The image shows the interior of a Gothic cathedral, characterized by its high vaulted ceiling with a complex ribbed structure. The walls are filled with pointed arches and flying buttresses that support the weight of the roof. The ceiling is painted with a grid of ribs and contains several circular medallions or frescoes. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the textures of the stone and the depth of the architectural space. A red banner is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the title and edition information.

OMNIBUS V

The Medieval World

Second Edition

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General Editor **GENE EDWARD VEITH**

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To my students: Those of the past, those of the present, and those who will read this book.

—GENE EDWARD VEITH

To my first grade teacher at Germantown Elementary, Miss Robinson, who first taught me how to read. My obligations to her do nothing but increase every day.

—DOUGLAS WILSON

To Dante Alighieri, the Poet, and my Teacher.

—G. TYLER FISCHER

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FOREWORD

One of the most obvious questions that Christians might ask about a curriculum like this one is, “Why study this stuff?” The question can be asked for different reasons. Perhaps a concerned parent is attracted to the rigor of a “classical and Christian approach,” and yet has thumbed through a couple of the texts and is taken aback by some of the material. “It was this kind of gunk,” he thinks, “that chased us out of the government school.” Or perhaps the question is asked by the student himself when he “hits the wall.” The rigor that is built into this course of study is significant, and about a third of the way through the year, a student might be asking all sorts of pointed questions. “Why are you making me do this?” is likely to be one of them. The student may be asking because of his workload, but if he points to the nature of the material, the question still needs a good answer. It is a good question, and everyone who is involved in teaching this course needs to have the answer mastered.

G.K. Chesterton said somewhere that if a book does not have a wicked character in it, then it is a wicked book. One of the most pernicious errors that has gotten abroad in the Christian community is the error of *sentimentalism*—the view that evil is to be evaded, rather than the more robust Christian view that evil is to be conquered. The Christian believes that evil is there to be fought, the dragon is there to be slain. The sentimentalist believes that evil is to be resented.

My wife and I did not enroll our children in a classical Christian school so that they would never come into contact with sin. Rather, we wanted them there because we wanted to unite with like-minded Christian parents who had covenanted together to deal with the (inevitable) sin in a consistent, biblical manner. We fully expected our children to encounter sin in the classroom, on the playground and in the curriculum. We also expected that when they encountered it, they would see it dealt with in the way the Bible says sin should be dealt with.

A classical Christian school or a home school following the classical Christian curriculum must never be thought of as an asylum. Rather, this is a time of basic

training; it is boot camp. Students are being taught to handle their weapons, and they are being taught this under godly, patient supervision. But in order to learn this sort of response, it is important that students learn it well. That is, setting up a “straw man” paganism that is easily demolished equips no one. All that would do is impart a false sense of security to the students—until they get to a secular college campus to encounter the real thing. Or, worse yet, if they continue the path into a soft, asylum-style Christian college and then find themselves addressing the marketplace completely unprepared.

If this basic training is our goal, and it is, then we should make clear what one potential abuse of the Omnibus curriculum might be. This curriculum was written and edited with the assumption that godly oversight and protection would accompany the student through his course of work. It was written with the conviction that children need teachers, flesh and blood teachers, who will work together with them. It was also written with the assumption that many of these teachers need the help and the resources that a program like this can supply. But we also believe that, if a seventh-grader is simply given this material and told to work through it himself, the chances are good that the student will miss the benefit that

is available for those who are taught.

The Scriptures do not allow us to believe that a record of sinful behavior, or of sinful corruption, is inherently corrupting. If it were, then there are many stories and accounts in the Bible itself that would have to be excluded. But if we ever begin to think our children need to be protected “from the Bible,” this should bring us up short. Perhaps we have picked up false notions of holiness somewhere. In short, there is no subject that this curriculum will raise in the minds of seventh-grade students that would not *also* be raised when that student reads through his Bible, cover to cover. It is true that this curriculum has accounts of various murders, or examples of prostitution, or of tyranny from powerful and cruel kings. But we can find all the same things in the book of Judges.

So the issue is not the *presence* of sin, but of the



response to that sin. What we have sought to do throughout—in the introductory worldview essays, the questions and exercises, and in the teachers’ materials—is provide a guideline for responding to all the various worldviews that men outside of Christ come up with. This program, we believe, will equip the student to see through pretences and lies that other Christian children, who have perhaps been too sheltered, are not able to deal with.

Of course, there is a limit to this, as we have sought to recognize. There *are* certain forms of worldliness and corruption that would overwhelm a student’s ability to handle it, no matter how carefully a parent or teacher was instructing them. And while children differ in what they can handle, in our experience with many students of this age, we believe that the content of this curriculum is well within the capacity of Christian children of this age group. But again, this assumes godly oversight and instruction. The challenge here is two-fold. The rigor of the curriculum can seem daunting, but we have sought to provide direction and balance with regard to the demands of the material. The second concern is the question of false worldviews, paganism and just plain old-fashioned sin, which we have addressed above.

As our students work their way through this material, and in the years of the Omnibus program that will follow, we want them to walk away with a profound sense of the *antithesis*. What we mean by this is that right after Adam and Eve fell in the Garden, God gave His first messianic promise (Gen. 3:15). But along with this promise, He also said that there would be constant antipathy between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. This is what we mean

by the antithesis, and we want our students to come to share in that godly antipathy. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil (Ps. 97:10; Prov. 8:13). In every generation, in all movements (whether of armies or philosophies), in all schools of literature, the men and women involved are either obeying God or disobeying Him. They are either trusting Him or they are not trusting Him. All students are learning to love God, or they are not learning to love God.

But when they love and trust Him, they must do so in the face of conflict. Jesus was the ultimate Seed of the woman, and yet when He came down and lived among us, He faced constant opposition from “broods of vipers.” It is not possible to live in this world faithfully without coming into conflict with those who have no desire to live faithfully. The task of every Christian parent bringing children up to maturity in such a world is to do it in a way that equips. False protection, precisely because it does not equip, leaves a child defenseless when the inevitable day comes when that artificial shelter is removed. True protection equips. We do not want to build a fortress for our students to hide in; we want to give them a shield to carry—along with a sword.

Students who have faithfully worked through this course of study will not be suckers for a romanticized view of ancient paganism offered up by Hollywood. They have read Suetonius, and they have worked through a Christian response to true paganism. They are grateful that Christ came into this dark world, and they know *why* they are grateful.

—Douglas Wilson



P R E F A C E

With the publication of this volume, you Omnibus students are moving into the backstretch of your studies. This year, and then the next, and you are done. Or are you?

There are two different ways to think about this classical Christian education you are receiving—one I call the shoebox approach and the other the conditioning approach. We hope that you are taking the latter and not the former.

Some think of memory, or knowledge, or the results of working through a particular curriculum like this one, as something akin to the contents of a shoebox. You store stuff in there, but it is only so big, and so you have to be careful. The more room this information takes up, the less room there is for other stuff you may need to learn later on in life. And since the later-on-in-life stuff is the really useful stuff, you need to be careful that you don't jam your shoebox full of extraneous information about the *Song of Roland*, the *Iliad*, and so on. If the memory of your computer is finite, then why fill it up with software programs that you will never need after you graduate? The logic is compelling, but it depends entirely on the metaphor. If your mind is like a shoebox, and that is the only thing you get to take with you, then you should indeed pack carefully.

But suppose your mind is more like a muscle, and that learning and reading and studying are like a conditioning class. The more you run, the *more* you are able to run the next day. With a shoebox, the more you do today, the less you can do tomorrow. With conditioning, the more you do today, the more you can do tomorrow. Suppose the growth of the mind is dynamic, not static. This changes everything. When you read something, are you packing a box, or are you running wind sprints?

This question should help students who have fallen into the trap of thinking that perhaps classical education is a regrettable necessity, but that they want to work through it gingerly, keep it to a reasonable minimum, and above all, they don't want to *repeat* anything. I have seen students who received (what they thought was) a classical education, and who checked the books they had read off their list. Been there, done that, got the

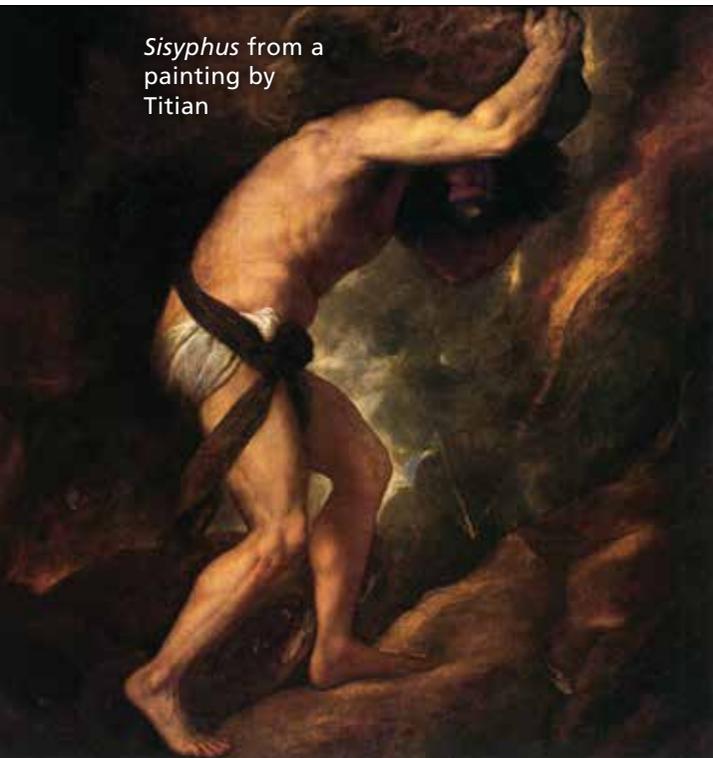
Aeneid T-shirt. Why should I read something in college if I read it in high school? But this dislike of repetition reveals that a shoebox paradigm is operative. With that small shoebox, repetitions and redundancies are your enemy. But in a conditioning class, repetitions are your friend. And that is why you should open this volume, drop down, and give us another twenty.



A classic is the kind of book which repays rereading. You come back to it and, like Lucy with Aslan, you find that it is bigger. But this is because you have grown. This is because the conditioning has enabled you to do far more than you thought you would be able to.

