



THE COURIER

THE GENEVA
SCHOOL
NEWSLETTER
NOVEMBER, 2007

Almighty God, who is the owner of continual praise by saints and angels in heaven, hear too, our offering of honor and thanks.

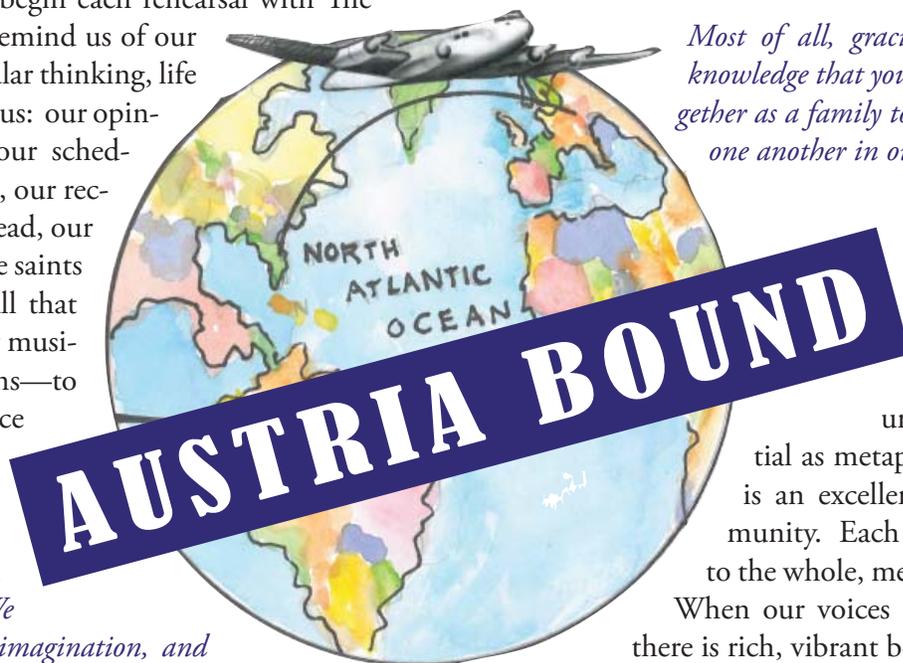
We use these words to begin each rehearsal with The Rhetoric Choir. They remind us of our place. Contrary to popular thinking, life does not revolve around us: our opinions, our preferences, our schedules, our responsibilities, our recreational activities. Instead, our place is to fall in with the saints and angels, rendering all that we have—including our musical skills and expressions—to the One who is the source of all things, with a spirit of thanksgiving.

We praise you for health, strength, and ability. We thank you for intellect, imagination, and expression.

Our prayer continues, highlighting our “tools” and acknowledging God as the giver. One of the beauties of

singing is the absence of anything but what God has directly created. Our choir is simply a group of creatures, mysteriously made *imago Dei*, “in the image of God,” working out our musical potential.

Most of all, gracious Father, we acknowledge that you have brought us together as a family to love and encourage one another in our daily work.



No doubt one of the great reasons God included music in His scheme of the universe is its potential as metaphor. A good choir is an excellent picture of community. Each of us is responsible to the whole, members of one body.

When our voices are employed well, there is rich, vibrant beauty of sound that is attractive and draws the listener to it. But it is work. It requires endless attention to detail, and we support one another in our common effort.





Grant us health, energy, humility, and unity, that we may be good stewards of our gifts for your glory and the edification of all who hear our song.

Our gifts are not our own. Nor do we cultivate them simply for our own benefit. The presence of a choir implies the presence of listeners. During the choir's first three years, our listeners have been mostly friends and family. This year, we thought we would take our music a bit further afield. In June of 2008, The Rhetoric Choir will depart on a ten-day tour to Austria. Our tour will begin in the small mountain town of Mittersill, home to Schloss (Castle) Mittersill, a Christian retreat center. We will visit the local public school, sing for the students, and provide a public concert for the town folk. We will tour the surrounding area, performing in Innsbruck and singing for the principal Sunday service at the Salzburg Cathedral. Leaving Mittersill, we will relocate to Vienna, with performances scheduled at Melk Abbey, Schonbrunn Palace, and a noon concert at St. Stephen's Cathedral.

The process of application for singing in many of these venues has been rigorous, and we are proud of our students for meeting such high standards. We look forward to celebrating their achievements and learning more as we survey a country rich in music history and tradition. We are calling our tour "The Imago Dei" tour. Our goal is that through all of our various efforts, the image of God would shine brightly, bearing witness to His goodness.

*Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*This prayer was written collaboratively by members of the 2006-07 Rhetoric Choir.



*Top: St. Stephen's Cathedral, Vienna
Bottom: Salzburg Cathedral*

Rhetoric Choir Fundraisers

Hire-a-Teen

Strong, bright, hard-working teens are available to help you!

Childcare

Experienced childcare providers with their own transportation! Our choir members will provide the safety and care that all parents desire for their children.

Holiday Music

Brighten your holiday party with the festive sounds of The Rhetoric Choir. We can work with you to provide an ensemble that will fit your venue and budget.

**Contact Mr. Miller at mjmiller@genevaschool.org.
(Each student needs to raise \$2600)**

It's Coming!

The 14th Annual Auction

Geneva's Ultimate Diamond Hunt!

LONG AGO, in a land far away, there was a man named Ali Hafed who had everything but wanted more. He finally sold all he had, searched far and wide, only to die destitute and friendless in a foreign land. Meanwhile, another man bought Ali's farm. One day a flash of light in his garden stream caught his attention. He reached into the sandy streambed, hunted around and found some seemingly ordinary rough black stones, but in the sunlight, the stones reflected all the hues of the rainbow, making him smile. Months later an old monk visited and, upon seeing the curious stones, exclaimed: "These are not ordinary stones! You have found diamonds...right in your own backyard." Thus was discovered the world's largest diamond mine.*

*For the complete text of *Acres of Diamonds*, by Rev. Russell H. Conwell (1843-1925), see <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/rconwellacresofdiamonds.htm>. Rev. Conwell gave this lecture over 5000 times and its timeless truths continue to inspire people around the world even today.

Have you ever discovered something of great value and joy right under your nose? Maybe it was an old silver candlestick that sparkled when polished. Or perhaps it was a deeply buried talent you never really had a chance to develop to a shine. So often we have many "diamonds in the rough" right in our own backyard that just need an opportunity to be discovered and polished, brought to magnificent life, in order to be a great blessing to others.

It is the vision of The Geneva School to seek out, shape, and polish our children—our diamonds in the rough—to reveal glittering treasures of learning through Christian classical education. Come...share our vision and discover anew the diamonds in your own backyard at the 14th Annual Auction: Geneva's Ultimate Diamond Hunt, on Saturday, March 8, at the Church Street Ballroom. The auction raises much needed funds to support Geneva's unique and stimulating approach to education. Previous events have raised \$250,000 or more to benefit current and future Geneva students.

More than the financial benefit, the auction is a great time to get to know other parents, teachers, and friends of the greater Geneva community. Your prayers and thoughtful participation are most coveted. In addition to hunting for customary donations and business sponsorships, there are other ways you can contribute and be a part of this fun Geneva tradition:

1. Be a Prayer Warrior (or Prayer "Knight"), praying for the auction and its success.
2. Inspire and work with a particular grade to create a unique class project.
3. Hunt for or solicit desirable items for the silent and live auctions.
4. Seek out sponsors, old and new, including table sponsors.
5. Decorate and set-up a magnificent silent auction room.
6. Be a smiling face to greet guests at registration and/or at auction check-out.
7. Design attractive certificates and displays for silent auction items.
8. Accomplish other great things behind the scenes or in the office.
9. Invite potential buyers to the auction.
10. Most importantly, come to the auction!!!

Every little bit helps—and adds up to the creation and unfolding of one fantastic event—all for the children!

If you feel inspired to help in ANY way, we would love to see you at any of our regular auction meetings on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month at 8:30 am in the Cascades office. Come for just 45 minutes, enjoy coffee and goodies, and have fun hunting for blessings that will benefit Geneva!

Questions? Ideas?

Cathy Lopdrup (Auction Chair): 407-740-6865 or Lopdrup@cfl.rr.com
Kelley Jain (Facilitative Chair): 407-657-4108 or kajain@genevaschool.org

The God Delusion

On October 3, Michael Eatmon and Ravi Jain were privileged to attend one of the most significant intellectual debates of this century in Birmingham, AL. The debate was hosted by Fixed Point Foundation, a Christian “think-tank” and teaching resource for churches and the broader community. Fixed Point’s mission is to prepare Christians to engage the culture in a thoughtful manner and endeavor to challenge skeptics in their unbelief with gentleness and respect. The debate between two Oxford University fellows—evolutionary biologist Prof. Richard Dawkins and mathematician and Christian apologist Dr. John Lennox—was entitled “The God Delusion.”

Michael, why are debates of this nature so important?

