

A JOURNEY FILLED WITH BLESSING A TRANSFER FAMILY'S TESTIMONY, KINDLY SHARED WITH US

"My name is Daphne R. Chaney. I am the wife of Alvin Chaney and mother of Alvin Paul Chaney (A.J.), who is in the 6th grade. This is our first year at Mars Hill Academy. We have lived in Cincinnati for twenty-three years and currently live in Kennedy Heights. Our family would like to give thanks to our Heavenly Father for carrying us through this journey.

In January, 2009, our son's school announced that it would be closing at the end of May, 2009. This had been our home for five years. All 50 students and their parents were family, not classmates. We had worked hard and prayed side-by-side over the years.

There were many questions. Where would we go? Where do we begin? Needless to say, the miracle was found in letting go of the 'familiar' and trusting God's plan -- not our desires.

Mars Hill Academy was the first of three schools we decided to visit and shadow. It had been highly recommended by Mr. and Mrs. Greg Phelia and Mr. and Mrs. Rasahn Reynolds. We were impressed by the academics, love, respect, and opportunity to fellowship with the Lord daily. Although each of the students made Alvin feel welcome during our visit, Tristan Admiraal went above and beyond what was expected.

Through continued prayer, the Lord showed us the next steps of His plan for our son. One day, I called Mrs. Susan Carter, who had kept in touch with us. I shared with her my concerns (from a mother's perspective) and she responded to me as a mother. She also described the academic mountain ahead and assured me that her thoughts and prayers would be with A.J. as he began his climb.



Alvin, Daphne, and Alvin Paul Chaney, a new MHA family. Alvin Paul (A.J.) has transferred into the 6th grade at MHA.

Like all the other incoming students who attended summer classes, our family made a commitment to persevere to the end. We knew that A.J. would be giving up his summer, but we also knew what he would gain in the fall. In every commitment, some type of sacrifice is required. We were blessed by Dr. Colvin and Mr. Persing, who taught A.J.'s summer classes (we enjoyed learning right along with our son). Dr. Colvin taught through tremendous back pain, and Mr. Persing traveled two hours a day to tutor. This speaks volumes of their dedication to the school and to their students. We also thank parents, Drs. Wesley and Jana Braden, who opened their home to us as their son, Wesley, tutored A.J. and others in Latin this past summer. This young man gave his students his best, and they returned it. It was a blessing to witness the students working together.

So ... here we stand.

I thank the teachers who have chatted with me on numerous occasions about Alvin's progress. Mr. Giese has stayed after school to spend extra time with A.J. studying Latin. We appreciate Mr. Wismer, the staff, and members of the board who have dedicated their lives to Christ and for providing an awesome learning environment. I would be remiss if I did not express my gratitude to Mrs. Bette Brinkerhoff and the mothers who pray every Tuesday for our school, students, teachers, and families. As we continue this transition, we are grateful to the parents and teachers who have shared their testimonies and offered words of encouragement. You will never know how much that means to a new parent.

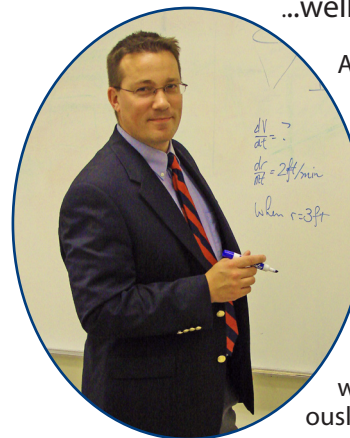
Although it has seemed like a long journey up to this point, I would not change any of it. Each step was there for a reason. I believe each child is here at MHA because God has special plans for him. The following scripture has brought our family comfort:

11 "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

Blessings!
Daphne R. Chaney

THE NUMBERS TELL THE STORY...

...well, part of the story...



At MHA we aspire to more than merely scoring well on standardized tests. In mathematics, for example, we set out to describe the complexity, order, and design of God's wondrous creation; we want students to glimpse the glory of God as they uncover His handiwork. "Calculus especially," says Mr. Rich Bennett, MHA Calculus instructor and shown left, "is the kind of 'higher-altitude' math that really opens up this world of complexity and beauty." This is why he could characterize one of last year's students as "having a love of learning...naturally inquisitive...awed at times by how the details of arithmetic, algebra, and trigonometry join together with the fundamentals of calculus to allow him to make previously unimaginable strides."

