*)

Surely, this is "despis(ing) the word of the Holy One of Israel," an activity Isaiah describes in verse 18 in these words:

Woe to those who draw iniquity with the cords of falsehood,
who draw sin as with cart ropes. (*Isaiah 5:18*)

The picture Isaiah gives is this: at the very moment his hearers were sneeringly dismissing the idea of divine judgment, they were drawing it closer to them. Our countrymen, like Isaiah's, can hear of divine judgment and respond with a superior smile and a wink-wink: all they are doing is bringing that judgment nearer.

The poet Tennyson was right in his *Prologue to In Memoriam* when he prayed for greater reverence to accompany the greater scientific and technical knowledge that was exploding in his own day--and warned, "We mock thee when we do not fear."

A thoughtful reading of Isaiah 5 can help to take us where we ought to go.

Two final woes remain. I shall try to present them efficiently. They are too important for me to treat lightly. So wind your mental powers to the sticking point--and follow closely what I have to say.

The first of these two woes is stated memorably in three parallel clauses, all three clauses re-enforcing each other.

Woe to those who call evil good and good evil,
who put darkness for light and light for darkness,
who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. (*Isaiah 5:20*)

That is, woe to those who pervert morality by confusing moral categories. Such confusion and perversion comes naturally to us for a number of reasons.

No age in human history has an absolute moral vision, trustworthy in all particulars. We cannot pick out any one age and say, "That is the age to which we must conform exactly."

Every age, to some extent, confuses authentic morality with its own mores--the customs and peculiarities of any age mortals drink in with their mothers' milk.

All of us have a tendency to be moral drifters: to an undetermined extent we let our own age, wherever it has drifted, provide our moral bearings for us.

Technological inventions and innovations, for us in A.D. 2006, complicate greatly our application of the moral absolutes we think we assent to.

For these reasons--and others--it will be no easy task for us to avoid the woe Isaiah has pronounced. But we dare not succumb to a sense of futility that the whole enterprise of moral clarity is hopeless; and we must not lapse into the fatuity, the folly, of shrugging our shoulders and sighing, "Somehow it will all work out."

We can steep our personal values in the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament, and drink deeply of the Sermon on the Mount in the New Testament, and--as we do so--ask God to overcome our moral laziness and indifference.

We can listen to wise moral mentors whose character and moral reflections can strengthen our feeble knees and give firmness to our limp arms. Sir Thomas Browne wrote to a young friend in the 17th century,

Put no new names or notions upon Authentic Virtues and Vices. Think not that Morality is Ambulatory; that Vices in one age are not Vices in another; or that Virtues, which are under the everlasting Seal of right Reason, may be stamped by Opinion.

Did you get what the kindly doctor says here? Morality is not to be molded by public opinion polls, a pervasive and often perverse determiner of moral thought in our age. Rechristening a vice with a euphemistic name may make us feel better, but it will not serve us well when we stand before the God who created us--and will judge us with perfect equity.

In all our moral pondering and striving we must never cease to hear the prophet's totally reliable warning: "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!"

The final woe this afternoon is the most succinctly stated of them all:

Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes,
and shrewd in their own sight! (*Isaiah 5:21*)

Five hundred years ago it was feared by some that turning away from the ultimate authority of the Church to the ultimate authority of Scripture--with every man free to interpret theological and moral matters for himself--would lead to theological and moral chaos. It was a risk those who felt the Church had forfeited confidence as a trustworthy guide were

willing to take: they felt that Scripture could and would vindicate itself and safely guide truly honest seekers of spiritual and moral truth.

But in some ages and quarters truly honest seekers were outnumbered by self-serving seekers whose capacity for spiritual and moral perversion [sometimes blatant, sometimes subtle] was boundless.

And for the past 120 years our culture's intellectual guides have abandoned both Church and Scripture as valuable guides. Sociology has dethroned theology. We will trust our own powers of observation--and draw our own conclusions. In Isaiah's words, we will be "wise in our own eyes and shrewd in our own sight."

