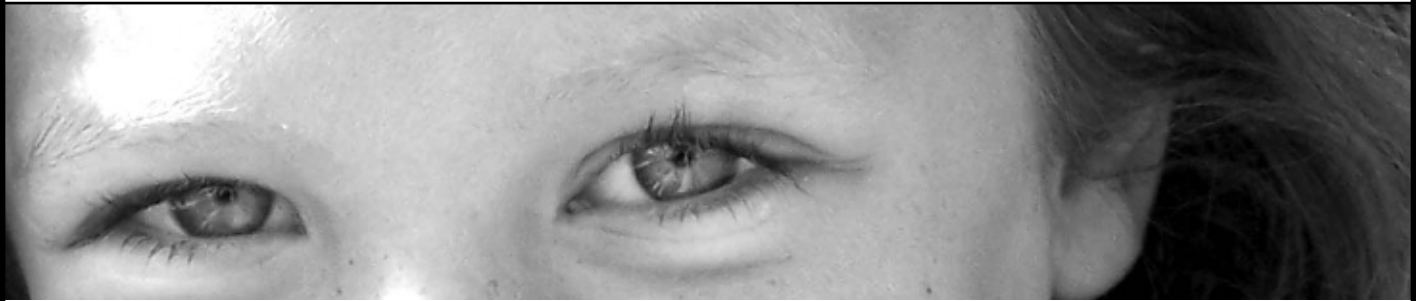


# at Ambleside

THE NEWSLETTER OF AMBLESIDE SCHOOL OF FREDERICKSBURG

02 SEPTEMBER 2005



FROM OUR PRINCIPAL

## An EDUCATIONAL AIM

THE SUMMER DAYS HAVE PASSED AND THE WORK OF SCHOOL HAS BEGUN AGAIN. The summer days afforded an opportunity for continued training at Ambleside through the summer institute principal's retreat, and in-service. These times of training provided an opportunity for teachers and principals to come together under the framework of a philosophy and practice of education girded by a few principles.

When we gather together to provide the training for teachers and principals, there are many questions and conversations as to how to systematize the work we are about through schooling. To systematize education is one extreme, to personalize it is another.

Charlotte Mason called a system of education an alluring fancy because it is pledged to more definite calculable results. She furthered this thought in her first book, *Home Education*.

System—the observing of rules until the habit of doing certain things, of behaving in certain ways, is confirmed, and therefore, the art is acquired—it is so successful in achieving precise results, that it is no wonder there should be endless attempts to straighten the whole field of education to the limits of a system.

If a human being were a machine, education could do no more for him than to set him in action in prescribed ways, and the work of the educator would be simply to adopt a good working system or set of systems.

But the educator has to deal with a self-acting, self-developing being, and his business is to guide, and assist in, the production of the latent good in that being, the dissipation of the latent evil, the preparation of the child to take his place in the world at his best, with every capacity for good that is in him

developed into a power (Mason, *Home Education*, p. 9).

Let us take a look at the other extreme, of personalizing the work of education. The child can be described as having gender, intelligence, personality, birth order, affections, heredity, brain chemistry and behavior at any given time. If our actions come out of these ideas we hold, we then begin to relate arbitrarily; forming opinions, judgments, and prejudices towards children relating with them differently based on our thinking and feeling rather than on principles.

The teacher or parent, in turn takes on the role of a winning personality trying to attract the child with the use of suggestion, influence, and love, playing upon his natural desires for approval, emulation, greed, and ambition. The child fails to develop fully, stultifying moral and intellectual growth and “goes into the world as a parasitic plant, clinging ever to the support of some stronger character.” We can all look at our own education and see areas of void because of ideas that were held that impaired our learning because we were thought less of in all the ways and more as previously described.

When systematizing or personalizing the work of education, we as teachers and parents lose sight of the whole, and begin to relate in part, making the part the whole, and creating an offense that will maim, crush, or subvert any part of a person.