Mr. Bennett also emphasizes how Calculus helps his students learn about their capacity for understanding exceptionally challenging material. In this course, all the objectives of our upper-level math courses come to a head – the need to think beyond the obvious, to perceive a problem in multiple dimensions, to identify a problem's "main idea," to probe, to experiment, to discover applications of abstract concepts to the created order, and to work at problem-solving even without mastery of all the relevant math topics.

The fruit of these emphases was observable in another member of last year's class, who was distinguished by a quiet tenacity, a dogged determination in the face of what seemed, at times, to be insurmountable problems. Calculus stretched his perseverance to the limit, but thereby revealed God-given capabilities which might otherwise have gone undiscovered.

Calculus is rigorous. Nationally, less than 10% of seniors study it. And many or most high school Calculus courses are now AP (Advanced Placement), which means they conform to a set of objectives geared towards the national AP Calculus exam. AP exams are graded on a scale of 1 – 5, with 5 being the highest and 3 being "Passing." Last year less than 60% of the 175,000 AP Calculus exam-takers passed.

During the last eight years about half of MHA seniors have taken Calculus, and multiple graduates have testified to being "more than well-prepared" for their college calculus classes. And though our Calculus is not technically an AP course, we now have our students take the AP exam each year. So, how did MHA students measure up this past spring? Of our four Calc students, all four not only passed, but scored a 4 or 5 – a remarkable achievement! It certainly confirms the diligence and hard work of students and teacher alike. But most of all, it confirms us in our focus on our God and on godly character, and confirms God's graciousness in so blessing those efforts.

Soli Deo Gloria, to God alone the glory!

—submitted by Mr. Paul Brinkerhoff, MHA's Dean of Academic Affairs

IN GRATITUDE FOR SERVICE

WE THANK MR. ART WONG AND MR. MIKE VANWYK



Mr. Wong retired from the Board this past summer, after serving a three-year term as Board secretary. He holds a B.S. in Engineering, a Certificate in Community Health, and an M.S. in Chemical Engineering from Tufts University. Mr. Wong is currently employed by Procter & Gamble as a principal engineer. His wife, Lynn, is the MHA art teacher. The Wongs have two children and attend North Cincinnati Community Church.

Mr. Van Wyk was elected to the Board in the summer of 2009 and serves as MHA Board secretary. He has been employed by Procter & Gamble since 1998 and currently leads the Consumer & Market Knowledge department for the North America Personal Health business. He earned a B.S. in horticulture from Michigan State University and a MBA from the University of Texas. Mike and his wife Elaine have 3 children and attend Grace Bible Presbyterian Church.



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Classic Café

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MHA staff or selected speakers present from 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. the first Friday of every month

Friday, October 2
The Case for Classical Christian Literature

Friday, November 6
*Hitting the High Notes
The Role of Music in Classical Christian Education*

Friday, December 4
*All Thoughts in Submission
The Role of the Bible in Classical Christian Education*

Bring your lunch and a friend!



CLASSICAL CORNER

One of our third grade teachers, Mrs. Tammy Peters, was recently published in *Classis*, the quarterly journal of the Association of Classical and Christian Schools. With permission we have reprinted the article for your enjoyment.

The Scaffolding of Monuments: Teaching English Grammar

Recently my third graders at Mars Hill Academy shared with an Open House audience how to analyze a sentence. First we chanted the Eight Parts of Speech, followed by a rousing chorus defining Adjectives and Adverbs. We recited 49 prepositions. The viewers smiled approvingly. Then the real fun began. In unison, we identified the principal elements and all the subordinate elements in a sentence. I drew the modifier lines on a whiteboard while the class explained the relationships between the words. At the end, we diagrammed the sentence to show a visual representation of the internal structure. The audience stared in disbelief. Hands slowly lifted in the air. "How did you ever discover this method?" "Why teach English grammar in this manner?"