God is infinitely holy and wise; we are fallen, finite creatures. Even though our faculty of reason still functions, often admirably, it can hardly be expected that our moral and spiritual reflections will be congruent with God's thoughts. That is why the prophet represents God, speaking for himself, as assuring us in Isaiah 55:

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts. (*Isaiah 55:8-9*)

If we want to worship the God that Isaiah worshiped, we shall have to approach that God with the truths about God--and about ourselves!--that drove Isaiah to worship and to ministry.

To worship the God who revealed himself to Isaiah and who revealed himself in our Lord Jesus Christ is an inestimable privilege. Do not take this privilege for granted; do not treat it cheaply. Pray to God, and determine in your own soul, that when you gather at The Geneva School for your class reunion ten or twenty years from now, you will affirm with the prophet,

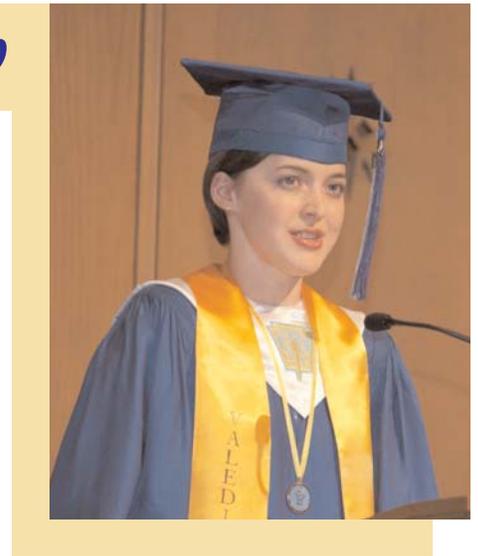
Behold, God is my salvation;
I will trust, and will not be afraid;
for the Lord God is my strength and my song,
And he has become my salvation. (*Isaiah 12:2*)

Shout and sing for joy,
O inhabitant of Zion,
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel. (*Isaiah 12:6*)

May the Holy One of Israel revealed to us in the prophet Isaiah be--and remain--the God who enriches our lives and steadies our course.

Co-Valedictorian ~ Jen Lopdrup

As I stand before you today, I am in awe. When I first started high school, I did not think I would graduate. Yes, I know you are thinking, "But wait, you are one of two valedictorians. How could you think you would not graduate?" It was not my grades, however, that I was concerned about. I sincerely was not sure if I would live to see my graduation day. During my summer as a freshman I was diagnosed with a benign meningioma brain tumor. To make a long story short, I survived--as you can see--with very few side effects. It was a long and scary road, but I would not trade that period of tribulation for anything. I learned so much. I learned to appreciate that which I love most. I learned to not take things for granted. And I learned to make a difference in the little time I have here on earth.



So I ask you Juniors, class of 2007, what would you do if you were to find out tomorrow that you had some serious illness and there was a large chance that these days would be your last? Would you think and act differently? Would your priorities change?

During the few months before I had my surgery, I noticed a drastic change in my outlook on life. I saw that the most important things in my life were not my grades or my personal possessions, but were God, my family, and my friends.

Everyone wants to leave a legacy. I wanted my mother and father, my sisters and brother to know how much I loved them. I did not know how much more time I would have with them here on earth. I did not want people to remember me by my grades or what I owned. I wanted to leave a meaningful legacy. I wanted people to remember my personality and character and my love for God, my family, and my friends.

Juniors, you have one year left here at Geneva. Realistically, you will probably not have someone tell you that your days

are numbered. You will, however, be leaving a legacy. In fact, you will be leaving a legacy throughout your life. The question is: what do you want that legacy to be?

I want you to pause a moment and think about what and who means the most to you. What and whom do you love? Into what and whom do you pour your time and energy? Now let me ask you: will your legacy reflect these things? Will people know what and whom you loved? Will people have seen you step up and be a leader and make a difference in the things that mean the most to you?