Charlotte Mason in her day proposed a solution to these same extremes we face today, a method of education.

Method implies two things—a way to an end, and step-by-step progress in that way. Further, the following of a method implies an idea, a mental image, of the end or object to be arrived at. What do you propose that education shall affect in

(continued on p. 2)

*Nourish a child daily with loving, right and noble ideas which may bear fruit in his life.*

CHARLOTTE MASON

## The 2005-06 School Board

Ambleside's school board announced new members for the upcoming school year. They include Laura Cook, Bill St.Cyr, and Chuck Dobson. Steve Talley was elected chairman.

The board nominated the new members last spring. "We spent two months in prayer before we voted," said Storm Hutchinson, who feels the group works really well together. Other Board members include: Sloan Gunter, Storm Hutchinson, David Pedregon, Maryellen St. Cyr, and Steve Talley.

"The Board's responsibility is to determine policy of the school," said Storm Hutchinson. The board meets the first and third Monday of the month. Board members serve a three year term.

For academic issues, a parent should always contact their child's teacher first. For issues that are non-academic, a parent should first contact Principal Maryellen St. Cyr.

*Top photo: Ambleside students collected socks for Russian orphans during a summer service project.*

*Bottom photo: Matea and Doran Acero in Grand Marais, Minnesota at the Kadunce River*

## *An Educational Aim* (continued from front page)

and for your child? Again, method is natural; easy yielding, unobtrusive, simple as the ways of Nature herself; yet, watchful, careful, all-pervading, all-compelling. Method, with the end of education in view, presses the most unlikely matters into service to bring about that end; but with no more tiresome mechanism than the sun employs when it makes the winds to blow and the waters to flow by shining. The parent who sees his way—that is, the exact force of method to educate his child, will make use of every circumstance of the child's life almost without intention on his own part, so easy and spontaneous is a method of education based on Natural Law (*Home Education*, page 8).

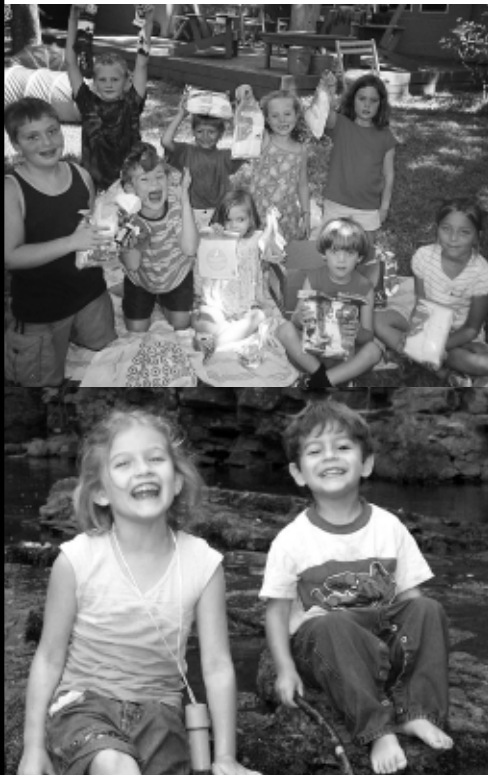
Looking at the definition of education, one must subscribe to an end, a purpose, an aim. For many persons this end is defined solely by vocation, this too is limiting. Mason expands this aim.

But the one achievement possible and necessary for every man is character; and character is finely wrought metal beaten into shape and beauty by the repeated and accustomed action of will. We who teach should make it clear to ourselves that our aim in education is less conduct than character; conduct may be arrived at, as we have seen, by indirect routes, but it is of value to the world only as it has its source in character. (Mason, *Philosophy of Education*, page 129).

Conduct does not always follow character. Yet, character is always followed by conduct.

Our aim in education at Ambleside is to guide and assist in "the production of the latent good in that being, the dissipation of the latent evil, and the preparation of the child to take his place in the world at his best, with every capacity for good that is in him developed into a power." With this in mind, we will in turn contribute to the world at large and bless as we have been blessed.