Nine years ago, we as a young classical Christian school began to wrestle with how to teach English grammar using the Socratic method of questioning. At that time, our program had the students identify parts of a sentence through parsing. But as the children progressed up the academic ladder, we found that they never really understood the relationships of words within the sentence. There seemed to be a disconnect between identifying all its parts and understanding why a sentence behaved as it did. It fell short of our expectations. We began to search for a better way.

Our search led us to Thomas W. Harvey. This 19th century grammarian incorporated the correct standard and usage within his lessons by building on concepts. He started with the principal elements and slowly added subordinate elements (adverbs and adjectives). Introducing his readers to a concept, he instructed them to identify an element within a sentence, and then directed them to explain why it behaved as it did.

For example: "Iron is heavy."

This is a sentence; it is a group of words making complete sense: declarative; it states a fact. Iron is the subject; it is that of which something is affirmed: heavy is the predicate; it is that which is affirmed of the subject; is is the copula; it joins the predicate to the subject. (Harvey, p. 21)

Harvey built on existing knowledge. In the second example, he provides only the new analysis for the reader to learn or memorize while the explanations of previous lessons need to be recited by memory.

"Scholars learn lessons."

This is a sentence; (why?): declarative; (why?): Scholars is the subject; (why?): learn is the predicate; (why?): "Learn" is modified by lessons, an objective element. (p. 26).

Using what we gained from Harvey's Grammar, we began to design our own program with our own grammar definitions and analysis. We use three main components to frame our lessons: grammar terminology, choral analysis, and diagramming.

1) **Grammar terminology.** To learn the language of grammar, we sing or chant the definitions. Singing definitions provide the memory pegs of learning. This reinforces our classical method of teaching younger children. First, we focus on the building blocks of our language, the eight parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions, interjections). Second, we focus on the mortar to create complete thoughts, the principal elements (subject and predicates) and the subordinate elements (modifiers, phrases, and clauses). We use Grammar School Grammar music CD.

2) **Choral analysis.** To learn the structure of a sentence, we analyze as a whole-class. As with Harvey, we analyze a sentence element by element, though we added a marking system to identify each part while we analyze. For example:

S Iv PA
Iron is heavy.

This sentence is about iron. So, iron is the subject (S) because it is what the sentence is about. This sentence tells us that iron is heavy. So, heavy is the predicate because it is what the sentence tells us about iron. It is a predicate adjective (PA) because it tells a quality of the subject. Is is the linking verb because it joins the subject to the predicate.

Once the students understand simple sentences identifying the subject and the predicates (Predicate Verb, Predicate Nominative, Predicate Adjectives) plus the prepositional phrases, they are ready to handle complex sentences with clauses (Relative Clauses, Adverbial Clauses, Noun Clauses).

3) **Diagramming.** To learn the relationship of principal elements with the subordinate elements, we use the Reed and Kellogg method of diagramming. Its main goal is to visualize the relationship of subordinate elements to principal elements.

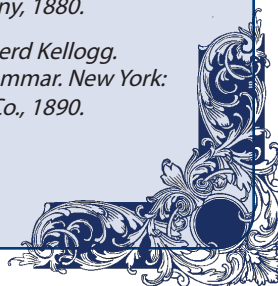
So why teach English grammar in this way? It reinforces the Dorothy Sayer's view of the Grammar stage (ages 9-11) as being immersed in language. Children at this age possess a God-given ability to memorize large amounts of materials, which then become the scaffolding for building the Dialectic (ages 12-14) and Rhetoric (ages 14-16) stages that follow. The singing of grammar definitions and choral analysis provide the framework where further learning takes place.

At the close of our Open House, I related a story about a few years ago when my husband and I took our kids to Washington, D.C. to see the sites. I personally wanted to visit the Washington Monument. This marble sentinel lays claim to being the largest masonry building in the world, and I couldn't wait to see it. Yet alas, the monument wore a shroud of scaffolding, which surrounded the grand masterpiece and obscured it. Though impressive, it wasn't what I desired to see.