This is your time. I cannot tell you how fast life passes you by. It took a near death experience for me to slow down and put life into perspective. Don't tempt God to use his megaphone of pain to show you how important your legacy is. Juniors, you are now seniors. Next year you will stand where I am and graduate. Time is precious and you do not have much of it. You have one year left in the chapter of your life here at Geneva. What is it going to say? What is your legacy going to be?



**Jenna Conklin ~
Literis Award**

**Jen Lopdrup ~
Fide Award**



Given to the senior who manifests in thought, word, and deed a sincere commitment to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, informed by the Reformational Distinctives of The Geneva School, the FIDE award is a \$500 scholarship granted by the Board of Governors upon the recommendation of the administration and Rhetoric faculty.

Given to the senior who best appreciates, appropriates, and applies the ideals of classical Education, informed by the Liberal Arts tradition of The Geneva School, the LITERIS award is a \$500 scholarship granted by the Board of Governors upon the recommendation of the administration and Rhetoric faculty.

Co-Valedictorian ~ Jenna Conklin

For a while, as the end of the year approached and I began to realize that graduating would mean moving a thousand miles away from everything and everyone I knew, I wished I could slow time, or even stop it, to savor the sweetness of the present, of security, of old friends. I did not feel ready to face the new life ahead of me. Not yet. I was nostalgic --and more than that, I was afraid.

But time ignored my wishes and forced me to look ahead, and I started to like the idea. The futures before our class vary as much as the class itself. In a few months, we will scatter to colleges as far from each other as Seattle and New York, and

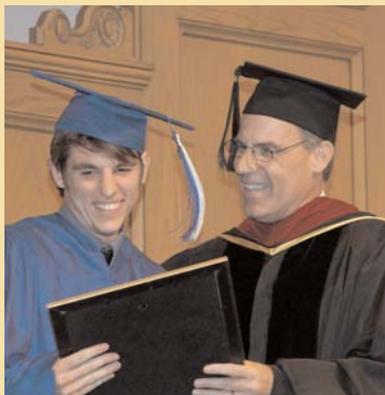
Vermont and Palm Beach, where we will pursue medicine, music, business, and other studies equally unrelated. Our professional and academic goals do not need heightening; each of us has a destination in mind. Though we may change those destinations many times or God may change them for us, it is important that we have them. Rather than wandering through a world of endless opportunities and distractions, we each have our own compass to direct us.

My highest hope is not that we meet our career goals, though I am sure we will, but that we create and strive toward personal goals. Academics are not the biggest change we are facing: while the work may get harder, it will still be schoolwork. It is our relationships that will change --relationships with friends, with family, and in a way, with ourselves. In the coming separation, we will see less of old friends and grow close to new ones. In our new independence, we will receive less guidance and prodding from our parents than we are used to. In our new freedoms, we will have to trust ourselves with new choices and new responsibility.



I hope that, as we face these changes, we will consider who we are becoming just as we consider and chose our intended fields of study. I hope that we will think about the expectations we have for ourselves, and that each of us will ask, "Who do I want to become? How will I treat people and react to conflict and tackle challenges?" And I would challenge us all, myself especially, to set standards. We may not know what lies in the future, but we can determine some of it by how we approach it.

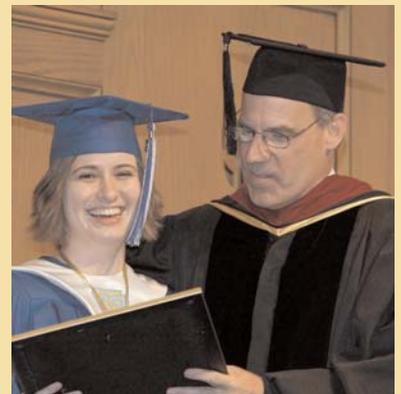
And let's not forget a factor that will greatly help shape the future--the past. Everything we have been through. The good and the bad has equipped us for what we will meet. Our time in high school, and our time at Geneva, whether we have been here ten years, five years, or only one, will remain in our hearts and minds through the experiences we have had, the lessons we have learned, and the friendships we have made. Like a tributary separating from a river, we will go on, and we will echo the river with our own themes, knowing that, if we do not meet the river soon, we are still flowing to the same ocean. Knowing this, we bid the river farewell for a time, gather our courage, and go on to follow a new course.