God has created the universe in such a way that it grows. Think about this for a moment. Even after the resurrection, we will always be finite. But even though we will always be finite, we will also always be growing in our love for God and in our knowledge of His triune glory. We will always be growing, and we will be learning on an everlasting curve. On top of that, this learning will be a delight and joy, not a chore. We will not be like Sisyphus in Hades, pushing his rock up the hill. But

Sisyphus from a
painting by
Titian



here is the glory—it *will* be uphill.

There will never come a time when we bump up against the ceiling of knowledge, where we will then remain stuck for the remainder of eternity. No. God is always gloriously infinite, and we will always be in the process of becoming more and more like Him. But if this is what is going to happen in the resurrection, if this is our destiny, then we ought to look around ourselves now and practice the cultivation of this great privilege in our day-to-day activities. As students, your day-to-day activities include your studies, your books, and your assignments. In order to see your vocation rightly, you need to have the right paradigm for it.

When you learn something, really *learn* something, nothing is being taken from you except for ignorance. You are being given something, and that gift includes greater potential to receive even greater gifts tomorrow. You are being conditioned, and by this point in your studies, you are in pretty good shape—if you have been thinking about it rightly. Accept the conditioning, prepare for the back stretch of this race. After all, we will all of us be running forever—further up, and further in.

—*Douglas Wilson*
2010

PREFACE TO OMNIBUS V: THE MEDIEVAL WORLD

The previous Omnibus volume was about the ancient world, when Christianity was either unknown or a minority opinion. The Omnibus volume after this one will cover the modern world, when Christianity is either unknown or a minority opinion. Even as the biblical worldview allows us to embrace what is good in all of those periods, both of those volumes show the Christian faith in a state of combat with the dominant cultures. In contrast, this volume shows us Western culture at a time when Christianity, literally, ruled.

The authors, the artists, and the musicians found their highest inspiration in the Christian message. The

Church was their most supportive patron. The same was true of philosophers, scientists, and engineers. The greatest minds—and this was an era of very great minds—acknowledged the truth of Christianity. So did the political rulers. So did virtually all of the common people. Western civilization had, in effect, a Christian culture. This is the age of Christendom.

And yet, as you will see, even Christendom (to put it mildly) had its problems. The Church might have ruled, but it drifted seriously away from the Bible and from the gospel. Immorality of every kind continued in this Christian culture. Governments were authoritarian. Society was stratified into a class system that one could hardly ever escape. If your family was at the bottom, you stayed there, often suffering with crushing poverty.

This volume, however, covers not just the Middle Ages. It also covers the Renaissance, when the culture started to change in the direction of human freedom, and the Reformation, when the Bible and the gospel were placed back into the center of the Christian life. Both of these movements would lead to enormous social changes. But they, too, were products of Christendom.

Some Christians today deny the possibility of a Christendom. And if it is possible, they deny that it is a good thing. Some Christians think that the Church's problems began when Constantine legalized Christianity. It is certainly true that, strictly speaking, only individuals can have saving faith in Christ, not cultures as a whole. It is also true that Christianity can get watered down when it becomes too culture-friendly. Conversely, Christianity is surely at its purest and most vibrant when its followers endure persecution.

Christianity is not a cultural religion like Islam, and it must not become one. When Christianity is reduced to a cultural religion, as has sometimes happened, it becomes, like Islam, a system of laws rather than a Christianity that is for individuals “of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues” (Revelation 7:9). It creates citizens for the Kingdom of Heaven, and, as our King Himself put it, “my kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36).

This miniature depicts the Italian-born French poet and scholar Christine de Pisan (c. 1365–1429) at work at her desk, writing advice to a young knight. She wrote poetry and prose on education, religion, philosophy, and history.



And yet, individuals have a corporate dimension as well. Christians are joined to other Christians in the Church, which is the Body of Christ. And individuals have God-given vocations in the family, the workplace, the Church, and the culture. Christians are to live out their faith in their different callings, which turns them into salt and light for the world. Thus Christianity does and should have a cultural impact. Christendom is possible, though it will not be the sort of utopia that the secularists crave. Rather, it will remain a realm of spiritual warfare.

“But how are the Middle Ages all that Christian?” some of you may ask. “The Reformation is fine, but the Middle Ages are all so . . . so Catholic.” Certainly, studying the Middle Ages will make you understand why the Church needed a Reformation. Many who then considered themselves to be Christians were all tied up in works righteousness, oblivious to the gospel of free forgiveness in Jesus Christ. The Church itself at that time devoted a good deal of its energy to the papacy, monasticism, the sale of indulgences, and veneration of the saints.

And yet, when you read medieval authors, you will find many testimonies of true faith and love of Christ as Lord and Savior. We must expect that, since Christ promised that “the gates of Hades shall not prevail against” His Church (Matthew 16:18). God continued to call people to faith, even at the lowest points of the visible Church. God calls people through His Word. During the Middle Ages, when Bibles had to be copied out by hand in expensive though beautiful illuminated manuscripts, many churches—let alone individual Christians—did not even own a Bible. No wonder that the Church drifted away from its teachings. The new technology of the printing press would take care of that problem, which, in turn, made the Reformation possible. But God’s Word could still be heard.

In the liturgy of the Church—in the rites of Baptism and Holy Communion, in the Scripture readings, in the chanting of the Psalms, and in the ancient hymns—the gospel was being proclaimed. Luther said that when the Church would sing *The Agnus Dei*, about “Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world,” it was proclaiming the gospel, and that Word was enough to create faith in the hearts of listeners.

Thus you will read some touching and moving confessions of faith in these readings. You will also come across Christians who saw right through the errors of the medieval Church. Dante excoriates the corrupt popes, placing them in Hell, with St. Peter denouncing them from Heaven. Chaucer lampoons the indulgence salesman and the worldly monk, while praising the faithful country parson who preached and lived the gospel of Christ.

In the bond that connects all Christians to each other, these medieval Christians—in their weakness and mistakes and also in their genius and their astonishing accomplishments—are our forebears. Reformation Christians today can claim their legacy, even as they reject their errors. Protestants who confess in the Apostle’s Creed that they believe in “the holy catholic church” are claiming membership in the universal Christian Church throughout the ages. They are not “Roman Catholics,” but sometimes today they call themselves “protesting Catholics” or “evangelical Catholics.”

At any rate, even when a medieval churchman does *not* have a saving faith in Christ, he very likely *does* have a Christian worldview. His assumptions about existence, morality, God, and human nature will tend to correspond with the Christian revelation, even though he himself is not a Christian. This is possible in Christendom.

After you work your way through this volume of Omnibus, you will know enough not to confuse the Middle Ages with the “Dark Ages.” That period is the time between the fall of Rome to the barbarians and the re-establishing of Western civilization. That happened when the barbarians were converted to Christianity. The “Middle Ages”—so called because they are between the ancient and the modern world—were what brought us out of the Dark Ages.

You will also know enough not to fall for the libel that people in the Middle Ages believed the earth was flat. You will understand the medieval belief that the earth is a sphere from Dante’s *Inferno*, in which the pilgrim and Virgil climb down through the center of the earth, whereupon they have to turn around and climb upwards.

At the end of his career, C.S. Lewis was named Professor of Medieval and Renaissance Literature, a position made just for him at Cambridge University. Part of his scholarly contribution was to argue that these two periods actually belong together, which is how they are treated in Omnibus. At Lewis’s inaugural lecture for this appointment, “De Descriptione Temporum,” he argued that if the Dark Ages were technically defined as the loss of classical learning, then we are actually going through another set of Dark Ages *today*.

Christianity converted the barbarians back then, keeping learning alive through the Church and jumpstarting civilization once again. This may be the Church’s task again today. But how can Christianity convert today’s barbarians? What impact can a biblical worldview have on a pagan mindset? What does a Christian cultural influence even look like? This Omnibus volume and its readings should give you some good ideas.

—Gene Edward Veith

PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

Have you ever stopped to think what the President of the United States in the year 2040 is doing right now? What about the next Martin Luther or John Calvin? I'll tell you what I hope they are doing. I hope they just finished reading this sentence!

There is no doubt in my mind that classical Christian education and the rigorous study of the greatest works of Western Civilization is a tool to create leaders like no other—godly leaders who understand that this is God's world, Christ inherited it, and we are to take dominion of it to His glory.

Many have begun down the path of studying this material and have not persevered—in their minds it was too hard, too salacious for Christian ears, too unrealistic, too much to grasp, the books were too old or some other “too.” Be assured, like the Scriptures say in the Parable of the Sower, the work you do will *bear fruit a hundredfold* if you stick with it. In the lives of our own children we have already seen tremendous benefit and really have just barely scratched the surface.

Our goal with this text is to make the work easier for you. This text should make approaching Omnibus, and other material not previously encountered, come alive in a way that instills confidence, and it should convey a sense that young students (and teachers) can handle it.

We have done all we could to make this text a stand-alone guide for reading, studying and understanding these great books. One reference book in particular will prove beneficial as a resource for this year as well as the following years. *Western Civilization* by Jackson Spielvogel. If you have previously used our *Veritas Press History and Bible Curriculum*, you will want to keep the flashcards from them handy, too.

May you be blessed as you dig in and study the hand of God at work in the past and prepare for His use of you in the future.

—Marlin Detweiler

ADVISORY TO TEACHERS AND PARENTS

In the course of history there has been much fluctuation on what has been deemed age appropriate for young students. And for those of us alive today, there remains great variation as to what is considered age appropriate. The material we have created and the books we have assigned address numerous subjects and ideas that deal with topics (including sex, violence, religious persuasion and a whole host of other ideas) that have been the subject of much discussion of whether they are age appropriate. The judgment we applied in this text has been the same as we apply to our own children.

In the creation of this program we have assumed that it will be used by students in seventh grade and above. Furthermore, we have assumed that there is no part of the Bible deemed inappropriate to discuss with a seventh-grade student. Therefore, the material assumes that the student knows what sex is, that he understands the existence of violence, that he understands there are theological and doctrinal differences to be addressed and that he has the maturity to discern right and wrong.

The worldview we hold and from which we write is distinctly protestant and best summarized in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. The Bible is our only ultimate and infallible rule of faith and practice.

