



PIONEERS IN CHRISTIAN HOMESCHOOLING

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE TCE SYSTEM

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WHAT IS THE BIBLICAL CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW?

Proverbs 9:10: The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

The Biblical Christian worldview is simply the recognition that God is Alpha and Omega (i.e. the Beginning and the Ending), and that He applies to all of life.

COMPONENTS OF A WORLDVIEW.

There are three components of a worldview. The first two are the primary questions of God, man and the cosmos, and the third deals with the application of these primary questions to all areas of life.

1. What is the origin, nature and destiny of the cosmos?
2. What is the origin, nature, role and destiny of man?
3. What is the institutional structure and procedure flowing from the answer to the first two questions?

To answer the primary questions, it is necessary first to answer the four philosophical questions:

1. Ontology – Who am I? Where do I come from?
2. Epistemology – How do I know?
3. Axiology – What is the ultimate value?
4. Teleology – Where are we going?

In response to these questions, the Biblical Christian believes the following:

1. Ontology: The God of the Bible created all that exists, including man.
2. Epistemology: Man knows ultimately on the basis of God's disclosure of Himself to man in verbal, propositional form – the Bible.
3. Axiology: The God of the Bible is the ultimate value, but man, created in His image, is of infinite, eternal value.

4. Teleology: God and His Kingdom are in ultimate control and are determinative of direction in time.

The answers given to the philosophical questions will determine the answers given to the primary questions of God, man and the cosmos. These answers, in turn, determine how we live, in a practical, day-to-day application. We may divide life into seven main areas:

Civil-Social – this has to do with relationships between and among people, including government, marriage and the family.

Ecclesiastical – the affairs of the Church.

Education – the means of acquiring knowledge and information, including the media.

Economics – market relationships.

Legal – the law order, the cement that holds everything together.

Aesthetics – the art forms, including literature, history, music, painting and sculpture.

International politics – the relations between and/or among nations and civilizations.

PRESUPPOSITIONS ON WHICH THE BIBLICAL CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW IS BASED.

A presupposition is a basic belief that cannot be proved. All worldviews are based on presuppositions. For a Biblical Christian, God is the Creator, Revealer, Redeemer, Guide, Lord and King. He is the Centre, the Absolute, the Infinite Reference Point. All of life should be structured vertically to orient man to God.

The following are the basic presuppositions of the Biblical Christian worldview:

1. God and His Kingdom are spiritual.
2. Man is prophet, priest and king under sovereign God.
3. No institution should be interposed between God and man.

1. God and His Kingdom are spiritual.

The Kingdom of God is simply His rule. Because they are spiritual, God and His Kingdom include the totality of existence and cannot be circumscribed by time and space, though God's Kingdom certainly includes time and space. It cannot be equated with any institution, as for example the church, but it includes the church. Every area of life is a place of nearness to and service of God.

2. Man is prophet, priest and king under sovereign God.

All men, on the basis of the finished work of God in Christ, have direct access to God. Therefore, the Biblical Christian recognizes the priesthood of all believers.

God created man and called upon him to exercise dominion over creation. Thus every person, under sovereign God, is a king, and is released to engage in godly exploration, knowledge and usage of creation. Science is not to be despised; rather it is to be recognized as the means by which man, under God, exercises dominion over creation.

Every person under sovereign God is a prophet in that God gives man knowledge. Every person can know on the basis of the Bible what is happening and why, what has happened and why and what will happen and why, truly, though not exhaustively in terms of every detail. Thus a Biblical Christian is never caught by surprise.

3. No institution should be interposed between God and man.

God in Christ is the only Mediator between God and man. Therefore, any institution that tries to place itself between God and man, or tries to take the place of God in any person's life, is a pretension to deity and is therefore blasphemous.

THE BIBLICAL CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW: A HOLY COMMONWEALTH.

The Biblical Christian believes that God is over all of life, no area excepted. Thus there is no false division of sacred and secular, the view that God is over part of life which is therefore “sacred”, but not over the rest of life which is therefore “secular”. Because He is sovereign, the ultimate question is always the question of reverence. However, if we abandon the God of the Bible as absolute, we will substitute something else for God, and that will necessarily be relative (because all people will not agree on the thing to be substituted). Thus the ultimate question will be whether something is “relevant”, rather than whether something is “reverent”.

THE BIBLICAL CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW: INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE AND PROCEDURE.