Madison Meyer ~ Imago Award for the Fine Arts

Given to the seniors whose vibrant imaginations, remarkable skillfulness, and creative works in the fine and performing arts best imitate the artistry of our creator, the IMAGO awards are \$500 scholarships granted by the Board of Governors upon the recommendation of the administration and the Rhetoric faculty.

Hanna Ludwig ~ Imago Award for the Performing Arts



Salutatorian ~ Amanda McPhail

Throughout the time that each one of us has been at Geneva, we have all been challenged to strive toward our potential. The rigorous academics and the qualified teachers at Geneva have properly equipped us to continue pursuing our education. We have been blessed because of the loving and caring teachers who want to see us succeed in all that we do; they have been genuinely concerned that we would learn and understand concepts, rather than mainly make straight A's.

Because Geneva is a Christian Classical school, not only have the teachers strengthened us intellectually, but also spiritually. They have integrated Christianity into all of our subjects so that our ability to comprehend the things of God has been cultivat-

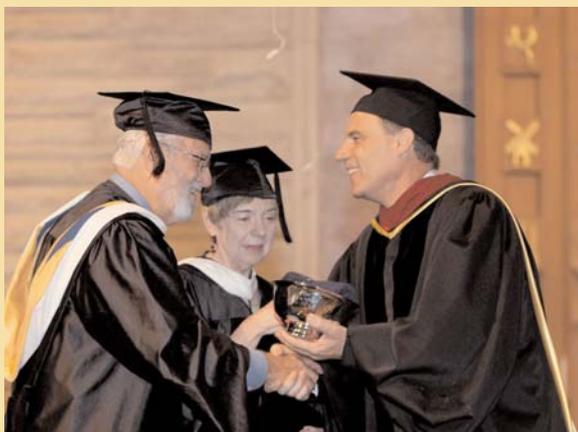
ed. By articulating our ideas in class, we have been reaffirmed in our foundation in Christ and have been strengthened by being challenged to defend our beliefs.

I think that as we look back to the first day we attended Geneva, we had no idea how much we would learn about life and the application of the Christian worldview in our lives. The teachers at Geneva have inspired us to love learning because of their heartfelt concern for our educational edification. We have been challenged not to rely on vain credulity, but to research ideas, that we may be prepared to think on our own and be able to effectively convey to others our beliefs. Through philosophy, math, and science, as well as our many "open lines," we have been taught that ideas impact society. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Euclid, Archimedes, Copernicus, Galileo, Pascal, Newton,



Einstein: these men had well-thought-out ideas and hypotheses that they acted upon, and in turn the world will never be the same. Locke, Descartes, Marx, and many others reacted to these ideas and altered the structure of society. During class we have seen the integration of math and science and how they have become crucial to know and understand the world in which we live.

Yet let us not forget that many of these intellectuals were Christians pursuing God's truth in the world. As we make the transition from high school to college, let us take away from Geneva intellect and religion and integrate them into our lives and into all that we do. Let us apply our ideas diligently to our society, so that we may go into the world and impact it as great people have done before us.