We encourage you to become familiar with the material that your students will be covering in this program in order to avoid problems where you might differ with us on these matters.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome back to the medieval world and to Omnibus V. The medieval world is a one full of unspeakable beauty and unutterable horrors. Parts of the Middle Ages were messy, but I am increasingly thankful for this glorious age when the gospel grew and flourished. It grew and eventually flourished in places that were once very dark. This time saw the steeples of cathedrals rising up into the heavens and Christianity (once a tiny sect within Judaism) growing up and filling an entire continent. During this time, the Christian faith filled and captivated many great minds—from Augustine, to Charlemagne, to Anselm, to Aquinas, to Dante, to Luther, and Calvin (for these reformers were certainly sons of the Middle Ages even as they corrected some of its abuses and wrong teaching). Sometimes the medieval world might seem strange to us.

Little has changed in the class formats from Omnibus IV, but there have been some noticeable changes in the content. In Omnibus V, we read selections of more books than we have before. The reason for this is twofold. First, some medieval writers are more patient than we are. I would encourage you to read all of Thomas's *Summa Theologica*, but if we were to attempt to do this in Omnibus V, we would, no doubt, need to change the title of this book to *Summabus* instead of Omnibus. The same is true for *City of God*. Whole semesters or entire years could be devoted to these works. We decided to give a broader reading rather than spending all our time in one place, but you need to know that we were torn at points while making these decisions. Second, the greater number of shorter readings and selections points to the fact that the Middle Ages are a broad time period. So much good was said and done during this time that including it all in one volume was really challenging.

As you wade into this challenging year, there are two reminders that I am obliged to make. First, remember



Gregory the Great

the purpose of Omnibus. Our desire in creating these texts is not the accumulation of knowledge in the minds of students. Having a warehouse full of stuff might be good, but it is only good if that warehouse bursting with guns, or widgets, or cotton candy is used for righteous ends. The end of this study is far more about the building up of love and wisdom than it is about the acquisition of knowledge. Your goal as a teacher and as a student should be to find good things, good ideas, and good people that you can love in these pages and in the pages of the works that we explore together. Remember, some people might tell you that the authors of most of these books are dead, but many of them—particularly as we

are reading books penned by our Christian forefathers in the Middle Ages—are written by people who today (like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) are alive still in the presence of God. They are enjoying their reward and some day you might have the privilege of meeting them. Start learning to love them now, because you are going to love them more fully in the future.

Second, I want to repeat a caution: only read what you can read and love. Anytime I am speaking about Omnibus, people ask me: “Do you really read all of these books at your school?” Some years we do, but more often than not we skip some books, do optional sessions on others, add a few small additional readings, and shorten some of the selections made in the Omnibus books. Do not use this or any other Omnibus book as a talisman that works in an *ex opera operato* manner, believing that love of the books will magically happen if you force march a student or class through all of the works each year. Remember, again, the end is love. Omnibus has been successfully completed if and only if the students themselves want to read more after their study is complete. It is most successful when they are ready and willing (and hungry) to go back and re-read many of these works for pleasure. Read then, as much as you can, but only as you can inspire love of the material in the heart of the student. If you find a topic or a work that stirs up particular interest, settle in on it for a time and extend your study there.

This “rule of love” leads me to encourage you, as teachers and students, to be on a search for some lifelong loves in Omnibus V. My desire for you is that you would learn to love two books. One should be the same for all of us—i.e., God’s Word—but the other should be different. Try to find one work that you are going to devote yourself to in particular; one work that you are going to attempt to master; one work that you are going to read over and over again. If you are a student in your mid- to late teens, you are ready to begin this search. (If you are an adult who has not found this work yet, now is as good a time as any.) You should read broadly, but you need to find a few works that are worthy of deep, consistent, abiding attention. Not all authors or books are worthy of this type of care—most, in fact, are not. Some, however, are, and you are right in the middle of a bunch of them in Omnibus V. Of course, there were a few books like this in Omnibus IV as well. *The Iliad* would be this sort of book. I am more moved by it each time I return to it. *The Republic* and the works of Aristotle also could merit this sort of attention and reading. In Omnibus V, however, the books have one great advantage for us—many are written by our brothers in the faith. There are a few works to pay particular attention to because they are certainly worthy of this sort of extended devotion and attention. The first of these that you will read

in Omnibus V is Augustine’s *City of God*. In it, you will find history, theology, apologetics, literary criticism, philosophy, and devotional literature blended by one of the greatest and most fruitful minds in the history of humanity. Thomas’s *Summa Theologica* also fits the bill. While there are points at which you might find his theology more Aristotelian than Christian, do not write him off. His deep thinking and parsing of different concepts provide an endless supply of debating material. When you wade into his work, you will find a mind that is of the highest rank. You will find a devoted brother who fought to affirm the goodness of creation over and against those in the Church who were pushing Christianity toward a Gnostic, otherworldly end. Also, consider adopting the work of one of the great Reformers as a lifelong passion. Omnibus V offers both Luther and Calvin. Consider Luther’s sermons. If you start reading now, you will not finish for years. So much truth is summarized and applied. It is all done in a manner that is thoroughly engaging and sometimes hilarious. Luther pulls no punches. Also, consider John Calvin. *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* could become a lifelong friend for you. It has for many. In it, you will find Calvin to be much better than the caricature that is too often painted of him. He is lively, refreshing, witty, and humble. Humble?! How else would you describe someone who says of the Lord’s Supper that he would “rather experience than understand it” (*Institutes* VI.17.32)? You can go back and drink from this well over and over again. Finally, I recommend Dante’s *Comedy* because it has been my own choice. I try to pick a new translation and read through it each year. In it, I have found a work that daily informs the way I see myself and the world. It, of course, is not perfect (and I disagree with Dante vehemently at points). Reading it does feel like swimming in the ocean. You wonder how someone could have created something so beautiful, so complex, and so instructive. It puts you in your place. There are others of course, but these are some of the highlights. Try to find one book that you will love above all but Scripture.

Let us deal with a few questions that have been expressed to me by other people using these books. What number of students is optimal for an Omnibus class? No answer is definitively correct. A lot depends on the students and the teachers involved. I think that somewhere between eight and sixteen is optimal. I know that it can be very profitable with only a few—five was one of my favorite numbers of students because I taught the same five students for four years. If you are much above twenty the dynamic changes greatly, and you are headed back toward a lecture environment. If you wish to ply good debate and rhetorical skills, you need an environment where students cannot hide and one in which they are, in fact, required to interact with the other students.

In a connected matter, some, particularly in a home-school setting, have asked whether they should teach multiple students at the same level or, instead, split students and work on two or three different Omnibus levels at once. Again, you need to judge your own ability and the abilities of your children, but I highly recommend putting multiple students in the same level even if their ages are slightly different. If this is not possible and if your child is working on Omnibus alone, then make sure they are

bringing their material to the dinner table and that it becomes the fodder for discussion and debate at the table. It is critical that parents have the right attitude for this sort of discussion. If you and your fifteen-year-old son disagree about the investiture controversy (see *The Lives of Thomas Becket*), it might not be a sign of him being disrespectful if he thinks you, Father, are mistaken. It might, in fact, be a sign that you have done pretty well as a dad and that he is learning to stand on his own and think

A miniature by painter Guglielmo Giralaldi illustrating cantos 10–12 of Dante's *Purgatory*.





The Ascension of Christ,
likely painted by Zanobbi
Strozzi and Battista di Biagio
Sanguini, c. 1430

great thoughts well. What could be more pleasing than to be instructed by your children and students! It is a sign that they are growing up. I recall that the best answer to an essay question that I have ever read started something like this: “I know that Mr. Fischer thinks that the answer to this question is . . . , but he is *wrong*.” Reading this, I reached into my desk drawer, grasped my pen full of blood-red ink, and thought to myself, “We will see.” By the end of this essay, I knew that I was wrong and the student was correct. Upon reflection, few moments have so blessed me.

Finally, as you study the medieval world, never forget its main lesson: Our faith is best lived out in a culture with festivals and funerals, with joyful hymns and doleful dirges, with glorious feasts and terrible fasts. This sort of faith is best because, like the Middle Ages, it can abide. It has meat on its bones—just like the incarnate Christ does. Certainly, we should not look to recapitulate the errors of the medieval world. I am not looking to return to transubstantiation, and certainly not to medieval medicine. We must, however, learn that our faith, like our Lord, cannot be quietly buried in a tomb or in our hearts and minds (never to come out into the public square). Our faith must breathe air. It must walk upright in the light of day. It must have a body on this good earth. Until that time again comes, we must know and feel that longing to see the world not subsumed into the Church, but transformed by the message of the gospel. We long to see men and women, households, and nations freed by God’s Word. We yearn to watch these people who have been washed and fed by Christ (again, like their medieval brethren) building a world that echoes the resounding glory of the risen Lord.

—G. Tyler Fischer
Trinity Season, 2010
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

USING OMNIBUS

The second half of Omnibus—volumes IV, V, and VI—continue the journey of learning from the greatest minds of the Christian West. For those of you who have been through Omnibus I, II, and III, thank you for coming along on this journey. (I hope that you are having a good time.) For the seasoned *omnibuser*, I hope that you will enjoy the new features that we have built into volumes IV, V, and VI.

Before discussing the new aspects of these new volumes, let's walk back through the basics of Omnibus. First, know that you join an incredible group of men and women as you read through these books. These books (the Scriptures and all the Great—but lesser—Books) have nourished your forefathers. They have a lot to give as you give yourself to this study. Remember, it is important to realize that some of these books are not to be learned from uncritically—some of them we learn from by the problems they caused.

Before you get started, however, there are a few terms you need to understand. First among them is the word *omnibus*. This Latin word means “all encompassing” or “everything.” So, in a very loose sense, the Omnibus curriculum is where we talk about everything. All of the important ideas are set on the table to explore and understand. In a more technical sense, however, this Omnibus focuses our attention on the ideas, arguments, and expressions of the Western Canon, which have also become known as the Great Books of Western civilization.

The *Great Books* are those books that have guided and informed thinking people in Western civilization. They are the books that have stood the test of time. They come from many sources, starting with the Hebrews and Greeks and extending to their Roman, European, and Colonial heirs. These books represent the highest theological and philosophical contemplations, the most accurate historical record, and the most brilliant literary tradition that have come down to us from our forefathers. The Great Books lead us into a discussion of the *Great Ideas*, which are the ideas that have driven discussion and argument in Western civilization throughout its illustrious history.

The Omnibus takes students on a path through the Great Books and the Great Ideas in two cycles. It follows the chronological pattern of Ancient, Medieval and Modern periods. The first cycle is *Omnibus I-III*, and focuses on sharpening the skills of logical analysis. The second is *Omnibus IV-VI*, focusing on increasing the rhetorical skills of the student.