What more important questions can one ask than “Why am I here?” “Why is there something, rather than nothing?” “What is my and the world’s purpose, and how do I know so?” “What are good and evil, anyway?” These questions are ultimate. They get at the very foundation of all other rational questions we men and women ask. Today, scientists and theologians are battling in a war of ideas over the answers to these questions; both propose solutions to these philosophical problems, but many of these solutions are incompatible with one other. Debates such as these help a watching world to see clearly what the points of difference are between Christianity and Scientism (the belief that science alone is the arbiter of truth) and how these differences matter, both in this world and in whatever world may lie beyond.

Ravi, what relevance does a debate on the existence of God have to students at Geneva?

Most of the students at Geneva believe in God, but they can scarcely conceive that others disagree. Dawkins represents the best arguments of a large contingent of atheists, and considering his objections helps our students to understand conflict-

ing worldviews. It ensures that our students don’t develop a faith insulated from the world, but rather one engaged with it. In our Scientific Revolution class (Precalculus and Physics), we listened to the entire debate. My 11th grade students surprised me with their impressive observations about the arguments. Having studied logical fallacies both earlier and now in Rhetoric class, they were fascinated to highlight when a debater’s reasoning broke down. In addition, many of the points Dr. Lennox made reflect the curricular emphases of our school with which the students were very familiar. Dawkins conceded that science arose in a Christian context—a link which our Scientific Revolution class spends considerable time exploring. Lennox discussed the influence of Hume and Kant on Dawkins’ ideology—a topic unpacked with the seniors in Relativity and Reason (AP Calculus and AP Physics). Moreover, Mr. Clark pointed out that G.K. Chesterton and C.S. Lewis had responded to most of Dawkins’ points in works read by the 10th graders in Apologetics class. Listening to the debate brings the arguments home for the students because they see real people on the international stage who intensely believe in one side or the other. This is not just an abstract homework exercise. It helps the students realize that ideas have consequences and what they are learning in class is being discussed by the brightest thinkers across the globe.

Michael, what was the nature of the debate?

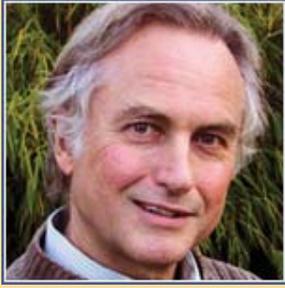
The nature of the debate was set by Dawkins’ most recent book, *The God Delusion*. Its six central theses served as the basis for the debate. The night was electric with energetic supporters on both sides.

Richard Dawkins paints himself as a man pursuing truth. Who can’t identify with that? Whatever reality is, deep down we hunger to know it. Unfortunately, Dawkins doesn’t ask the question, “What is truth to begin with?” He assumes

The New Atheists...

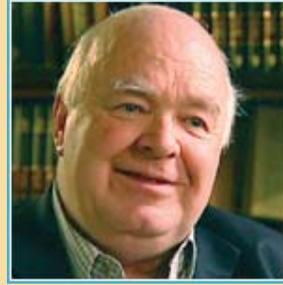
- Tolerance of pervasive myth and superstition in modern society is not a virtue.
- Religious fundamentalism has gone main stream and its toll on education, science, and social progress is disheartening.
- Wake up people!! We are smart enough now to kill our invisible gods and oppressive beliefs.
- It is the responsibility of the educated to educate the uneducated, lest we fall prey to the tyranny of ignorance.

From the New Atheist website www.newatheist.org



Dawkins, voted by Europe's Prospect Magazine as one of the world's most important intellectuals, is regarded by many as the spokesman for the "New Atheism." BBC has labeled him "Darwin's Rottweiler." He has written numerous best-sellers, most

notable among them, his recent book, *The God Delusion*, which has been on The New York Times List of Best-Sellers for over thirty weeks. It is a no-holds-barred assault on religious faith generally and Christianity specifically. According to Dawkins, one can deduce atheism from scientific study; indeed, he argues that it is the only viable choice.