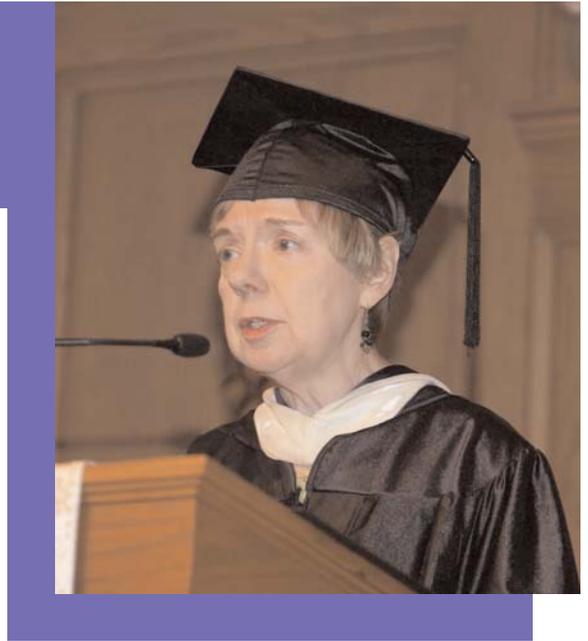
Order of the Towel

The Order of The Towel is an honor granted to people within the Geneva community in recognition of their selfless leadership on behalf of others. Inspired by the biblical example of Jesus girding Himself with a towel and washing the feet of the disciples, this honor is bestowed upon those who gladly disadvantage themselves for the benefit of others and for the glory of God. On behalf of the Board of Governors, Headmaster Rev. Robert Ingram congratulates both Mr. and Mrs. King while presenting them with an engraved silver bowl and a monogrammed Geneva towel.

*Come
Alongside
Award*

Presented by the Board of Governors to Beat and Jill Kahli for their extraordinary, exemplary, and selfless contributions of time, talent, and treasure to the cause of Christian Classical Education and to the life and well-being of The Geneva School.

Commencement Address by Mrs. Carlene King



"All my life I've fought a hard war with ignorance"--so begins Miss Julia's letter to Eudora Welty. In combating ignorance myself, I once thought it would be profitable to study Jesus' role as a teacher, in part to pick up some useful tips. Here is some of what I found.

(1) Jesus was compared negatively to a previous teacher (John the Baptist).

One student informed me his former teacher told *his* class that the pronouns "this" and "that" were never used as subjects of a sentence--giving me to understand he wasn't buying my rejection of the rule.

At Geneva I often was the former teacher, and no insistence on my part convinced the students I hadn't uttered some grammatical absurdity two, three, or four years ago.

(2) Sometimes what was taught was not rejected outright but came back a bit garbled. "How is it that ye do not understand?" Christ says to his disciples at one point.

I teach students that over the gates of Dante's *Inferno* are inscribed the words "Abandon all hope ye who enter here." I even gave the line in Italian for special effect.

Dante's words have come back to me in this form: "Hope abounds to ye who enter here."

After teaching that the Index was a list of books banned by the Roman Catholic Church, I have learned that it was "a bunch of books that Catholics are supposed to read."

Vatican II resulted in the mass being celebrated in English instead of Spanish.

Since Shakespeare is widely taught, there are increased opportunities to get it not quite right. I frequently ask students to name as many plays by the Bard as they can. The list is fascinating:

King Liar
King Leer
Spartacus
Much to Do about Something

King Arthur's Court
Ben Hur
Henry VII, Parts I, II, III
A Tale of Two Cities

Please realize that these slips were collected over decades, so students at any one school have not supplied them. That being said, I will share my all-time favorite. In Antony and Cleopatra, Shakespeare described Cleopatra this way:

"Age cannot wither her nor custom stale her infinite variety."

With only the slightest deviation a student wrote: "Age cannot wither her nor customers stale her infinite variety."

It doesn't always get better. Robert Benchley, in an article entitled "What College Did to Me," chronicled what he remembered having learned each year as an undergraduate.

Freshman year: Charlemagne either died or was born or did something with the Holy Roman Empire in 800.

Sophomore year: In Spanish you pronounce z like th.

Junior year: Eight hours of sleep are not necessary.

Senior year: Six hours of sleep are not necessary.

(3) A great frustration for the teacher is a lack of transfer. No matter how great the miracle, those who followed Jesus couldn't trust him to handle a new situation. There seemed to be no connection between Christ's feeding 5,000 and calming the storm.

I cannot be too critical here. I remember a favorite problem given to us in high school math class. A train set out,

say, at ten o'clock, and another one at eleven, but went so many miles an hour faster. We were to calculate when the two would meet. This I could do. When test time came, however, the teacher tricked us. The trains now left at seven and eight. Not having a clue what to do next, I filled my time drawing two trains on a track, hoping they would collide and the whole thing would be over.