TITLE	PERIOD	YEARS	EMPHASIS
Omnibus I	Ancient	Beginning–A.D. 70	Logic
Omnibus II	Medieval	70–1563	Logic
Omnibus III	Modern	1563–Present	Logic
Omnibus IV	Ancient	Beginning–A.D. 180	Rhetoric
Omnibus V	Medieval	180–1563	Rhetoric
Omnibus VI	Modern	1563–Present	Rhetoric

Two kinds of books are read concurrently in the Omnibus, *Primary* and *Secondary*. The list of Primary Books for each year is what might be termed the traditional “Great Books.” On this list are authors like Homer, Dante and Calvin. The Secondary Books are ones that give balance to our reading (balance in the general areas of Theology, History and Literature). The secondary list contains works such as *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *The Lord of the Rings*. These books are usually easier, and less class time is devoted to them. Each year is similarly organized. There are thirty-seven weeks’ worth of material. Each week is divided into eight sessions of roughly seventy minutes each, optimally. The time estimate is approximate. Home schooling situations might vary greatly from student to student. Five of these sessions are committed to the study of the Primary Books. The other three are dedicated to the Secondary Books.

In Omnibus IV, V and VI, some changes were made to encourage and challenge students to move toward greater maturity. Two of the biggest changes are the Discipline Essays and a number of new class forms.

The *Discipline Essays* aim at helping students to understand a number of important disciplines—everything from Poetry to Economics. These disciplines are areas that students might study in college. The goal, however, is not to find your college major (although, no doubt, some will find a major among these disciplines). The goal is to help students become well-rounded, mature adults who can converse with other adults on many important topics, with a basic understanding of many of the topics that move the world today. The essays are written to be both enjoyable and informative.

Omnibus IV, V and VI also employ a number of new kinds of sessions. These sessions challenge students to develop the skills necessary to wisely discuss questions in the future after they are done with their study in Omnibus and to encourage even more student involvement in class. Also, these new sessions are intended to challenge students to increase their rhetorical skills and integrate various types of knowledge.

KINDS OF SESSIONS

Prelude

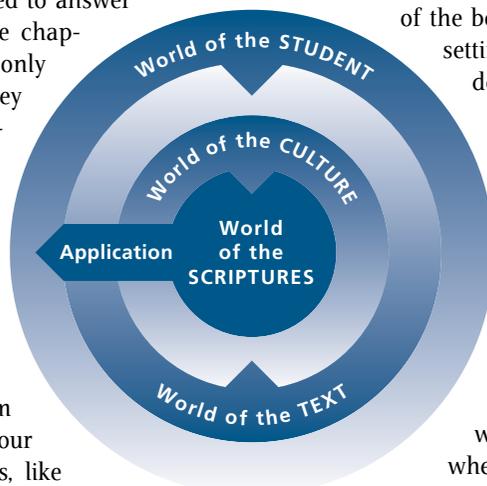
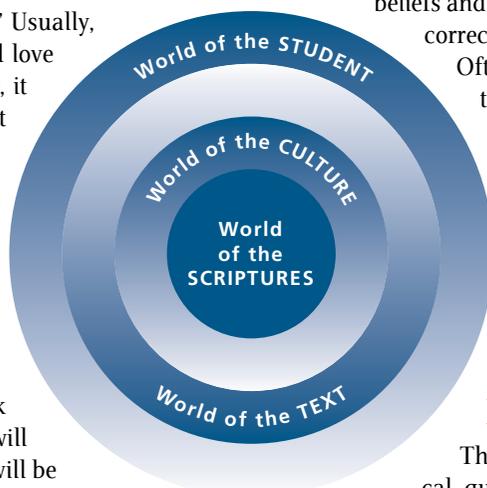
Each chapter is introduced with a session called a Prelude. In each Prelude we seek to stir up the interest of the students by examining a provoking question that is or could be raised from the book. This is done in the section called A Question to Consider. When the teacher introduces this question he should seek to get the students' initial reaction to the question. These questions might range from "Can you teach virtue?" to "Are all sins equally wicked?" Usually, a student in the Logic years will love to argue his answers. Generally, it will prove helpful for a student to read the introductory essay in the student text *before* tackling A Question to Consider. Sometimes a teacher may want to introduce the question first to stir up interest. This "introductory material" will give the students both the general information on the work and a worldview essay which will unpack some of the issues that will be dealt with in the book. After reading this section, the student will be asked to answer a few questions concerning the chapter. These questions are based only on the introductory material they have just read, not on the reading of the book itself.

Discussion

The Discussion is the most frequently used class in the Omnibus. It has five parts. The Discussion seeks to explore a particular idea within a book from the perspective of the text itself, our culture and the Bible. It begins, like the Prelude, with A Question to Consider, which is the first of "four worlds" that will be explored, the world of the student. The world of the text is discovered through the Text Analysis questions. These questions unlock the answer that the book itself supplies for this question (e.g., when reading the Aeneid, we are trying to find out how the author, Virgil, would answer this question). After this, in the Cultural Analysis section,

the student examines the world of the culture, how our culture would answer the same question. Many times this will be vastly different from the answer of the student or the author. The Biblical Analysis questions seek to unearth what God's Word teaches concerning this question. We can call this discovering the world of the Scriptures. So the progression of the questions is important. First, the students' own opinions and ideas are set forth. Second, the opinion of the text is considered. Next, the view of our culture is studied. Finally, the teaching of the Scriptures is brought to bear. All other opinions, beliefs and convictions must be informed and corrected by the standard of God's Word.

Often, after hearing the Word of God, the material seeks to apply the discovered truth to the life of the students. Finally, the students are challenged to think through a Summa Question which synthesizes all they have learned about this "highest" idea from the session.



Recitation

The Recitation is a set of grammatical questions that helps to reveal the student's comprehension of the facts or ideas of the book. This can be done in a group setting or individually with or by students. The Recitation questions can also be answered in written form and checked against the answers, but we encourage doing the Recitation orally whenever possible. It provides great opportunity for wandering down rabbit trails of particular interest or launching into any number of discussions. Of course, we cannot predict what current events are occurring when your students study this material. Recitations can prove a great time to direct conversation that relates to the questions and material being covered in this type of class.

Analysis

This session of worldview analysis is focused on comparing a character, culture or author you are studying to

some other character, culture or author. This might be done by comparing two or three characters' or authors' answers to the same questions. This type of session effectively helps students to understand the differences between cultures and characters, especially in the arena of worldview.

Activity

These classes are focused on bringing creative ideas into the mix. Activities might include debates, trials, sword fights, board games and dramatic productions. Music and art appreciation are also included in this category. These classes are harder to prepare for, but are quite important. Often, the student will remember and understand (and love) the material only if our discussions and recitations are mixed with these unforgettable activities. There are also a number of field trips that are recommended. Often, these are recommended in two categories: ones that most people can do and ones that are "outside the box" experiences that only some will be able to do. The first category might send you to the local museum or planetarium. The latter will recommend ideas like chartering a boat at Nantucket to experience what Ishmael felt on the *Pequod*. Careful pre-planning is important to be able to take advantage of these opportunities.

Review and Evaluation

Weekly testing is not recommended. Students will weary of it and will spend all of their time preparing for tests instead of learning. Choose your tests carefully. Even if a chapter has an evaluation at the end, know that you can use it as a review. The test and the review both work toward the same goal of demonstrating the knowledge of the students and cementing the material into their minds.

Evaluations are divided into three sections. The first section tests the student's grammatical knowledge of the book. Answers to these questions should be short, consisting of a sentence or two. The second section is the logic section. In this section students are asked to answer questions concerning the ideas of the book and to show that they understand how ideas connect with each other within the book. The final section is called lateral thinking. This section asks students to relate ideas in one book with the ideas that they have studied in other books. For instance, the student might be asked to compare Homer's ideal heroes (Achilles and Odysseus) with Virgil's character Aeneas to discover how the Roman conception of the hero was different

from the Greek idea. Finally, students often will be asked to compare and contrast these pagan ideas with a biblical view. So, students might be asked to contrast Homer and Virgil's teaching on what is heroic with the ultimate heroic work of Christ. In this way students demonstrate that they can set ideas in their proper biblical context, showing the relationship between the writing of one author and another. Students should be allowed to have their books and Bibles available during testing. If they have to do extensive reading during the tests, they are not going to be able to finish or do well anyway. Students should not be permitted to have notes of any kind during the test.

Optional Sessions and Activities

For each chapter there are also some optional classes included. These allow the teacher to be flexible and to add to, or omit classes as they think wise. Usually the number of optional classes is approximately one optional class for every week that the book is taught. There are also a number of optional activities included. These activities allow you to spend addition time on ideas that your students might find fascinating.

Midterm and final exam forms have been provided on the Omnibus Teacher's Edition CD. These tests are optional, but can be a helpful gauge of how much the student is retaining. Usually midterms are given around the ninth week of the semester, and finals are given during the last week of the semester. Midterm exams are designed to be completed in a class period. (You might want to give the students slightly more time if possible.) The finals, however, are made to be completed over two class periods (or roughly two and a half hours). Most students will finish more quickly, but some might need all of the time. If possible, give the finals when the student has no time limit. These tests, as well, are given with open books and Bibles, but no notes, and they feature the same sections as the review and evaluation (i.e., grammar, logic and lateral thinking).

Student-Led Discussions

This kind of session (new in Omnibus IV, V, and VI) fits the form of a regular Discussion, but to encourage more student involvement the students are expected to create their own questions and answers for Text Analysis, Cultural Analysis, and Biblical Analysis. The teacher is responsible for the Summa Question. The assignment appears at the end of the previous session to allow the students to work on it while doing the assigned reading.

We would expect that students might need help with this the first few times they try it. These questions will quickly reveal whether or not the students have understood their reading. The teacher should collect students' questions and answers to edit and grade them. In a group setting, teachers may allow the students to ask and answer each others' questions—inserting themselves to correct or guide progress but with as gentle a hand as possible.

Current Events

This session (new in Omnibus IV, V, and VI) challenges students to see the modern relevance of the issue they are studying in Omnibus. The assignment appears at the end of the previous session, and there is no reading assignment, allowing the students to prepare their assignment for the following session. The student will find a news or magazine article and prepare a short presentation demonstrating how the article and the previous readings relate to the issue. Students will show where the issue is present in both their reading and in their articles, comparing the worldviews and critiquing both from a biblical perspective.

