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Finger Pointing: Toward Novare Math and Science

March 2014

Sequitur Classical Tutorials (Baton Rouge, Louisiana)

by Brian Daigle

It is a privilege to work alongside great educators, and it is a privilege when we continue to learn in such a way as to discover other great educators doing great things in other parts of this country. Scott Gendron, a father in our school and board member, recently sent me one such good artifact from one such good educator. As many of you know, over the past year we have become more acquainted with the folks over at Novare Science and Math, particularly John D. Mays. We will be using much of their curriculum as our own in the coming years. They have been extremely helpful in several ways and continue to show great ability in their craft. But I want to take this opportunity and do two things: 1) briefly outline what makes their curriculum and approach to science so distinctive, and 2) point you to their March newsletter as evidence of that distinction.

Sequitur holds to the theological and academic principle that the disciplines we teach our students are deeply related. That is to say, the fast-peddled lie among today's educators and academicians that the arts and sciences sit on polar opposites of the brain, schoolhouse, or epistemological spectra couldn't be further from the truth; hence, why I have called it a lie. It is perhaps one of the biggest lies in modern education, from Kindergarten to doctoral dissertations. It is what I have called elsewhere "The Great Hoax". One quick reading of Dante or the English Romantics, for example, shows that scientific investigation and poetry can be sweetly interwoven as a rich and blessed tapestry. Scripture showcases this as well. In Christ, science and poetry hold together, and only in Christ.

This is what makes Novare Science and Math quite distinctive in their general approach to academics, science in particular. First, they understand that the maths and sciences, when taught from a Christian perspective and taught well, do not happen in a void. Science and math are more than mechanisms, technical jargondry our kids must learn to succeed in an ever-increasing technological world. Therefore, it is just as important, if not more so, for students to understand math and science conceptually

than understand merely the mechanics of math and science, the nuts and bolts. Second, Novare understands that math and science, to be taught well, must be taught in relation to the other academic disciplines. I often talk with parents whose children are math or science inclined, and it is not rare for them to ask, “So, why does my kid need Dante and Homer if he is going to be an engineer? What do the humanities have to do with science?” Well, what *hath* Geneva to do with Florence? In short, everything! There is much more to be said here, but one quick discussion with any current engineer or physicist who had a good classical Christian upbringing will be enough to prove this point. Or just study da Vinci’s life, as Kevin Lindholm, my colleague, has been imparting to me the brilliant renaissance man da Vinci actually was. And to relay Kevin’s words spoken to me just the other day, “Da Vinci’s last words upon his death bed, from a man who was a leading scientist, mathematician, architect, and inventor in his day, were ‘I have failed both God and man. I should have spent more time on my paintings.’ “

So, now for the finger-pointing, the good kind. John Mays over at Novare Science and Math has put forth his March newsletter, and it is a good one. It is on the topic of teaching poetry in science class. This newsletter should be spread far and wide, for it is rare, even in classical and Christian circles I find this kind of promotion. Mays has done justice to several topics in this article, including 1) the interdisciplinary nature of a well-rounded academics 2) the different kinds of knowledge we obtain as humans and why we must approach learning more holistically, and 3) why Christians, and Christian schools, are obligated to teach all subjects in their interrelation under the Lordship of Christ. You may find the March newsletter from Novare Math and Science [here](#), or at their website www.novarescienceandmath.com.