(4) Sometimes, students remember the most amazing things: akin, I suppose, to straining at gnats and swallowing camels. A number of years ago, I spoke in chapel focusing on the seventh grade. I had come across a diary I had had for decades--which I had written in for about four years: grades 6 - 9. I tried to show how troubles and concerns that are so important in junior high often vanish with time. Three or four years later, someone in class made reference to Woody Post. I looked blank. "Don't you remember?" another chimed in. "He was the boy you liked in the seventh grade. You wrote about him in your diary." I had gotten over Woody Post decades ago, but they had not.

(5) Finally, as teachers we are aware that we cannot reach everyone. Judas sat at Jesus' own feet, yet never embraced his teaching.

So now here I am before you for the last time to launch an attack on ignorance--I would not have you ignorant; and, yet, that is not altogether true.

I recently came across the graduation speech I delivered in 2001, the gist of which was to urge you to be thought insane rather than go along with the world's definition of sanity. Today I am here to present the virtues of ignorance. I don't expect you will invite me to speak a third time.

Christopher Marlowe's Tragical History of Doctor Faustus is a work I have taught in the 9th grade at Geneva for several years. It is one of a handful of works that I know will afford new discoveries every time I read it. Versions of the Faust legend vary, but most people know the basic plot: a man sells his soul to the Devil for a period of 24 years.

He is the most learned man anybody knows, but when that learning fails to satisfy, he starts dabbling in the black arts. A good angel warns:

O Faustus, lay that damned book aside
And gaze not on it lest it tempt thy soul
And heap God's heavy wrath upon thy head!
Read, read the Scriptures--that is blasphemy!

Faust is about to exchange one kind of ignorance for another: he actually thinks he has the demons well in hand, going so far as to remark, "How pliant is this Mephistophiles." Drifting, like Faust, toward the dark arts was considered so evil that those guilty of it were on a very low level in Dante's hell. The punishment for those who tried to get at knowledge reserved for God alone was to have their heads looking back, and their bodies facing forward.

What occurred to me this time as I read Faust was how many sins come from grasping after knowledge we are not intended to have.

Secondly, those who, like Faust, sell out do so rather cheaply. Twenty-four years is not a very long time; and if one considers Adam and Eve, a piece of fruit when they were not even hungry sealed their doom. Earlier this week when I was thinking out what direction my presentation might take, Mrs. Wise's 7th graders were in the same room acting out scenes from Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. There it is again, I thought. This time a character found himself more and more sucked into a world of mind-altering drugs--brought on by his own curiosity and a desire to know.

You may feel that your teachers and parents are ganging up on you these days with unsolicited advice, but you are so vulnerable. The decisions you make in the next few years--sometimes impulsively--will affect the rest of your lives. In speaking of a new voyage, Tennyson's Ulysses says, "It may be that the gulfs will wash us down."

The gulfs will be less likely to wash you down if you purpose to stay ignorant:

ignorant of sexual pleasure outside of marriage;
ignorant of recreational drugs;
ignorant of excess in drink;
ignorant of pornography;
ignorant of "damned books."

I mention these particular areas because I have seen many young people washed down by these gulfs. You see, when we go astray, we aren't even very original.

But God has created a universe of wonderful, legitimate knowledge that leads to delight in Him. I will give an example. A few days ago I passed a senior center where, from time to time, short courses in the Polish language are given. Because of my schedule at Geneva, I have never been able to sign up for Polish lessons. But with retirement around the corner, I can!

Do I plan to go to Poland? No.
Do I know any Polish people? No.
Do I have Polish ancestors? No.
Have I eaten in a Polish restaurant? Actually, yes, but now the entire menu--with the possible exception of sauerkraut--is not on my list of healthy entrees.

Then why take Polish lessons? Because languages--their sounds, their grammars, their idioms--are absolutely fascinating to me.