Poetry

This session (new in Omnibus IV, V, and VI) first introduces a kind of poetry—like a sonnet, a limerick, a quatrain, a sestina, etc. The student is expected to then write a poem related to some content or object in the book they are reading. During the Rhetoric Stage (tenth through twelfth grade) we are encouraging students to grow in their love of poetry and to begin to write poetry themselves.

Aesthetics

Aesthetics sessions (new in Omnibus IV, V, and VI) introduce students to different pieces of art, ask them to analyze the work and respond to the *content*, *method* and *meaning* of the work. When studying art, one or more of three general emphases should be covered:

- *Grammar of art* (e.g., why is Moses frequently depicted with horns coming out of his head?)
- *Immediate cultural connection* (e.g., colors or poses used at certain times in history). To evaluate a particular work of art, we need to place the work

within its historical context: When was the work produced? And where? By whom? Man? Woman? Collaborative? What were/are the historical implications of this particular work? How does it compare to other works produced in that time and place? How does it compare to other works by this artist? And other artists of that time? And of previous periods? Do we recognize any specific artistic or cultural influences?

- *Deeper meaning* (e.g., How does the blurred focus of Impressionism relate to the worldview of the artists using the form?) All art speaks in a language of signs, symbols and semblances: It looks like some thing, sounds like some thing, feels like some thing or references some thing. In what language does the piece of art speak? Once that is determined, does it speak it well?

Trials

These sessions encourage verbal argument and debate, yielding some wonderful discussion. This kind of class appears more frequently in Omnibus IV, V, and VI than it does in the earlier years.

Writing

Writing assignments in Omnibus IV, V, and VI are shorter than in the earlier volumes. This is to encourage the teacher to edit the work more carefully and more critically. It might mean that the editorial process will take a few cycles before the work is in its final state. We hope that the writing will be shorter but much better by the end of the process.

For those getting ready to teach this curriculum, preparation should be carefully considered. The material has been designed so that it can be taught with little preparation, but this is not recommended. If you want your students to get the most out of this program, you should prepare carefully. First, make sure you are familiar with the book being studied. Also, consult the Teaching Tips on the Teacher's Edition CD before teaching. Knowing where you are going in the end will help you to effectively move through the material and interact with your students effectively.

WHAT'S ON THE TEACHER CD?

Teacher's Edition of the Text

The teacher text includes teaching tips and additional pages of material, with suggested answers for all the questions, writing assignments and activities in the daily sessions.

Lesson Plans

Session-by-session lesson plans for each chapter.

Midterms and Exams

Tests with answer keys for both semesters. Three versions are provided for each test (labeled A, B and C).

Grading Tools

An explanation of our suggested grading routine, including sample and blank grading charts, as well as a grading calculator in a popular spreadsheet format.

Requirements and Use

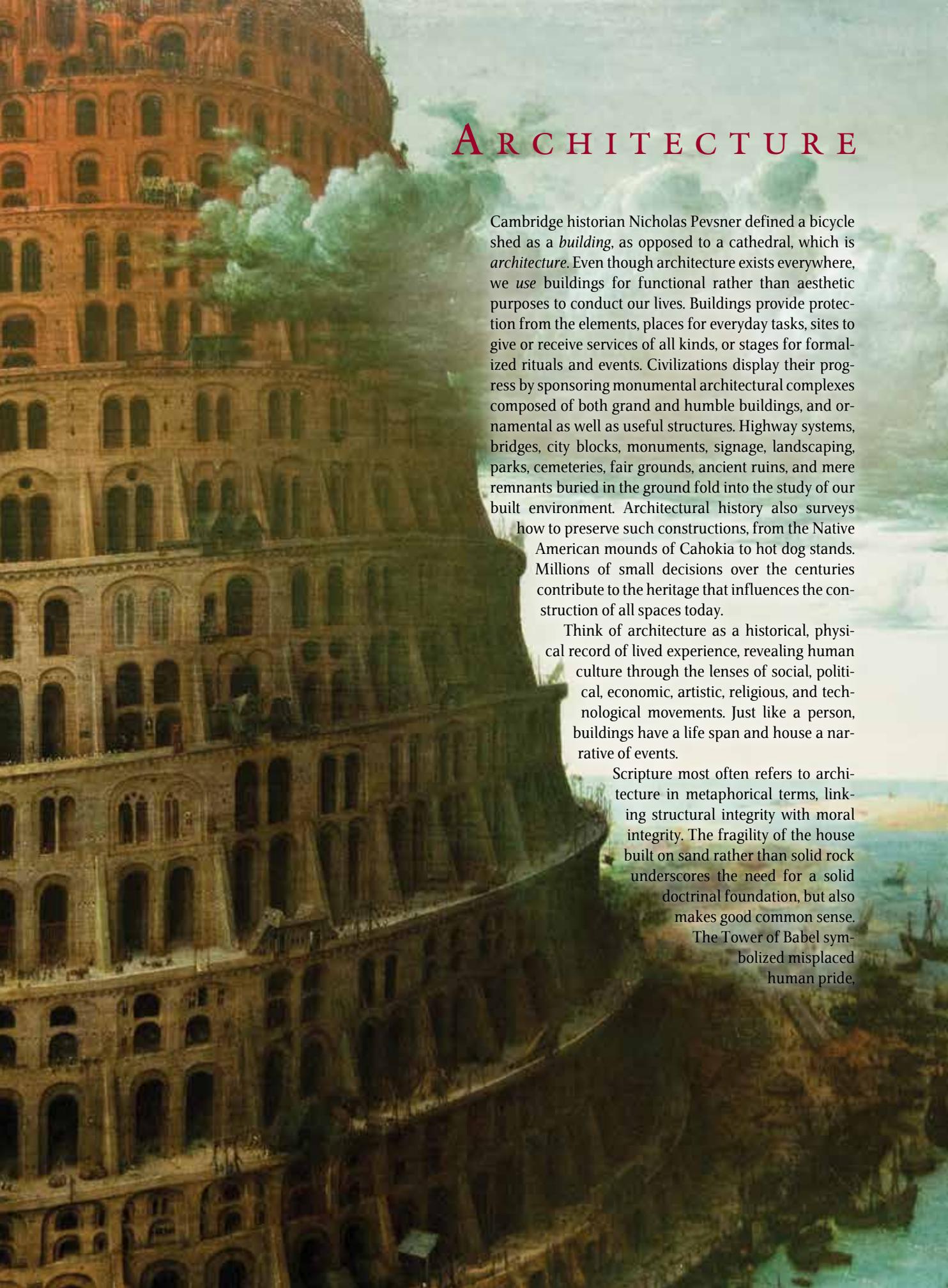
The CD is Windows and Macintosh compatible, and requires Acrobat Reader, which may be downloaded and installed for free at <http://get.adobe.com/reader>.

WINDOWS OS

If the main application does not appear automatically, double-click the file named "Omnibus-V-TE".

MACINTOSH OS

Double-click the appropriate PDF file in the Teacher's Manual Files folder to open the desired chapter.



ARCHITECTURE

Cambridge historian Nicholas Pevsner defined a bicycle shed as a *building*, as opposed to a cathedral, which is *architecture*. Even though architecture exists everywhere, we *use* buildings for functional rather than aesthetic purposes to conduct our lives. Buildings provide protection from the elements, places for everyday tasks, sites to give or receive services of all kinds, or stages for formalized rituals and events. Civilizations display their progress by sponsoring monumental architectural complexes composed of both grand and humble buildings, and ornamental as well as useful structures. Highway systems, bridges, city blocks, monuments, signage, landscaping, parks, cemeteries, fair grounds, ancient ruins, and mere remnants buried in the ground fold into the study of our built environment. Architectural history also surveys how to preserve such constructions, from the Native American mounds of Cahokia to hot dog stands. Millions of small decisions over the centuries contribute to the heritage that influences the construction of all spaces today.

Think of architecture as a historical, physical record of lived experience, revealing human culture through the lenses of social, political, economic, artistic, religious, and technological movements. Just like a person, buildings have a life span and house a narrative of events.

Scripture most often refers to architecture in metaphorical terms, linking structural integrity with moral integrity. The fragility of the house built on sand rather than solid rock underscores the need for a solid doctrinal foundation, but also makes good common sense.

The Tower of Babel symbolized misplaced human pride,

which God eventually “confounded” by scattering the self-aggrandizing people who built it. “Unless the Lord builds the house,” the Psalmist warns (127:1), the builders labor in vain. What matters primarily to God about architecture is how one uses it: protecting cities with watchtowers is acceptable, but conducting pagan rituals on high is clearly offensive.

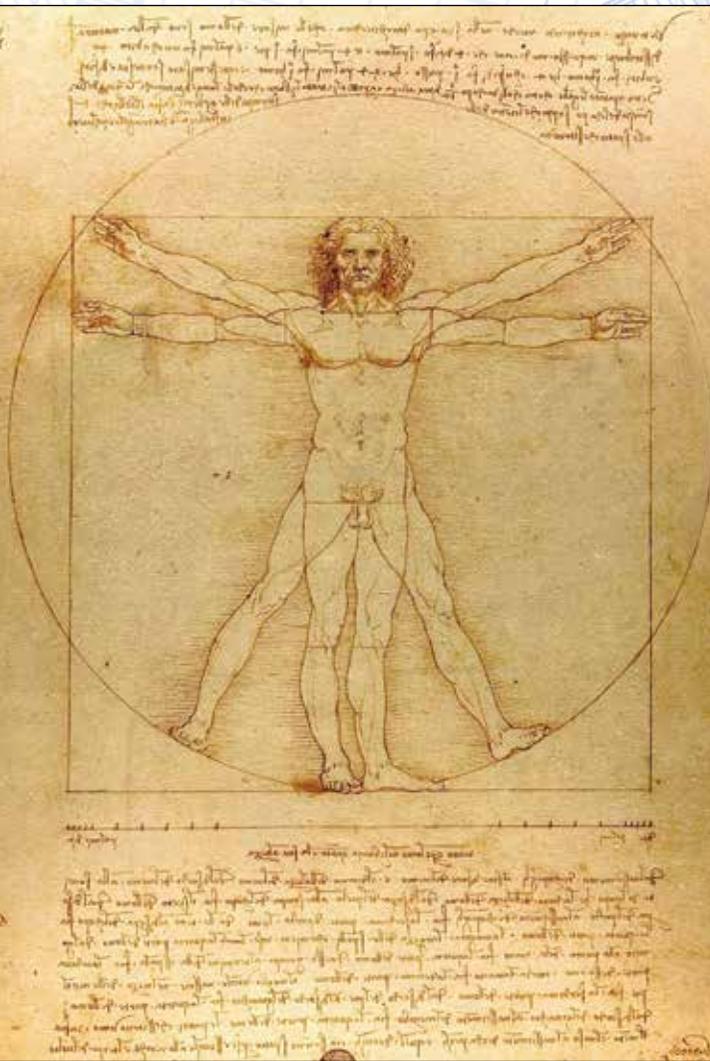
What is Architecture?