1. Civil-Social.

Government is the gift of God for the orderly procedure of man in a fallen world. Thus the Biblical Christian neither worships government, which leads to authoritarianism and totalitarianism, nor debunks and despises government, which leads to anarchy. He recognizes that government is of God, by God, for man, and needs to be limited. Human government is under God. We see the Biblical Christian influence even today in the terminology we use – we speak of “civil servants”, recognizing that those in positions of influence and power are ultimately servants of God, and will give account of their stewardship to Him.

2. Ecclesiastical.

The function of the church is three-fold: to point all men to God in Christ, to bind the redeemed together in Christ (the Body of Believers) and to make known that God is Lord over all of life.

3. **Economics.**

The Biblical Christian believes in and practises private property and freedom of enterprise with important Biblical qualifications. Every person under God is a steward and is accountable to God for the time, energy, gifts and possessions which God has given him. Freedom of enterprise is Biblically qualified in terms of prices and wages: we need to practise justice in prices and wages, by charging or paying a just price, and by earning or paying a just wage. For the Biblical Christian, work is a form of worship. Every person, without exception, is created by God for a particular purpose, and therefore all work is done for Him. There is no such thing as “full time Christian service”, because this implies that there is such a thing as “part time Christian service”, which is not possible for a Biblical Christian. It is possible to serve God in any area, if we do it for Him and according to His principles given us in the Bible. The Biblical Christian believes that those who are unable to work are the responsibility of the Christian community, first of the family and then, if there is no family, the church.

4. **Legal.**

The Biblical Christian knows that in God we live and move and have our being (Acts 26:28). He holds everything together. Accordingly, for the Biblical Christian, all law is based on the Bible or principles derived therefrom.

5. **Aesthetics (Art, Literature, Music).**

The Biblical Christian believes that God is the ultimate beauty, and art has to do with beauty. Accordingly, Biblical Christians are in the forefront in the arts having been liberated to sing, write and paint about the beauty which God is and which surrounds us because of God’s creation, including man. As we abandon the Biblical God, our art forms will become increasingly ugly.

6. **International Politics.**

The Biblical Christian believes that God is the Creator and Ruler of the nations and civilizations of the world. He Himself has provided the times and the places where they will live (Acts 17:26). No nation is to "lord it" over another, but Biblical Christians have the responsibility to take the Gospel and its fruits to all other nations. Because man is fallen, there are wars. For a Biblical Christian, offensive wars are forbidden (except when directly commanded by God, as in the conquest of Canaan), but defensive wars are imperative. Each nation has the responsibility to equip itself militarily in order to be able to defend its people from those who would overrun it and take away its sovereignty under God.

7. **Education.**

Biblical Christian education not only flows out of the Biblical Christian worldview, but also perpetuates it. The Biblical Christian assumes a working knowledge of the rudiments of reading, writing and numeracy. If ultimate knowledge is to be found on the basis of God's disclosure of Himself to man in the Bible, it is important that children know how to read, write (i.e. be able to communicate clearly and correctly in writing) and work with numbers, the basis of scientific endeavour. Therefore Biblical Christians have always been in the forefront of mastering the rudiments as a means to the end of knowing God.

Given the rudiments, the Biblical Christian has a three-fold objective in education: to know God as applicable to all of life (the Biblical Christian worldview), to know all other worldviews fully and fairly (we need to know what we believe and why as over against what we do not believe and why), and to reinterpret everything on the basis of Biblical presuppositions and the Biblical Christian worldview. Biblical Christians must always reinterpret, but especially in an increasingly post-Christian West and world.

Because of this, the academic standard of Biblical Christian education has always been very high. There is no "easy" way to get a Biblical Christian education. Hard work, self-discipline, order and accountability are

essential. The aim is not merely a certificate at the end of the school career, but a fully-formed world and life view which will determine what kind of person the pupil will be and the contribution he will make to the world he lives in.

If you are interested in more information about the Biblical Christian worldview, please contact our office for a free copy of the CD, "The Biblical Leadership Seminar" by Dr. Glenn Martin. Dr. Martin spent many years as a professor of philosophy at Marion College, Indiana, where he worked on and taught the Biblical Christian worldview. What appears above is merely a very sketchy summary of what he said.

WHY TCE?

TCE stands for "Theocentric Christian Education". We believe that all education is religious – it is simply a matter of which religion will be taught. The Bible makes it clear that the Biblical God is to be at the centre of our lives. As education is commonly regarded as something that is meant to prepare a child for life, this means that God must be at the centre of education. He is to be the focus, the infinite reference point, of all that we do or say – or learn.