Lennox, a popular Christian apologist and scientist, travels widely, speaking on the interface between science and religion. Like Dawkins, he has dedicated his career to science, but he has arrived at very different conclusions. "It is the very nature of science that

leads me to belief in God," he says. Lennox possesses doctorates from Oxford, Cambridge, and the University of Wales. He has written a response to the notion that Science has exposed the Bible as obscurantist in a book titled *God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?* The book was published this fall. Dr. Lennox has spoken to Geneva's faculty and parents twice in the last year.

from the onset that he knows the answer to this most important of questions. Dawkins claims that the burden of proof is on religious believers to provide evidence that God exists rather than on unbelievers to prove that He doesn't. He does not accept the premise that atheism and science themselves also require a faith in foundational suppositions in order for them to cohere. Dawkins doesn't claim that he's a radical skeptic like David Hume, a logically tenable (if practically impossible) alternative to theism. But Dawkins does believe in a host of unprovable things with no underlying justification for why he believes them. Arguably more brilliant atheists than he, like Bertrand Russell, have conceded that there is no basis for the kind of positivism that Dawkins purports to require (namely that one can believe nothing to be true but what has been proven empirically, evidentially with absolute, mathematical certainty). In my opinion, one cannot, therefore, assume such a philosophical position as the default.

Ravi, what was one of the most memorable exchanges of the debate?

That happened when Lennox charged that atheism is a faith just like Christianity. Dawkins denied this. Lennox affirmed it. Dawkins denied it again. Dr. Lennox retorted, "Of course it's a faith. You believe it, don't you?" Dawkins invoked his basic defense: atheism is the default setting among humans; it's not a faith.

Didn't Dawkins himself acknowledge that he feels a desire to worship something?

Yes, in fact he often proclaimed his awe of the cosmos but challenged us to rebel against such an innate sense of a creator, from which inclination, he claimed, Darwin emancipated us.

In Romans 1:21 Paul highlights that "although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him." Dawkins would probably identify with this verse. Further, Paul expresses that God gave such men and women over to the sinful desires of their hearts. Although Dawkins claimed that, "there is no logical path between atheism and killing others," he seems to ignore zealously Nietzsche's influential philosophy of the *Übermensch*, the "superman" whose natural inclination is to dominate others. Dawkins' beloved mechanism of natural selection relies on "survival of the fittest," not killing with kindness. He argues that there is no need for a God because people "generally agree on morality." This comment befuddles us. Do not lawmakers and judges exist wholly to clarify positions and enforce consequences for people who do not agree on universal standards of morality?

Dawkins seems to deny the fact that the vast majority of humanity alive now and throughout history has believed in God

That is correct. Furthermore, he admitted freely—but disregarded as patently irrelevant to the question at hand—the truth that most of the influential thinkers who laid the foundations of Western science itself believed in God. Instead, Dawkins employed the problematic debate "strategy" of begging the question. He himself denies faith and maintains that non-faith is both evolution's default position and the only rationally defensible one vis-à-vis belief in God. This raises an obvious and troublesome question for the professor, however. If the natural inclination of people everywhere is atheism, then why the need for debates to persuade them of it? Simply put, is atheism really so natural, so obvious, as Dawkins suggests?

Finding The Geneva School in Annapolis, Md.

by Mike Beates

In late September, my daughter, Abbie, and I took a trip north to visit some colleges in the D.C. and Maryland area. Among the schools we visited was St. John's College in Annapolis, the third oldest college in America. We had heard a lot about St. John's and had driven by its beautiful campus on several occasions while visiting Abbie's brother, Abraham, now in his second year at the U.S. Naval Academy. The two campuses are across the street from one another just a couple of blocks from the picturesque Maryland Capitol State House and St. Anne's Episcopal Church.

We were surprised to discover The Geneva School at St. John's! The College prides itself on its "Great Books" curriculum and its focus on non-traditional rhetorical and dialogical classroom interaction. Classes are moderated by "tutors" rather than taught by "professors." Students read and come prepared to debate and discuss the deeper philosophical issues related to the subject matters of philosophy, science, the arts, and language.

The more we listened, the more we began thinking, "We have heard this before. No wait, we have seen this before—at The Geneva School!" Eventually, the admissions counselor mentioned that at St. John's they not only read the Great Books in order to discover truth, they also read from people who thought they were right but were later proven wrong; one such thinker was Ptolemy. When our host mentioned Ptolemy's *Almagest*, Abbie quietly said, "Oh, I read from the *Almagest* last year." Our host stopped short and said, "I have never met anyone under 18 who has ever heard of the *Almagest*, much less read from it." Again Abbie humbly replied, "We read portions of that work along with selections from Kepler, Copernicus, and Newton in my Physics and Pre-Calculus class during my junior year."

Abbie and I mutually decided after our visit that while St. John's would certainly be an intriguing and stimulating atmosphere, it would lack those "Ah ha!" moments we all seek for our children's educational experience. Rather, after a 13 year career at The Geneva School, Abbie's experience there would more likely be characterized by moments of "Oh, yes, I remember that." While the study at St. John's would be more thorough (and the two semesters of Classical Greek would certainly be new!), The Geneva School has in many ways already covered much of the St. John's experience.