The term *architecture* comes from the Greek and Latin roots for “chief” (*arkhi* or *archon*) and “builder or carpenter” (*tekton*), although no one was called an “architect” until the sixteenth century. We rarely discover the identities of the master masons who constructed lofty cathedrals in what historians later called the Early

Christian, Carolingian or Ottonian (after various rulers), Romanesque, or Gothic styles. Yet anonymous medieval builders erected high stone vaults and piercing spires with the simplest tools, and their buildings have remained upright for centuries. Part of the rebirth that Renaissance theorists supported involved the refinement of architectural vocabulary, through formal guidelines based on ancient Roman ruins. Palladio (1508–1580), in particular, revived the writings of the first century B.C. Roman, Vitruvius. Two centuries later, Thomas Jefferson imported Palladian classicism to the new American republic with his plans for Washington, D.C. (1791), the Virginia capital (1796), and the University of Virginia Lawn (1817–1826).

Vitruvius defined the primary qualities of architecture with the Latin terms *venustas*, *firmitas*, and *utilitas*—beauty, strength or structural integrity, and usefulness or functionality. Over the centuries, many individuals contributed to the forms we call the classical orders, beginning with the Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian systems, which include columns, pediments, and sculptural ornament, and later expanded by the simple Tuscan and combined Composite orders. Within each order, strict proportions operate: for example, a column’s width dictated its height; spaces between classical columns corresponded to their height. Such formulas established a formal classical canon or set of rules for proper proportion, balance, and symmetry (equal-sidedness).

Even though we don’t experience or perceive ideal proportions when we walk through a space, designing by rules and geometric formulas made classical Renaissance architecture an intellectual challenge that even artists like Michelangelo could not resist. Many treatises attempted to demonstrate how facial or bodily proportions corresponded to pleasing architectural measurements. Leonardo da Vinci’s iconic *Vitruvian Man* placed the ideal body in a circle and a square, with perimeters that marked the reach of ideal arms and legs. (Don’t try this at home, though! Our actual measurements are rarely ideal!) The circle and its volumetric sphere, which appear in rotundas, domes, or halved in apses and lunettes, represents an endless space that has no obvious beginning or end, and therefore symbolizes a perfected whole or eternity. The square and its volumetric cube project perfection through tidy mathematical formulas based on equal sides. Squares and circles appear regularly in planning formulas for Renaissance buildings, which are not discernible to the eye, but easily visible in the decorative patterns on floors and walls (see San Lorenzo, including Michelangelo’s New Sacristy).



Leonardo da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man*

“Reading” Architecture

We can learn about architecture by “reading” certain types of diagrams. The site plan shows what “footprint” the building makes on its property. A flattened floor plan displays a building’s layout on the ground, revealing walls, doorways, openings for windows, and features like columns on each level, as if the roof had been lifted off. In vertical terms, illustrations of the elevation or façade of a building show how its exterior walls look. Cutaways or cross-sections “slice” through the building width- or length-wise and give some sense of the proportion or spatial design of the interior. Perspective views give a three-dimensional rendering of the building’s space, more as it might be experienced in life, and can be tilted at various angles for differing views. Occasionally, you may see exploded or expanded views, which visually explain how the components of a building fit together. These are helpful for understanding the hidden systems that keep the building running. Consider sketching your own home in these ways, and you are bound to see it differently.

Architectural history even investigates the familiar house or apartment where you grew up, which not only reveals the context of a neighborhood at a certain time in history, but also figures into regional, national, and even global movements. Perhaps you have visited the homes of friends who are more or less privileged than your family, and you’ve noticed differences in the quality of materials, the traffic pattern, or the way rooms are set up. You can bet that the areas in a house used most regularly reveal its inhabitants’ lifestyle preferences. Contemporary houses often feature grand entries (even though the occupants prefer the garage entrance), huge entertainment centers (which replaced “family dens”), and enlarged eat-in kitchens designed for “grazing” rather than formal dining—all concessions to contemporary life. In fact, housing trends tell us a great deal about the state of society. For example, severe housing shortages in America after World War II contributed to the innovation of cheap, cookie cutter housing developments, such as Levittown. Levitt and Sons, among others, contributed to the founding of modern suburbia by constructing efficiently planned neighborhoods (at the rate of 30 homes per day) in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Puerto Rico, giving middle-class patrons the opportunity to pursue the American Dream by owning their own house. Since the 1950s, though, the size of American homes has expanded by five times, on average, despite the fact that average family size has decreased. Multiple garages, larger room sizes, and more storage spaces for extra “stuff” suggest a period of relative material success.

The Cycle of Style

Architectural style “speaks” to us about the building’s nature, function, status, or place in history, and every style that dominates culture for a time tends to be overthrown by a subsequent generation. Imitating or reinterpreting a historical style, which is called historicizing, is a design approach that reorganizes widely familiar architectural elements. Architects who oppose historicism try to invent a new style that reflects their own time period. Classicism, as the oldest “academic” style, has remained a constant target: Baroque and Rococo designers had to tart it up, dressing it up and making it fancy, stretching its rectangles or circles into oblongs and ovals; Victorians tired of its predictable repetition; modernists simply hated revisiting older styles, wanting an architecture that suited modern times; postmodernists injected a sense of irony by lampooning, in some ways, the classic features of classicism—summed up by Michael Graves’ Team Disney Building in California (1991), which features the Seven Dwarves holding up a pediment.

Classicists felt that orderly architecture promoted orderly society. This idea of architecture as an abstract or ideal, rather than a purely physical construction, has roots in the writings of Plato and finds expression in the development of the classical temple structure in Greece (e.g., the Parthenon, fifth century B.C.). Ever wonder why so many buildings in Washington, D.C. feature triangular pediments, fluted columns of white marble, and classical statues? Thank Pericles, the great statesman of ancient Athens, who attempted to project a sense of political permanence and power through an ensemble of incredible buildings on the Acropolis. Unfortunately, Athens fell to the Spartans two decades after the Parthenon was completed, proving that a grand architectural statement, in effect, was powerless to prevent military defeat. And yet, classical Greek or Roman features still symbolize the strength and endurance of democracy, particularly in Washington.

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the main academies in France, Britain, and America accepted nothing less than Greco-Roman classicism as the basis for an enduring, universal expression of Western civilization. However, during the Victorian period (based on the reign of England’s Queen Victoria from 1837 to 1901), architects firmly rejected the regimentation of classical white marble pediments and columns. Victorian designers preferred to mix and match exotic, foreign, and eccentric elements for a picturesque, visually stimulating effect, studding their architecture with color, shapes, textures, and depth. Some Victorian approaches, such as the

Arts and Crafts movement started by England's William Morris, began as critiques against the impersonality of the Industrial Revolution, advocating a return to handcrafted yet affordable art, and medieval guild systems. Arts and Crafts designers around the world coordinated ensembles of matching architecture, furniture, wallpapers, textiles, stained glass, original art and landscape treatments.

Other Victorian architects felt convicted that "modernization" meant combining industrial solutions with aesthetic design and began adapting the huge metal trusses that supported major train stations, colossal market buildings, factories, and glass-walled garden conservatories to non-industrial projects. Mid-nineteenth-century masterworks that exhibit both technical daring and artistic beauty include Henri Labrouste's Ste. Genevieve Library in Paris, Joseph Paxton's temporary glass and cast iron Crystal Palace, and Deane and Woodward's Oxford Museum of Natural History (influenced by John Ruskin). While Ruskin accepted the use of glass supported by cast iron columns, his editorials always urged a return to Gothic motifs and forms, which were called "Christian pointed architecture" at the time. Ruskin and A.W.N. Pugin, in particular, advocated medieval styles as

more "authentic" to Britain and more "moral" than pagan neoclassical architecture.

As Victorian taste began fading in popularity, a committee of America's most prominent architects presented a gleaming array of neoclassical buildings ringing an artificial lagoon at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. These temporary straw-and plaster-constructs, known collectively as "The White City," inspired the redesign of Washington, D.C. in 1901 according to the original 1791 plans overseen by Jefferson and L'Enfant and prompted an urban redesign trend using classicism called the "City Beautiful" movement.

Modernists in the early twentieth century objected to both Victorian ornament and the repetitious rules of classicism, insisting on a "modern" approach to design that reflected progressive if not futuristic technologies and materials. German Walter Gropius (1883–1969), who taught at the Bauhaus and Harvard, argued for architecture as the unifier of all other art. An emphasis on function led to a practical overview of architecture as a machine with working parts, prompting Le Corbusier's statement that "a house is a machine for living in."

Modernists played with open rather than fixed floor

The Farnsworth House
by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe



plans, flat roofs, pre-fabricated parts, non-symmetrical placements of windows or doors, and moveable walls that presented a planar effect, paralleling art movements like Cubism and Russian Constructivism. Eventually, a strict set of rules defined High Modernism, also known as the International Style after an influential 1932 exhibit because it could be universally applied to any setting or climate.

As modernists anticipated population explosion in cities, many embraced the ancient idea that orderly architecture could order society, or the way people behaved, but chose a stripped-down style that has not always stood the test of time. They founded many international consortiums, like CIAM, to head off the urgent challenges of creating architecture for a rapidly expanding world in dire need of affordable mass transportation and healthier living conditions. As Peter Hall's *Cities of Tomorrow* explains, solutions for better suburban and urban life existed for centuries but matured during the Industrial Revolution, when humane village and town plans for the working class began receiving more notice. In the 1920s, Swiss-born Le Corbusier (1887–1965) designed the first of several model cities for millions of people, housed in huge towers surrounded by parks and

hidden highways and train systems. Germans Mies van der Rohe and Ludwig Hilberseimer, teaching in Chicago after World War II, rationalized a scheme of “superblock” apartments on a grid, hovering above extremely sterile mass transit avenues. Such monumental urban schemes were rarely realized, except in smaller segments, such as Brasilia, in Brazil, and Corbusier's Chandigarh in India. Humans, in the end, are sloppy by nature, creating garbage, pollution, noise, and visual chaos that no architectural design could possibly control. (No one trained you how to mess up your room, right? But how often have you been hounded to pick it up?)

