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A Letter from the Community of

# ST. TIMOTHY'S

Leading Students to Reverence Truth, Desire Goodness, and Rejoice in Beauty

Fall 2010

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## Staff at St. Timothy's

**Michael Klaassen**, Academy  
Director, Grades 5-8

**Christine Edmonds & Alison  
Nanda**, Kindergarten

**Naomi King**, Grades 1&2

**Rachel Bloomquist**, Grades 3&4

**Maestro Uwe Lieflander**, Choral  
Music Instructor, Grades 1-8

**Mary Gauvreau**, French, Grades  
3-8

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Paul University

**The Very Rev'd Ghattas Hajal**, St.  
Elias Antiochian Orthodox Church

## Contact Information

St. Timothy's Classical Academy  
c/o 350 Avondale Avenue  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K2A 0R5  
Telephone: 613-794-1750

## Educating our Children Despite the Experts

### By Rebecca Visser

Parents of school-aged children in Ottawa have recently been faced with issues regarding the line between parental and school authority. Last Spring, the Ontario government announced it would be introducing a new health curriculum that included more explicit sexual information for children as young as grade one. Many parents were outraged and due to the public reaction the plan was shelved.

Then just a few weeks ago the Ottawa-Carleton School Board laid out its plan to conduct a survey of its grades 7 – 12 students (and grades 1 – 6, to be filled out by parents), asking questions that many deem to be too personal and inappropriate (including sexual orientation and religious affiliation). The controversial survey is now being delayed after the province's privacy commissioner received complaints.

When the Ontario government curriculum was cancelled, an American sexual educator who was asked to comment expressed her frustration by stating: "That's what we do in the States, kow-tow to parents groups... instead of

sticking our feet in the ground and saying 'We are the educational experts'."\*

The above developments beg the question of what the role of parents should be in their children's education. Who, indeed, are the educational experts?

For most of us parents, there is a simple answer: we are. We know our children best; we know their personalities, desires, and capabilities. We know what challenges them, scares them, and encourages them. We educate them from the time they are in the womb until ... do we ever stop? We teach them right from wrong, judgement, mercy and forgiveness, conflict resolution, and anger management. We do our best to model patience, kindness, and humility. We are especially sensitive to what hurts them and brings them down. We open their eyes to the beauty all around them in the natural world. In spite of the mistakes we make, we are undeniably their primary educators. They are God's gifts to us, and it is our responsibility and great privilege to form them.

When children start school, ideally they are launched into a "formal" education that works in conjunction with the "informal" one they continue to have at home. Laced throughout the official documents at St. Timothy's is the running theme

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## Director's Comments

Several weeks ago my son, Peter, and I were listening to Led Zeppelin's Kashmir, a piece of rock and roll from the seventies which has been given considerable play on the radio in the last twenty-five years. I wondered aloud why this particular track was so catchy – it couldn't, certainly, be the lyrics or the melody. But my son acutely remarked that people find the song interesting at least in part because the drums play in four-four time, while the melody itself is in three-four time.

This makes sense to me. But it is not something that I, even though I'm tolerably well trained musically, had picked up on, or would ever pick up on. Peter understood it because over the last few years he has been trained - in the strings programme at Canterbury - to break apart music in his own head into its component parts, like light through a prism. He is learning what makes music beautiful.

The conversation came back to me last week when I was reading Dickens' A Christmas Carol aloud with the senior class. As we read, several of the students were pointing out some of Dickens' literary devices, turns of language which he used to make his writing more compelling: metaphor, simile, alliteration, tricola, personification. These devices form a small part of a long tradition of writing which stretches back through English literature to the Greeks and Romans. They are some of the tools authors use to give weight and colour to prose and poetry alike, and students can be taught to find them and see them for what they are: part of what makes writing beautiful.

Writing is not made beautiful only by artifice, of course. There are any number of technically proficient authors who do not write beautifully. But the number of authors who write beautifully and who are not technically proficient is very small indeed. I regard my students' attentiveness to what they are reading as a small first step in their acquisition of an aesthetic sense which they can articulate, a recognition that there are some things about what is beautiful that we can identify, point out, and agree on. This attentiveness and recognition is one of the goals of a classical education.