The Bible tells us in Romans 1:20 that we learn about God through the things that have been made:

For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.

... Romans 1:20 (KJV)

This particular passage of Scripture talks about men suppressing the truth, and states that God's wrath is directed against them. We believe that children should be taught the truth – that God has created all that is, that He upholds it by His powerful Word, and that we, His creatures, are responsible to Him for the lives He has given us. This does not mean that TCE pupils spend all their time doing Bible studies, singing hymns and praying (although they

do these things too). It does mean that they approach their studies with a different attitude.

Art and Music become ways in which we can glorify God by using the special talents and abilities He has given us. If we do not have these particular talents, we may well find that we have others that we can use instead – and we can at least learn to appreciate them in others, recognizing that they come from the Person with the greatest creative ability of all!

Science and Maths are not boring, dead-end subjects – they are a way of seeing something of the marvel of Who God is, the God Who has used scientific and mathematical principles to put together His creation, and Who invites us to study and master these principles.

We find that God is tremendously practical in the directions He gives us concerning economic matters. Subjects like Accounting, Business Economics and Computer show us the importance of paying attention to detail, of being faithful, hard-working and honest.

English, Afrikaans and other languages give more insight into a God Who communicates with people by means of language, and Who has given the structure of each language on earth as His special gift to each nation.

History becomes a fascinating subject as we learn to look at it from the perspective of what God has been doing to further His Kingdom on earth – and pupils develop a positive attitude as they look confidently to the future, knowing that God's purposes never fail. We also learn humility as we see the mistakes and failures of those who have gone before, and learn to forgive rather than condemn, "watching ourselves, lest we also be tempted."

As we study practical subjects such as Home Economics and Woodwork, we learn the importance of being faithful in the home and in the family. Jesus was a Carpenter; we can be sure that what He made was well-made. We learn how important it is to be faithful in the little things, if we are to succeed in these subjects.

Geography and Biology unfold the wonders of the physical creation. As we study these, we learn to appreciate even more the kindness and love of God. He has equipped the tiniest creature with all that it needs to survive, and has made this earth a place of beauty and joy for us all, if we only have eyes to see it.

Even a subject like Physical Education helps us to understand that our bodies need to be looked after properly if they are to work well. In Health, too, we learn about cleanliness, proper diet and other things that we need to know. We learn to draw the analogy between the physical body and the spiritual body – the Church – and develop principles that will help us to care for the Body of Christ as we grow older.

We realize at TCE that it is not possible to educate a child into being a Christian. That is a decision that each person must make for himself or herself. Home-schooled children are just as able to rebel and turn their backs on the faith of their parents as anyone else. However, our duty as parents is to present our children with the truth of what is. If we do this, they may well come back to it sooner or later. In fact, the Bible indicates that this will be the case (Proverbs 22:6).

WHY THE CHARACTER QUALITIES OF GOD?

It is one thing to want to centre a curriculum on God, and quite another to implement this practically. We use twenty-seven character qualities of God, for which we give credit to *Youth With A Mission*. These are divided into three groups. Each group takes one school year.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. Creator | 10. Light | 19. Wisdom |
| 2. Person | 11. Truth | 20. Resourceful |
| 3. Faithful | 12. Joy | 21. Protector |
| 4. Love | 13. Peace | 22. Shepherd |
| 5. Father | 14. Preserver | 23. Kind and Gentle |
| 6. Good, Righteous and Holy | 15. Just | 24. Meek and Humble |
| 7. Lord and King | 16. Merciful | 25. Patient |
| 8. Forgiving | 17. Gracious | 26. Self-controlled |
| 9. Healer | 18. Provider | 27. Servant |

There are twenty-seven character qualities, because $27 = 3 \times 3 \times 3$ - a symbol of the Trinitarian God. The character qualities in themselves form a pattern which teaches the plan of salvation and the walk of a Christian.

We found that these character qualities had to be in a certain order, and that they broke naturally into three groups of nine each. The idea is that the character qualities act as themes. The pupils learn many different things during the course of a four-week theme, but the most important thing that they should learn and remember is the character quality of God for that theme.

For example, the first theme is "God is Creator". In Grades 1, 4, 7 and 10 the pupils will study this unit for the first four weeks of the year. They may be learning to read and write and work with numbers, or they may be learning about the stars or studying English literature. Whatever they are learning, they will be aware that God is the Creator of all that is, and that He is the author of all that is good and beautiful in our world. The reason we learn to read is that God has given us a written Word, the Bible, and we need to be able to read what He has said to us. The reason we learn to count is that God can count (see Genesis 1), and we need to learn how to do more complicated Maths because God is a great Mathematician, and He wants us to understand some of what He has done.