Because postmodern architecture refers not to a specific style or philosophy, but merely the time period following modernism, many scholars consider it a flawed term. Postmodernists in the 1970s debated vigorously about the direction architecture ought to take, leading to a standoff characterized by a plurality of individual styles.

Some fought against the former dominance of spare Modernist design by rejecting functionality and embracing ornament and symbolism, as if the past offered an encyclopedia of recovered meaning. A 1980 exhibit at the prestigious Venice Biennale, titled “Presence of the Past,” demonstrated that everything—even new forms of classicism—had been allowed back into architectural practice. One group, dubbed “The Whites,” reinterpreted Le Corbusier's white boxes, hoping to transcend history as the Modernists had with a “high” form of architecture (see Meier, Gwathmey, Hejduk, Eisenman). “The Grays” argued for a “low” form of design, gleefully muddied by individualistic design approaches, that appealed more to the public by narrating a storyline from history and culture (see Venturi, Scully, Moore). Meanwhile, other architects promoted “deconstruction” by dismantling our expectations of architecture along with its very structure, paralleling Derrida and Foucault's interrogation of meaning in language. After their initial introduction to the wider public at an exhibit in 1988, many deconstructivists altered their radical, theoretical approaches for practical reasons during the following decade and finally located the technology to actually build such chaotic forms (see Libeskind, Gehry, Eisenman).

The realization that most humans generally prefer variety and surprise in their daily environments led postmodernists to design more humane urban complexes. One excellent example of this New Urbanism appears in *The Truman Show* movie, set in a digitally modified version of an actual town in Seaside, Florida. Here, a combination of carefully proportioned house designs contributes to a tidy yet diverse looking neighborhood which rings the town's service core. Everything optimizes the beautiful ocean sunsets. Some individuals protest New Urbanism precisely because a plan that presumes to anticipate everyone's needs and habits reduces actual life into a caricature of aesthetic perfection. Another stream of architecture, defined by some as Critical Regionalism, embraced the natural building practices and materials of non-Western cultures, intentionally modeling architecture on the simpler but efficient inventions of folk life (see India-born, MIT-trained Charles Correa). Late twentieth-century scholars began seeing the value in vernacular buildings for everyday use (such as barns and gas stations) or noticing trends in simple housing forms (such as the bungalow)—structures that regularly serve the majority of the population. Recent scholarship emphasizes the fact that distinctive regional forms of architecture project the same validity and vitality as universal, monumental, or classical forms, and deserve to be investigated with the same rigor.



Perhaps the best-known example of Wright's concept of "organic" architecture, the Fallingwater home hovers atop a waterfall. Initially commissioned as a rural vacation home for the successful Kaufmann family of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Fallingwater now stands both as a museum and as a monument to Wright's architectural daring. Boasting nearly as much outdoor terrace space as indoor living space, the home has been plagued by structural shortcomings.



Critical Issues

Unlike twentieth-century artists who intentionally subverted meaning, structure, and discipline to test the relevance of art, architects have always had to produce edifices that function and remain standing. Through time, architects tested the ideals and rules of a "pure" or predominating style, such as classicism, against forms extrapolated from observed nature or inspired by personal imagination. Ayn Rand's novel *The Fountainhead* (1943) highlights the intense struggle between classicists and modernists. Commentators writing on one of the most prominent American architects, Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959), described his early Prairie-style homes as "organic" because Wright's designs allowed the best views of nature, brought the most pleasing natural effects into the house, and seamlessly meshed built forms with the surrounding environment. Postmodernist Frank Gehry (b. 1929), who innovated the "Bilbao Effect" with his famous titanium-sheathed Guggenheim Museum in Spain, epitomizes design processed by the imagination, with self-derived forms, rather than by rules or nature. Gehry sketches freehand forms, and then contracts computer programmers to figure out how to construct his ideas. This approach results in freeform architecture

that encases interior spaces, like art galleries, in billowing, metallic folds that ambiguously suggest sails, boats, fish scales, or the shape of wind blowing. Charles Jencks, one of the first scholars to argue that postmodern architecture sought to reclaim language and symbolism after the failure of Modernism, calls Gehry's buildings "iconic architecture," because they become "icons" in their own right, without referring to anything but themselves.

Of course, the greatest dilemma facing contemporary architects involves the combined impacts of population growth and environmental issues aggravated by our abuse of natural resources and pollution. Given the Genesis mandate to care for the environment, one would expect Christians to maintain a higher profile in this discussion. In general, developers heartlessly scrape all the trees off their plots, for efficiency, and plunk houses down without considering the direction of sunlight, wind patterns, or natural features of the property, because it costs them less. Conscientious architects are trained to make environmentally responsible choices and to position the building in a way that preserves as much of the landscape's natural features as possible.

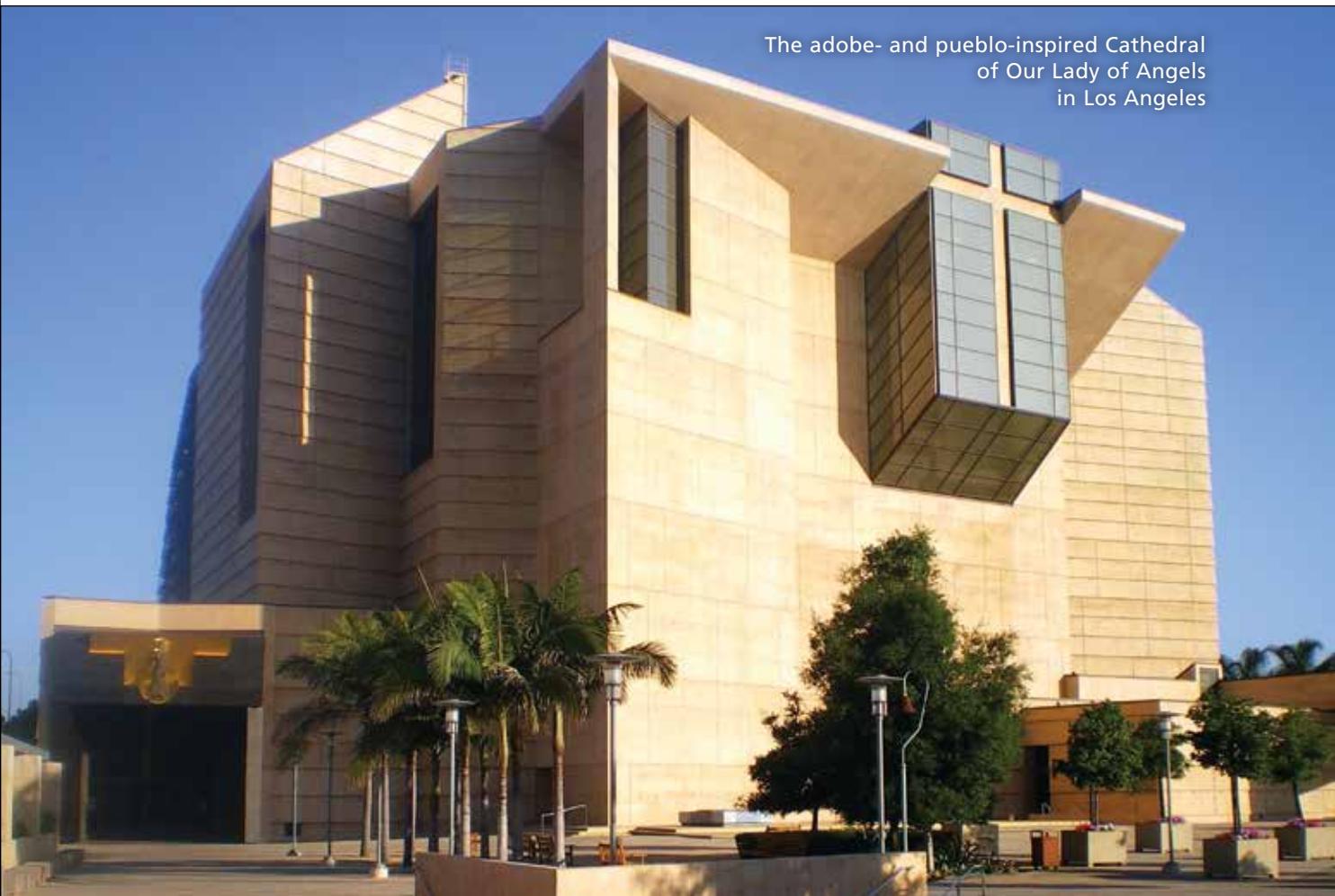
While we can point out "Christian buildings," we rarely, if ever, hear someone described as a "Christian architect." Church building commissions don't generally

inspect the character, morality, or religious convictions of the firms they hire. They simply want a good, affordable, and serviceable building. In the larger cultural sphere of architectural endeavor, however, a definitive Christian response is lacking in the important fields of urban design, green technologies, and aesthetic integrity. Clearly, there is a natural tension between the call to focus on the spiritual future of redemption and eternal life, and the need to build our environment responsibly. Academically, the historical period called “Christian Art and Architecture” corresponds specifically to the growth of the early Christian church, from the fourth to eighth centuries, when Rome, Ravenna, and Byzantium became established as centers of a powerful ecclesiastic system sponsored by emperors and kings, starting with Constantine’s Edict of Milan in 312. After this point, church officials wanted to project power, so they adopted basilica or rotunda formats from Roman imperial architecture for their early churches, starting in the fourth century. The reasons for this are, of course, complicated. Some church leaders, no doubt, wanted to project their own personal power and authority. Some chose this form to highlight Christ’s authority and kingship. Many adopted it because it was the popular style of architecture for meaningful public buildings in the Roman Empire.

Basilica, which translates from Latin as “hall of kings,” provided an efficient rectangular format with side aisles that facilitated royal and liturgical processions. Early Christian builders translated the apse end of Roman basilicas, which contained a monumental statue of the reigning emperor, into a half-circle shape on the eastern end of the building (where the sun rises, and the focal point of the altar is located). Using the body metaphor, the apse represents the “head” of the body, and Jesus Christ is the head of the church.