— MARYELLEN ST. CYR



## Ambleside Teachers 2005-06

Janet Whitehead: Kindergarten;  
Upper School Composition and Literature

Jane Cox: 1st Grade;  
Upper School Service Project

Laletta Johnson: 2nd Grade

Rebekah Brown: 3rd/4th Grade

Marianne Ward: 3rd and 5th  
Grades Math

Randal Johnson: 5th/6th Grade

Nicolle Hutchinson: 7th/8th Grade

Doug Comstock: Middle School Math;  
Upper School: Math, Science, P.E.,  
Service Project

Ken Smith: Upper School Math

Bill St. Cyr: Upper School Civilizations,  
Spiritual Leadership

Maryellen St. Cyr: Principal, Upper  
School Covey Leadership

Laura Cook: Upper School Covey  
Leadership

Gerard Migeon: French K-11th Grade

Candace Morgan: Art 1st-4th Grade

Greg Morgan: Art, Art History  
5th-11th Grade

Mark Hierholzer: K-11th Grade Music;  
Middle & Upper School Music Philosophy

Mary Littman: Office; Upper School  
Nature Study

*I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust."*  
PSALM 91:2

BOOK REVIEW  
**GRACE-BASED PARENTING**

BY DR. TIM KIMMEL

"This time it will be different," we chant to ourselves as we enter parenthood: "I will raise my kids better than my parents, better than that woman across the pew, better than the norm." But what we try is usually just a variation of what we have known. *Grace-Based Parenting* by Dr. Tim Kimmel offers a model of parenting that is based on our heavenly Father's relationship with us. How we view God impacts how we parent our children. **Judgmental parents** spend most of their time making sure their family is better than those around them. **Legalistic parents** spend most of their time trying to make sure their family does everything right. **Grace-based parents** spend their time entrusting themselves to Christ. Grace-based families are not afraid of all the evil around them.

Kimmel says, "I'm urging you to raise your children the way God raises His. The primary word that defines how God deals with His children is grace. Grace does not exclude obedience, respect, boundaries, or discipline but it does determine the climate in which these important parts of parenting are carried out. You may be weird and quirky, but God loves you through His grace with all your weirdness and quirkiness."

Why do our own well-meaning parenting models fall short? The "no boundaries" brand of parenting focuses on relationship to excess without boundaries, limits or rules. Then there's the model of placing boundaries within boundaries around children with little room to move, and subsequently, weakly developed relationship skills. Kimmel finds Christian families struggle the most in this over-safety approach. It's based on two false assumptions:

- *The falsehood that obedience to standards automatically creates safer, better children.*

In reality, change must happen on the inside or it will "undermine the desire of the Holy Spirit, who is working to build a sense of moral resolve in their hearts".

- *The falsehood that tight boundaries around our children translates into more protection or favor from God.*

"The real test of a parenting model is how well equipped the children are to move into adulthood as vital members of the human race. Furthermore, they need to be engaged in the lives of people in their culture, gracefully representing Christ's love inside these desperate surroundings," Kimmel said.

The goal of grace-based parenting is to meet your children's inner needs for security, for strength, and for significance. Those needs are met by showing your children a secure love that is steady and sure that they can confidently carry into the future. The need for significance can be nurtured by shepherding your child through discovering his spiritual, relational, general and specific purpose. The need for significance is communicated by instilling a strong sense of hope. A sure way to convey hope to your child is by recognizing accomplishment, opening the door of adventure, and acknowledging his abilities.

How can we practically and daily maintain a grace-based home? Parent the way God parents us.