I warned the audience of the danger of focusing on the scaffolding and missing its reason for being there. While visitors are often impressed by our students' ability to analyze sentences, I explained that its purpose is twofold 1) to provide the structure to better understand their own language and 2) to provide the wherewithal to construct monuments of thought through their writing and speaking. Each stage of learning reinforces and shapes the next. When these grammar years are successful, its lasting reward is our children's ability to communicate about God's world and His truth using His precious gift of language.

Harvey, Thomas. Harvey's Elementary Grammar and Composition. New York: American Book Company, 1880.

Reed, Alonzo and Brainerd Kellogg. Elementary English Grammar. New York: Effingham Maynard & Co., 1890.



HIGHLAND TIMES

SPECIAL EDITION

A publication of Mars Hill Academy

October 2, 2009

FROM THE HEADMASTER BECOMING WISE

"When the scoffer is punished, the naïve becomes wise."

- Proverbs 21:11

Wise	Naïve	Scoffer
loves God	"I guess..."	doesn't love God
loves church	"it's OK"	church is boring
loves parents	"they're OK"	parents don't get it
loves school	sometimes	school's lame
loves correction	huh?	everyone's on my case



Dear MHA Community,

"Becoming wise" will be a theme of mine for the entire school year. It doesn't matter what age your children/students are, OR what age you are, all of us are responsible before God to grow in wisdom in all areas of our lives - in fact, God says that following His instructions gives "life" and not following them leads to "death." A significant part of our work at MHA is to challenge, grow, encourage, model, train, instruct and even discipline your children/students in the "way of wisdom" (which, by the way, also includes math facts, grammar, literature, etc.), learning about God's TRUTH in every area. You get the picture. We're after the heart as well as the mind!

So, what does this mean for you? What does this mean for your student? What does this mean for MHA? I can answer these questions with the following questions:

- What characterizes your children/student's attitude at home?
- What characterizes your attitude at home?
- How does that compare with what you hear from their teachers at MHA?
- How does that compare with what you desire for your family?

If, for any of the above, you feel a twinge of remorse or "guilt by neglect," CONGRATULATIONS! You've taken the first step of growth!!! "None are so blind as those who will not see." If you're moving by God's grace out of that mindset, welcome to the world of biblical wisdom. We're moving together!

So, your homework is the same as mine/MHA teachers. We need to ask ourselves, "How does God want me to improve my attitude?" "How can I encourage those around me to demonstrate God's wisdom in every area (especially the difficult areas, the easy areas are easy)?" "How should my prayer-life change (i.e. am I praying for REAL change that's observable)?" After all, until my prayer-life changes, there is no real change! I'm praying for you - please pray for me, the staff, and Mars Hill Academy!

-Roger Wismer, Headmaster

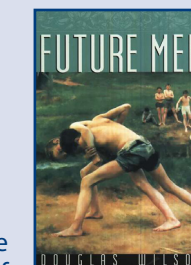
THIS WEEK'S PROVERB

- Q. What will happen to those in a hurry to get rich?
- A. He who hastens to get rich will not go unpunished. (28:20)

BOOK REVIEW

Future Men

By Douglas Wilson



Do you have a "vision" of your son as a man? Do you know what you are laboring toward in your parenting journey? If your vision is unclear, Douglas Wilson has some ideas for you. As always, his "ideas" are based on Biblical truth, and, as with many of Douglas Wilson's ideas, the ones found in *Future Men* will open the eyes of, and challenge, any parent.

In *Future Men*, Wilson contests many popular, secular notions, providing a breath of fresh air to a parent struggling to keep the word "gun" from ever entering her son's vocabulary. True to his thinking, Wilson also brings to light "out-of-the-box" issues many parents have probably never considered: the church's effect on boy's masculinity, how giants and dragons are positive influences in a boy's life, and more.

This book is sure intrigue and refresh any parent raising a son. It is highly recommended by MHA.

DON'T MISS MARS HILL ACADEMY'S 2009

Vision Weekend

Friday, October 16
Grandparents' Day
at Mars Hill Academy

Saturday, October 17
Brunch, Silent and Live Auctions,
Banquet at the Great Wolf Lodge

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