Interestingly enough, architectural history textbooks never question the validity of church architecture from the fourth to sixteenth centuries, but the category gradually evaporates from the narrative and disappears altogether by the late modern era. Beyond Le Corbusier’s 1955 *Notre Dame du Haut* in Ronchamp, which eminent Berkeley historian Spiro Kostof called a twentieth-century masterpiece, one hardly sees any discussion about contemporary ecclesiastic design in academic journals. This legacy of the Modernist discussion arose from an assumption that faith in the West was on its way out, resulting in the marginalization of modern church architecture. Publications like *Faith and Form* entertain the topic in a non-critical, non-theoretical and mostly descriptive way. Many useful books go into depth on the

The adobe- and pueblo-inspired Cathedral of Our Lady of Angels in Los Angeles



entire historical narrative of ecclesiastic architecture (see Richard Kieckhefer, Judith Dupree, Thomas Barrie, or Mark Torgerson), but few address the reasons for the gap between the critical literature about traditional church architecture versus its contemporary expressions.

That this gap exists at all is all quite interesting in light of the fact that *every* major twentieth- and twenty-first-century architect, regardless of personal faith, has competed for major commissions to design sacred spaces. Resolving the design for a space with such lengthy historical roots in the record of human history tantalizes architects, who must use physical materials to construct a place for sublime, spiritual experience. Mario Botta's striped cylindrical churches, Richard Meier's bisected spheres for the Jubilee Church in Rome, or Raphael Moneo's adobe- and pueblo-inspired Our Lady of

Angels Cathedral over the Los Angeles freeway represent a few contemporary responses. "Seeker sensitive" and megachurch movements have required huge building programs but rarely sponsor a "signature" style. One exception might be Reverend Robert Schuller's church campus, which moved far beyond its origins at a drive-in theater by commissioning the glassy, \$72-million Crystal Cathedral in Orange Grove, California, designed by leading American architect Philip Johnson (1906–2005).

Regardless of the "high" *architecture* discussion about churches, our landscapes are punctuated by church *buildings* of every kind, in numbers that defy calculation. Many of us have even worshipped on fields, in temporary structures, under tents, in high school auditoriums, or in boring cube-like gymnasium spaces and still experienced spiritual connection just as surely as we might have in a medieval Romanesque or Gothic cathedral. We can actually pray to God or worship *anywhere*. Typically, however, we do not worship just *anywhere*, but construct worship halls that specifically provide a place for our spiritual interactions with God and that intentionally incarnate our deepest theological convictions. More seminaries and divinity schools ought to prepare their students in ministry for building campaigns. Rather than sponsoring merely adequate vessels for Christian endeavors, why shouldn't the buildings associated with our faith exhibit blazing creativity? Most new churches fall back on classicism as a default style, without thinking through the symbolic implications. They can buy the elements more cheaply than ever, produced in hollow vinyl or aluminum for Lowes or Home Depot, but what does this artificial classicism actually "say" about the endurance of our faith?

If we consider architecture as a language, there are many different dialects, or choices, that can convey reflections of God's identity, knowledge and precepts in architectural form—although individuals may argue long and loud about their bias towards classical, Byzantine, or various traditional formats. Why not sponsor buildings that converse with the God-given delights of nature? Show originality? Turn on a concept that the congregation holds dear, such as reconciliation, community, or love? Model the store of infinite creativity that we are connected to, as beings made in the image of an infinite Creator? Contemporary church buildings need not offer some of the worst clichés in architecture. Not surprisingly, one of the largest congregations on earth, Joel Osteen's Lakewood Church, meets in a bland former football superdome, plus stage lighting. When the Anaheim Vineyard outgrew its supermarket warehouse, what did it build for millions of dollars? A bland supermarket warehouse-like building! Have we such limited abilities to innovate?

The Crystal Cathedral



Where are the Christians in urban design? Augustine, in particular, brought attention to the metaphorical parallels and contrasts between the City of God and the City of Man, but overall we would have to conclude that most city housing projects around the world have failed their occupants. Those that work tend to relate to the depth of community commitments. Not only do we lack individuals willing to identify themselves as believers who have made significant impact on urban improvement, but we also lack specifically architectural analyses of note on the topic by Christians. Who will bring redemption to this field? Who will fight the good fights for those who cannot afford decent housing?

Christians in general seem somewhat resistant to the green conversation, even though our calling to be good stewards of the created world relates so directly to the Genesis mandate about our dominion over the earth. Increasingly, architects building new churches are attempting to persuade church congregations to pay for green roof systems, rainfall recycling, reused and reusable building materials, and passive heating or cooling technologies that do not require oil, coal, or gas in the long run. Responsible stewardship of our financial resources, as well as the natural resources granted to us, allows future generations to thrive. While green technologies may cost more initially, the end result can provide substantial savings in energy costs and can certainly benefit the environment. Christians should not be “green” because it is currently trendy, although it is, and they should not be compromised by any pantheistic theologies concerning the environment or political coercions in the name of saving the planet. But with that said, there is nothing wrong with good old-fashioned stewardship. In matters of stewardship and creation, Christians of all people, should take the lead.

All these questions require Christian responses and hard work. Christian reactions are a different matter as far as architecture goes. So many church campaigns amount to building a big box on a prominent site, as if bigger is better. If we don't buy evolutionary theory wholesale in our science classes, why should we always support the concept that bigness and grandness shows success to the unsaved? Why not advocate quality or innovation as well as quantity? Does the world really need another 50- or 150-foot high cross? How about an arresting, artistic design instead? What if our seminaries, divinity schools, and Christian colleges taught future ministers something that actually prepared them for building campaigns, which some of them will inevitably face, as well as the history of building?

Your charge as Christians regarding architectural matters can be summed up quite efficiently. No arena of

activity in this world has too many Christians involved in it. When you can improve on a building, do so, because people inherently respond to *good* (not just adequate or efficient) architecture. When you can make a choice that demonstrates good stewardship of the environment, do so, because God cares for creation, which currently groans. And finally, if you have the chance to choose quality over efficiency, think hard about it. Additionally, if you have the kinds of gifts that architectural training or construction management might require, go for it! Your example can bring standards of excellence and integrity into an area where unscrupulous builders, commercialism, developers' greed, and scant attention to nature in the landscape have influenced too much building.

A Christian Response

How interesting that the only artist described in detail in the entire Bible turns out to be invested in the design and decoration of the Tabernacle. Exodus 35 and 36 describe an individual with technical proficiency as well as the right heart and a willing spirit. God, through Moses, specifically called Bezalel, we are told, and granted him “skill, intelligence, and knowledge in every kind of craft, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, and in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood.” Moreover, Bezalel was an inspired teacher, willing and able to pass his skills and example on to future generations. Teaching: *always* important. Moreover, Bezalel is willing to collaborate and share this calling with Oholiab as well as teams of others skilled in various crafts. Collaboration, while hard: always a good teacher. The filling of Bezalel by the Spirit of God and his willingness to “do the work” suggest an attunement to the goals of the ultimate Maker, rather than his own agenda or need for self-realization. Sacrifice for God is ultimately enriching. Exodus also explains that Moses has to restrain the people from donating too many “freewill” offerings to the building campaign—a condition that rarely, if ever, happens in our own church projects.

Of course, the Tabernacle differs greatly from its more permanent expression in the Temple of Jerusalem, visualized by Ezekiel, realized by Solomon, and renovated by Nehemiah and others. Roman soldiers pillaged Herod's reconstructed Temple in A.D. 70, leaving only one foundation wall in place—the Wailing Wall, where Jews have left paper petitions in the mortar cracks for centuries. By the seventh century, Muslims supplanted both Jews and Christians on the Temple Mount, crowning it with an Islamic shrine called the Dome of the Rock to honor Abraham, Sarah, and the prophet Muhammed. A complicated history underscores the loss of this major Jewish monument, yet begs the question: did God really want a

house, or did the people want a house? Didn't God really want the obedience of the people? Some actively wait for the third Temple to be reconstructed, but the New Testament proffers only an unusual substitute.

In 1 Peter 2 we learn that the people of God have become *living stones of the new temple*. God's answer to the lack of a building, or a prime location like the Temple Mount, is community—an unassailable replacement. As Paul emphasizes in Ephesians 2, “you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens . . . built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.” This Cornerstone, prefigured in Isaiah 43, is prominent enough to be a “stumbling stone” to the unsaved, the stiff-necked, the stubborn goats, the shallowly planted, and the whitewashed sepulchers who seem perfect on the exterior, but are filled with death inside. “Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom,” Paul argues in 1 Corinthians 1, “but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks . . . the power of God and the wisdom of God.” The Cornerstone, intentionally laid in Zion to trip nonbelievers, will not similarly shame those who repent of their unbelief.

Consequently, every living stone that rests on the Cornerstone contributes to the building's soundness, wholeness, and beauty. You may be a beautifully carved bracket, or a sturdy slab of stone supporting a wall, hidden amidst the other stones. You may serve as a gutter spout or a lowly doorjamb, but you are equal to the window that allows the glorious light of day to pierce the interior ambience, and the finial that decoratively tops the roofline and leads the eye heavenwards. Each living stone contributes to the total effect, steadfastly supported by the cornerstone. This portable iteration of community stands firm in the

wake of all catastrophes and crises. For wherever we are, as Ephesians 2 concludes, Christ joins the whole building together, “to become a holy temple . . . built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.”

The architecture of community makes for a mighty good building.

—Karen Mulder

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The people of God have become living stones of the new Temple: “You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). Depicted is a model of the Temple complex.





Our struggle today, first and foremost, is a struggle of identity and destiny. Too often we think that we will “find ourselves” by burrowing more deeply into our own psyche or by cutting ourselves off from our community in order to see what we are without influence. The result of this popular approach is often devastating. *Omnibus* offers another (and in fact an opposite) approach. These books point us toward our identity and our destiny by pointing us back to our fathers. Instead of fleeing from the life of our community, we can learn to embrace it and know ourselves by faith to be joined to each other and accepted by God in Christ. We can also know the direction, the hopes, and the aspirations of our fathers in the Christian West. From them we can learn both who we are and where we, as a people, were going. Nothing can be done for us if we do not settle these questions firmly first: *Who are we?* and *Where are we going?*



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