Dr. Michael Klaassen

## *Primary...Continued from page 1*

that parents are the primary educators of their children, and that the school, in its capacity of handling the daily "formal" education of the students, is working in cooperation with the parents. The staff have been entrusted with the students and "they have the prerogative to co-operate with parents to 'train up a child in the way he should go,' that 'when he is old he will not depart from it' (Prov.22:6)" (from the Faith and Basis of St. Timothy's).

As a parent with five children at St. Timothy's, I certainly know my educational limitations. My husband and I were not comfortable with the public school system for many reasons, yet we did not feel prepared to home school either. We chose our school because we know we can trust the teachers to pass on the information and knowledge they have studied, the pieces of God's creation that they are passionate about, to their students. To a certain extent we hand over our parental reigns every day, as the able staff educate, guide, challenge, and discipline our kids.

I say "to a certain extent" because we have not left our parenting responsibilities at the school door. We appreciate when teachers communicate with us regarding concerns for our children. After all, it is still primarily at home that our children's characters are being formed and the most important part of their education is occurring.

Parents should be able to trust the schools where their children go five days a week – trust that the hard work they have been doing at home in beginning their education is being supported and built upon. Our children can then step into the world with a solid foundation of strong character and knowledge, capable of transforming the world around them.

\*National Post, April 23, Ontario's sex-ed battlefield: Saving lives or encouraging early sex?

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***Rebecca Visser is a parent of five St. Timothy's students as well as being our school secretary.***

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***Please check out our new website recently created by Jonathan Randoy and Rebecca Visser at [www.st-timothys.ca](http://www.st-timothys.ca).***

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## Voices from Our Community

We hope to make this a regular feature of our newsletter where various voices from within our community can bring you a little closer to what life is like inside our school. This fall, we have asked Mr. Bob Graham to comment on his experience as a volunteer. Mr. Graham has faithfully come in once a week for the past six years to enrich the lives of our students with his presence and with his understanding of history.

*For several years I have been privileged to work as a teaching associate at St Timothy's under the direction and supervision of Mrs. Bloomquist. For me, the gift is to be able to work, once a week, with highly motivated, intellectually curious, interested and interesting young people in grades three through five, and to see how Christian values are manifested in succeeding family generations. My role is to help history come alive by telling stories about real people in real situations, using pictures, maps, photographs, artifacts, etc., and then to try to help them find the larger implications within the narrower focus of the story line. This approach, I believe, enables young people to remember the past and learn for the future. A Christian love and structured family life is evident in each of the young people with whom I have come in contact at St Timothy's. Their care for each other, as peers, and their attention to the needs of the littler ones in the younger grades, bears witness to the family ethos of compassion and care that they themselves have experienced at home. It continues to be, for me, a great joy to be able to be a part of the larger St. Timothy's family and to be a small part of a team of dedicated parents and teachers committed to the nurture and education of the next generation of spiritually healthy and happy young men and women.*

Bob Graham

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## If only we all spent our Friday mornings thus amused...

On Friday mornings, we begin the day with reading aloud from the Bible. We have been immersed in the marvelous story of Joseph, in the book of Genesis. This past week we were stirred by the emotional drama of Joseph's brothers... having to leave behind their brother, Simeon, in Egypt, discovering their payments for grain in their sacks, begging their father to let them take Benjamin back to Egypt, and then encountering Joseph, who, having seen his brother Benjamin again after so many years, turned aside from the room to weep. Finally, we noted the wonderment of Joseph's brothers when they found themselves seated at his banquet table in order of age from oldest to youngest.

Rachel Bloomquist's 3/4 Class

## Highlights from this term...

Bug hunting for Mrs. Edmonds.

Monarchs: from egg to caterpillar to cocoon to butterfly and all in each classroom.

A glorious hike in Gatineau Park.

A new course at St. Tim's: Drama with Mrs. Walker.

A tea party for St. Maurice's Seniors, hosted by the Senior Class at St. Timothy's very own cafe.

Mrs. Small's Running Club on Tuesdays after school.

Science journalling for Mrs. Torenvliet.

Reptillian bread creations with Mrs. Bloomquist.

The third annual Ceili on a stormy night in October.

A trip to the NAC to see the Nutcracker.

