



Urban Classical Education with Russ Gregg

Lesson 1: A Day of Good News

Outline:

This is a Day of Good News: Why Start Classical Christian Schools in Hard Places?

- God is doing something new in our day that is so surprising, that nobody 20 years ago could have predicted it. He is raising up a movement of Christ-centered, classical schools in the inner-cities of our country.
- Story from II Kings 7: Four men with leprosy find wealth in the deserted camp of the Arameans. As they are plundering the camp they realize that what they are doing is wrong. They say, “What we’re doing is not right. This is a day of good news, and we are keeping it to ourselves. If we wait until daylight, surely punishment will overtake us. Let’s go at once and report this to the royal palace.”
- Russ tells his story of how he was led to move into the worst part of Minneapolis—into the Phillips Neighborhood, known for rampant poverty and violent crime.
- When his oldest son became of school age, Russ realized that there was an educational crisis in his neighborhood.
- The heart of the problem: 87% percent of the African-American children born in Minneapolis are born to a single mom. These children start Kindergarten with a vocabulary of just 500 words, while the average suburban child has a vocabulary of over 5000 words. These children start so far behind it hard for them to catch up; they often fail to do well in school and many drop out of school by 10th grade and get involved with drugs and crime, often ending up in jail.
- Russ and his wife were taking their kids 10 miles across town to a good classical Christian school... and loved the education their children were receiving. Russ recalls that Mortimer Adler said, “The education that’s best for the best is best for all.” Russ also recalls the parable of the banquet and then the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10). Russ fell under conviction driving by those in great need, trapped in the worst schools in the country.
- In the September of 1999, Russ heard a sermon on Romans 4 that brought him under great conviction. At the end of the sermon, the pastor said that if the teaching of Romans 4 was true, “then for the 70 year “vapor” that we have on this earth, we ought to venture something for God that’s a little bit “crazy.”
- Russ then sensed that he was being called to create a classical Christian school for his inner-city neighbors. He also believed that if he did not respond



then God was going to call someone else to do it. Russ then promptly resigned his job in September, knowing it would take him some 11 months to prepare for the opening of a new school. With no teachers, no board, no money, and now facility—he got started.

- Now Hope Academy has 480 students, 80 staff members and 4.5 million dollar budget, 90% of which is raised by sponsors. The academic achievement of students from Hope Academy is three times that of the neighborhood schools.
- Russ says, “God has answered our prayers!” He leaves us with these words of Jesus: “To whom much is given much is required.”