St John's College

Our students at The Geneva School experience an application of the liberal arts that offers a unique preparation to engage the great ideas of the world and of higher education. Our daughter, Abbie, has enjoyed this educational venture from Kindergarten through 12th grade—the first student to be so blessed in the school's history.

The Geneva School has succeeded in its goal of igniting a love for learning in our daughter. But we have also seen courses, like the new class on anatomy, throw more fuel on that fire in her heart and mind. She now seeks to merge two deep interests (both cultivated at TGS) into her higher educational pursuit. She plans to explore further the mysteries and wonders of God's creation of the human body. Combining this with her love for children, she hopes to serve God through pediatric medicine. We are confident that Geneva's comprehensive and well-rounded, challenging, and engaging atmosphere has not only sparked a love for learning in our young lady, but it has also prepared her well to engage the ideas of higher education no matter where she ends up studying. And we are grateful to God for this.

Mike Beates is an Associate Pastor at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Oviedo and has been around The Geneva School since it was an "idea" in the minds of the founders.

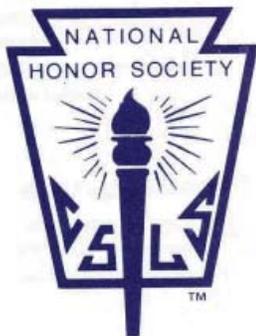


Operation Christmas Child

A PROJECT of SAMARITAN'S PURSE

Christmas is right around the corner, and Geneva's chapter of the National Honor Society is excited about teaming up with Samaritan's Purse to collect boxes for Operation Christmas Child!

Operation Christmas Child is a project that sends shoeboxes filled with simple gifts like school supplies, toys, and personal items to children around the world who do not receive such gifts at Christmas. These boxes also help introduce children and their families to the love and hope of Christ. Local believers follow up with evangelistic programs, and many children later receive Jesus as Savior.



We will be collecting boxes during the weeks of October 29–November 16.

Students can bring their box to their classroom (homeroom for

upper school students), and they will be collected by NHS members the week of November 12–19 and taken to the designated drop off location.

We will also be partnering with Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida and hosting a Thanksgiving food drive from November 1–20. There will be boxes in every classroom for students to place non-perishable food items (i.e. canned food, pasta, water, rice, etc).

NHS hopes to have school-wide participation in these exciting service projects!



Friends of Geneva



David Brooks with board member Dayle Seneff

In the first of a three-part series, Great Conversations with Friends of Geneva, invited guests enjoyed an evening with author and columnist David Brooks on Tuesday, October 2, at Rollins College. Brooks, one of the most popular writers in America, is a political journalist and “comic sociologist” who authors a bi-weekly Op-Ed column for The New York Times. The event was moderated by Michael Cromartie, Vice-President of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C., and Senior Advisor to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.

Friends of Geneva was established in 2005 to provide significant financial resources on an ongoing, annual basis in support of student scholarships.

Dates for Your Calendar...

November 1:	All Saints' Day
November 3:	Admission Assessment and Testing Fall Family Festival, 4:00–7:00 pm at School
November 9–11:	Downtown Disney Chalk Fest
November 9:	Grammar School Students Bring Science Projects to School Ninth-Grade Parents' Knight Out
November 10:	Science Fair (Morning—exact time TBD) Kindergarten Parents' Knight Out
November 12–16:	7th & 8th Grade Trip to North Florida
November 14:	Second Grade Winnie the Pooh Play, 9:00 am, 10:00 am, & 11:00am at Aloma Methodist Church
November 15:	Pre-K Happy Harvest Celebration, 9:30 am at Aloma Baptist Church
November 16:	Kindergarten Thanksgiving Play, 9:30 am at Aloma Methodist Church Third-Grade Charlotte's Web Fair, 10:15 am–2:15 pm at Maitland Park Progress Reports Go Home
November 17–18:	Book Fair at Barnes & Noble (Colonial Dr. Store at Colonial & Bumby)
November 19:	First-Grade Harvest Corn Festival, 12:00–3:00 pm at School
November 20:	Fifth-Grade Colonial Day at School
November 21–23:	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
November 26:	First-Grade Fort Christmas/Jimmy Sawgrass Trip, 10:00 am–2:00 pm
November 30:	Kindergarten Trip to Santa's Tree Farm, 8:30 am–1:00 pm

The Geneva School
2025 State Road 436
Winter Park, FL 32792



**Celebrating 15 Years of
Faith & Learning
in Community**