## Smiles at School

During lunch play-time today, a lovely scene unfolded without any leadership from the adults present. At the invitation of the senior girls, our eight kindergarten students were seated along the grassy hill, rather like spectators at a Roman amphitheatre. At the bottom of the hill, the older girls demonstrated a few songs and dances with great drama, to which the kindergarten responded with enthusiastic applause. Then the older girls invited the kindergarten students to join in the festivities.

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## The Reader's Nook

### For Young Children

A Selection of Bible Storybooks

God's Kingdom Stories from the New Testament

Geraldine McCaughrean (Author),  
Anna Leplar (Illustrator)

Everlasting Stories

Lois Rock (Author), Christina Balit  
(Illustrator)

This one is available at the library  
and is lovely and big with beautiful  
illustrations.

Tomie de Paola's Book of Bible  
Stories

Tomie de Paola (Author and  
Illustrator)

A collection of 17 stories from the  
Old Testament, 15 from the New  
Testament, and 4 psalms.

Stories from Adam and Eve to  
Ezekiel & Stories from the Life of  
Jesus

Celia Barker Lotteridge (Author),  
Linda Wolfgruber (Illustrator)

Joseph, Exodus, Moses, Jesus,  
Mary, A Christmas Story, The  
Easter Story, St. Francis, The Bible  
Story

Brian Wildsmith (Illustrator)  
Beautiful illustrations with lots of  
gold and bright colours.

The Story of Christmas, The Story  
of Creation, Adam and Eve and

the Garden of Eden, Noah's Ark,  
Let There Be Light Bible Stories

Illustrated by Jane Ray  
Jane Ray (Illustrator)

Beautiful illustrations also with lots  
of gold and possibly inspired by  
Brian Wildsmith.

The Bible Storybook: Ten Tales  
from the Old and New Testaments  
& The Good Shepherd Storybook

Georgie Adams (Author), Peter  
Utton (Illustrator)

Whimsical illustrations that delight  
young children.

### And for Christmas...

The Nativity

Julie Vivas (Illustrator)

Worth finding a copy of this  
refreshingly real and fun-loving  
look at this beautiful story. This  
one is also available at the library.

The Christmas Collie

Ted Paul (Author), Mary Kummer  
(Illustrator)

"This is a beautiful story of a child  
and his dog as they grow together.  
It is a story of friendship, love, and  
sharing through the stages of life."

### For Older Readers

A Little History of the World

E.H. Gombrich (Author)

Starred Review: "...a children's  
history originally published 70  
years ago...Gombrich, later known  
as an art historian, wrote this  
primer in 1935, when he was a  
young man in Vienna. Rewritten

(and updated) in English mainly by  
Gombrich himself, the book is still  
aimed at children... But while he  
addresses his readers directly at  
times, Gombrich never talks down  
to them. Using vivid imagery,  
storytelling and sly humor, he brings  
history to life in a way that adults as  
well as children can appreciate"

### For Adults

Our new history text book for the  
Grade 5-8 class may interest some  
of our adult friends.

The History Of The Medieval World

Susan Bauer (Author)

"From the schism of Rome and  
Constantinople to the rise of the  
T'ang Dynasty and to the birth of  
Muhammad, this erudite book tells  
the fascinating, often violent story of  
medieval kings, generals and the  
people they ruled." (Amazon)

If you are looking for more reading  
material, try the mercatornet blog  
site, Reading Matters. Continually  
updated, this blog will give you old  
and new reviews of recommended  
and not recommended reading  
material for children.

[www.mercatornet.com/  
bookreviews](http://www.mercatornet.com/bookreviews)

Alice Cantrell's blog site, **A Number  
of Things**, is a lovely browse  
through a very creative life with  
children. She also has some  
interesting book suggestions  
including many non fiction books.

[www.alicecantrell.com](http://www.alicecantrell.com)

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## Please Pray for Our School

- ✦ That Jesus Christ will always be the light for our school.
  - ✦ Thank the Lord for a smooth beginning to this school year and for all the new students He has given us.
  - ✦ Thanksgiving for the new families already interested in joining our community next year.
  - ✦ Praise God for the generosity of Bromley Road Baptist Church.
  - ✦ Pray for a new location for our school for September 2011.
  - ✦ For greater financial security as we consider new endeavours for our growing school - unless God calls us to live a life of greater trust in Him, in which case, pray for courage and faith for our Board and community!
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