**He gives us the freedom to be different.** Whether it is fashion, fads or music, the determination of what is evil is the effect of the thing or the

*(continued on back)*



*Several Ambleside students/families took part in the Baron's Creek Club summer tennis camp including: Trad and Jett Willman, Hattie, Frances, Piper and Clare Morgan, Kit Russell Patterson and Hannah Bouble.*

## Welcome Back

Teacher Marianne Ward, originally from Cape Town, South Africa has rejoined our Ambleside family after several years in England. Through the efforts of Curt Littmann, Marianne received a work visa to return to Ambleside. "If it wasn't for his perseverance, then I would not probably be here," Marianne said.

Marianne will be teaching third grade math, fifth grade math and assisting Rebekah Brown in the third and fourth grade classroom. "I am here to learn more about the practice and philosophy of a Charlotte Mason education. Because the school is practicing a pure form (of the philosophy), it is a good training place to be," she said.

Marianne has a long term goal of starting an Ambleside school in England. Marianne taught third/fourth grade at Ambleside in 2002 before having difficulty with her visa.



*Watercolor, Erika Migeon*

## School Calendar

### September

- 5 Labor Day Holiday
- 10 New Parent Orientation, 9 a.m.
- 13 Campus Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
- 16 Study Group: "Philosophy, Principles & Practice", 7:30-9 p.m.
- 21 Teacher In-service, 12:15 dismissal
- 30 Study Group: "Philosophy, Principles & Practice", 7:30-9 p.m.

### October

- 5-7 Internship
- 10 Parent Teacher Conferences, No school
- 12 All School Lunch
- 14 Study Group: "Philosophy, Principles & Practice", 7:30-9 p.m.
- 27-29 Upper School Play, 7 p.m.

## Community Calendar

### September

- 10 114th Annual Saengerfest, Pioneer Pavilion
- 18 Davide Cabassi, Fredericksburg Music Club Concert

### October

- 16 Blackburn/Lang Duo, Fredericksburg Music Club Concert
- 21-22 Fredericksburg German History Symposium, German-Texas Society

### Prayer Time for Mothers

Mothers, are you praying for your child? Join us to pray for your student and the needs of the school weekly. You will be blessed, and your children will be blessed. Meet at Leslie Harper's house at 203 East Schubert at 11 a.m. on Friday mornings. Meetings last a little under an hour. Bring a Bible and notebook for prayer requests. If you have little ones, bring them along. Call Leslie Harper at 997-9498 for more information.

### Fall Book Study

A 5-session study group introducing the philosophy and methods of Charlotte Mason will meet every other week beginning Friday, September 16 at 7:30-9pm at Ambleside. Bill St. Cyr will facilitate the discussions using Charlotte Mason methods. Study group articles and narration journals will be provided. Childcare at the school also has been arranged at a cost of \$3 per child. Please call the office to sign-up.

## Needs

- The keyboarding lab is in need of a computer with Windows 98 or later and keyboard. The lab also could use four mouse pads.
- Art: empty baby food jars, large smocks for older students
- Library: If anyone has spare furniture please contact Candace Morgan for interior plan. Items needed: 9 x 12 rug, club-like chairs, tables and lamps. Candace Morgan 990-9605

## Grace-Based Parenting *(continued on back page)*

action in an individual's life. Things are not specifically evil; attitudes are evil.

**He gives us the freedom to be vulnerable.** My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. (2 Corinthians 12:9) Your love and understanding can turn a setback into a step forward.

**He gives us the freedom to be candid.** Grace-based families make room for their kids, opinions. They provide a safe forum in which to air their doubts, disappointments, and even their misguided beliefs.

**He gives us the freedom to make mistakes.** Sin is a preexisting condition. Accept your child as a sinner who desires to become more like Christ—not a nice Christian kid trying to maintain a good moral code.

— DAN HARPER

Articles and news items are posted on our website:

[www.amblesideschools.org](http://www.amblesideschools.org)

We welcome your submissions, responses, news, or questions.

Send to: [danslie@peoplepc.com](mailto:danslie@peoplepc.com)

Next newsletter deadline: Oct. 10

*At Ambleside Newsletter*

*Writer/Editor: Dan and Leslie Harper    Layout Design: Candace Morgan*