

Veritas Classical Academy

News – April, 2004

Student Testing Continues Saturday, May 1, 2004

Student Testing Information

VCA will offer a second testing date on Saturday, May 1, 2004, for students applying for admission. To register, please call 850-5309 by Wednesday, April 28. Please send the testing fee (\$25 per child) to **Veritas Classical Academy, P.O. Box 720426, Norman, OK 73070**, to be received before the test date. Testing spots are limited and will be offered on a first-come-first-served basis. Students should arrive at Trinity Baptist Church by 8:45 a.m. to begin testing at 9 a.m. Testing will go until noon on the scheduled dates. Readiness screening for incoming kindergarteners will be offered at a later date, with more information to follow in future newsletters.

Prayer Requests

Teacher interviews began Thursday, April 15 and are scheduled to continue through April 26th. Please pray for the Board and the applicants for wisdom throughout this process.

The VCA board is pleased to announce that a local business has made a generous financial gift to VCA toward expenses for the 2004-2005 school year. Praise God with us for this company's generosity and pray for their continued support for the school.

VCA Considering Adding 6th Grade

The VCA Board is prayerfully considering the addition of the 6th grade beginning this August. However, the Board needs specific information from you for planning purposes and for teacher interviews. If your child plans on entering the 6th grade this fall and you'd like to enroll in VCA, please call 850-5309 or email rpbrown@ou.edu with your information as soon as possible to indicate your interest.

Friday Courses and Teachers Needed

Veritas is currently accepting submissions for proposed courses and teachers for Third Day classes (Fridays) for the Fall 2004 semester. We are interested in hosting classes that will also be available to the home-schooling community for grades **K-8** in hands-on science courses, arts and music, additional languages, specific literature courses, and athletics. We are open to your suggestions for additional topics of interest to the community. If you are interested in teaching a course *or can recommend a teacher we should contact* about our Friday classes, please email rpbrown@ou.edu or call 850-5309. Interviews for Friday teachers will begin in May.

Introductory Information Sessions- Location Moved

VCA will be hosting an introductory information session for interested teachers and parents on Tuesday, May 4th and Tuesday, May 25th, both at 7 p.m. Please note that these will be at Trinity Baptist Church in Room 12.

Important Dates

April 15: Teacher Interviews Begin
May 4: VCA Information Session
May 17: Enrollment forms and fees accepted to reserve placement
May 25: VCA Information Session
May 28: Notification of student acceptance
June 1: Review VCA curriculum guide to plan for summer reading and preparation
July 1: Fall book list finalized
August 4-6: Required teacher training at Coram Deo Academy, Dallas, TX
August 11-12: Parent Orientation
August 24: First Day of School!

Why do we defer to the Nicene Creed?

Creeds form an important part of church history, marking, as they do, benchmarks of the faith, documenting the struggle of God's people to discern and define God's truth in the midst of errors and heresies. Creeds, though, serve more than this merely historical function. They also serve to join the church, the corporate body of Christ, in a common confession. When we recite a creed, we are acknowledging our union with the great cloud of witnesses, orally confessing our willingness to receive and rest upon Christ and be identified with the people He has bought for Himself.

The Nicene Creed stands as one of the first of these confessions in the great history of the church. It was first formulated in 325 AD at the Council of Nicea, a gathering of over 300 bishops. This was the first great gathering of church elders following the conversion of Constantine, which had recently led to the end of persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire. Justo Gonzalez remarks that this was, indeed, the first time that these church leaders had "before their eyes physical evidence of the universality of the church."

It is in the context of this recognition of the universal (catholic) nature of the church that the Nicene Creed arose. The church elders had not set out to formulate a confession of faith. However, the creed became necessary in order to clearly define the nature of the belief about the godhead.

Certain men at the council, most notably Eusebius of Nicomedia, followed the teaching of Arius, who taught that Jesus Christ was a created being. In Arius' view, God created Jesus Christ, who then created the world. This was closely akin to the view of the Gnostics, who associated all physical and temporal reality as inherently evil. Thus, God could not have created the world, so there had to be some intermediary creator. These church elders attempted to explain their position as one valid within the teachings of the church.

The council determined that it needed to articulate a clear and definitive position regarding the nature of God in order to oppose this heresy which struck at the very heart of the

Christian faith. However, as Justo Gonzalez relates, "by limiting itself to biblical texts the Council would find it very difficult to express its rejection of Arianism in unmistakable terms."¹ Rather, the Council drew up the creed, which clearly delineates the orthodox Christian position of Jesus as "God of God, light of light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father." The last of these phrases is the most important, as it leaves no room for the followers of Arius, who could agree with the rest of the statements about Jesus, but who the claim of Jesus co-substance with the Father excluded.

It is important to note that the Creed, then, functions to give a defense of the faith in the midst of a controversy that involves not an obscure point of doctrine but an issue that strikes at the heart of the gospel, the very essence of Christianity. Much as the church leaders in Acts gather to determine what of the Mosaic law is applicable to Gentile converts, an issue related directly to our freedom in Christ, and their letter to the churches serves to express the inspired, godly wisdom of the church, so the Creed serves to stamp out the heresy which would deny that Jesus was God, thus denying the very essence of our salvation.

It is important to recognize that the function of the creed is neither to reject the authority of Scripture nor to replace it. Rather, those who first determined the Creed recognized the need to make clearly known what the teachings of Scripture were on a specific matter where there was dispute. The Creed, then, functions for us much as a biblical commentary or other resource—to point us more clearly to the truth that God has revealed. Much more, we can recognize the significance of the opening words of "we believe" as declaring that Christianity is not at its heart an individual matter governed uniquely by individual conscience but a corporate matter of the union of all members of the body receiving their sustenance from the head, Jesus Christ.

The Story of Christianity, Volume One: The Early Church to the Reformation, by Justo Gonzalez.

Article submitted by Todd Wedel, Adjunct Professor of Composition, University of Oklahoma.