Gerard Manley Hopkins has written a beautiful poem in which he celebrates God's infinite variety. I especially like two lines. The first one speaks of the landscape "plotted and pieced-fold, fallow, and plough." The first time I flew over England, there it was, just as Hopkins had described it, though he could not have seen it from the air.

The second line refers to "all trades, their gear and tackle

and trim." This makes me think of horse shoeings, glass blowing, wine making--and even English teachers with their red pens and bags of lovely books.

I would like to close with Hopkins' short poem "Pied Beauty," his tribute to God's greatness.

Glory be to God for dappled things--
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced-fold, fallow, and plough;
And all trades, their gear and tackle trim.
All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:

Praise him.

"Grammatical Changes"

This summer a loyal staff said good-bye to Grammar School Principal Michele Lewis. Many remembered when she joined Geneva's faculty in the summer of 2000 as our fourth-grade teacher. There was only one fourth grade at the time (this coming year there will be three), and Mrs. Lewis brought unparalleled energy, life, and drama to the classroom--due in part, no doubt, to her background in the fine arts. For four years she devoted herself not only to the teaching of her own students, but also to the mentoring of younger faculty members who were joining the Geneva team.

Because of the rapid growth in student population by 2004, Michele moved from the classroom to the administrative team, assisting in the capacity of interim principal. This past year she served as named principal of the grammar school, leading a student body that had more than doubled in size since she had first come to Geneva. An added dimension to her leadership was her willingness to serve also as a curriculum director, in the absence of such a person on staff.

Michele's dedication to the faculty and her loving touch with students have been hallmarks of her tenure with us. Passion, energy, and an unflagging zeal to forward the model of Christian classical education are also signature aspects of her service, and she has left her own distinct and indelible mark upon the school's pursuit of all things good, true, and beautiful.

Even as we say good-bye and thank you to Michele, the board is pleased to announce that Mr. Michael Eatmon has agreed to lead the grammar school this year as its interim principal. Though he will continue to serve as the school's academic dean and will teach two classes in the rhetoric school, he will focus his knowledge and experience of classical education upon the lower grades, pre-K through 6th.

Assisting him in that role, and assuming a significant portion of the implementation on the ground, will be Mrs. Joy Schaffer, our new full-time curriculum director. We are delighted that Joy has returned to Geneva after having taught faithfully and successfully for us a number of years ago. Mrs. Robin Candeto will also aid Mr. Eatmon, by shifting some of her previous year's responsibilities in curriculum mapping to mentoring our newer faculty members in the grammar school. Rounding out this administrative team, Mrs. Carol Reaves has become our full-time Director of Early Childhood Education, continuing her long and distinguished career at Geneva.

Please welcome Mr. Eatmon and his veteran staff into their new capacities, and expect great strides this year in the realization of the ideals of The Geneva School and of its aspirations toward virtuous scholarship.

The Geneva School

2025 State Road 436
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www.genevaschool.org

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Parent Orientation

**Thursday, August 10
7:00 pm**

In the school gymnasium

It is required that at least one parent attend this meeting. No childcare is provided, so please make other arrangements for your little ones.

Thank you.

The Geneva School Convocation Service

**Sunday, August 13
4:00 pm**

Winter Park Presbyterian Church
400 S. Lakemont Avenue, Winter Park

Convocation comes from the Latin word *convocare*, which means “call together.”

Come worship with us as we *call together* the community of The Geneva School and ask God’s blessing on a new school year.

Meet the Teacher Open House

**Friday, August 11
10:00 am - 12:00 noon**

Followed by
Picnic and Fun at Maitland Park
11 am – 1:30 pm

Bring your own lunch—we’ll supply ice cream and games!

(Maitland Park is located off 17/92 behind the Maitland Blvd overpass at the end of Mayo Avenue. We will have maps available at school.)

New Moms’ Coffee

**Monday, August 14
After morning drop-off**

Aloma Baptist Church
(Half a mile north of school on SR 436)