The way of salvation is implicit in the sequence of the character qualities for the first year: God is Creator, He is a Person, He is Faithful and Loving, He is our Father, He is also Good, Righteous and Holy, He is Lord and King, He is Forgiving and He is our Healer.

In the second year we concentrate more on the Christian life: God is our Light, He is the Truth, He gives us true Joy and Peace, He is our Preserver, He is Just, Merciful and Gracious to us, and He is our Provider.

In the third year we study character qualities related to problems we will encounter along the way: He is our Wisdom, He is Resourceful and can show us how to overcome our problems, He is our Protector and Shepherd, He is Kind and Gentle towards us when we fall, and gives us an example to follow

by being Meek and Humble Himself, He is Patient and Self-controlled, and He shows us the way of servanthood by being a Servant Himself.

As a child goes through these character qualities four times at different stages of his development, he cannot but help gaining a deeper understanding into the character of God – and this may stand him in good stead one day when life does not seem to make sense.

WHAT IF I HAVE CHILDREN AT DIFFERENT LEVELS, DOING DIFFERENT CHARACTER QUALITIES?

We find that the character qualities fit together horizontally as well as vertically. At each of the nine levels there are three aspects which complement one another.

Creator - Light - Wisdom: God is the Creator, and Light and Wisdom were present with Him before the creation of the world.

Person - Truth - Resourceful: God revealed Himself as a real Person in Jesus Christ, Who is the truth about God. God's solution to the problem of sin shows His resourcefulness.

Faithful - Joy - Protector: God is faithful and never leaves His people. He rejoices over us and protects us at all times.

Love - Peace - Shepherd: God loves us and gives us His peace, even in difficult circumstances. We can trust our Shepherd to look after us in love.

Father - Preserver - Kind and Gentle: The God of the whole universe is our Father. He is strong enough to preserve us from all evil, yet He is kind and gentle in His dealings with us.

Good, Righteous and Holy - Just - Meek and Humble: There is no sin whatsoever in God – He is absolutely pure and holy. He is also just and fair in all His ways. At the same time He is meek and humble – He is not proud.

Human righteousness often leads to arrogance and pride, because we do not emulate our Father in meekness and humility.

Lord and King – Merciful – Patient: Once we become children of God, Jesus Christ rules in our lives as Lord and King. Yet He is merciful towards us when we fall, and patient with us in our failures. He is not a harsh and unyielding Lord and King.

Forgiving – Gracious – Self-controlled: God shows His grace to us when He forgives us time and again – even though we don't deserve His forgiveness. He is self-controlled in not punishing sin immediately, but rather giving us the opportunity to come to repentance and salvation.

Healer – Provider – Servant: God is the only One Who can heal us, whether He does so by means of doctors or medicines, or whether He chooses to heal supernaturally. He is the only One Who can heal us of the wounds in our spirit. He provides all this for us through Jesus Christ, Who came to earth, not to be served, but to serve.

WHAT ABOUT LEARNING STYLES?

The concept of “learning styles” has become very popular in recent years. It is said that children have their own “learning styles”, and they cannot learn properly unless that particular learning style is used. This sounds like an attractive idea, but unfortunately, there is no experimental evidence to support it. (See <http://theconversation.com/seven-great-teaching-methods-not-backed-up-by-evidence-33647>)

The truth is that all children pass through different learning styles as they grow older. A young child is at the “concrete” stage. He needs to count using real objects, for example. One cannot sit a young child down and lecture him as one would a pupil at Grade 10 level. He needs plenty of “hands-on” activities to help him learn. Any mother realizes this and accommodates her child, knowing what works for him.

As the child gets older, he begins to enter the “abstract” stage. Here he develops the ability to visualize things in his own mind, without seeing them. Of course it is important to do as many “hands-on” experiments and other activities as possible, but these will no longer dominate the learning process. **He needs to be able to read well, and understand what he is reading. He needs to be able to communicate what he has learned, both orally and in writing.** This takes a long time to develop – many years, in fact, which is why we allocate twelve years to the basic schooling of a child.

By the time the child is in the upper years of high school, he needs to be an “abstract” learner. If he is still having to count on his fingers, he is in serious trouble.

All children (and adults) love colour, audio-visual presentations, etc. That is how God has made us! Thus we try, where possible, to ensure that the learning material we use is colourful, and we encourage parents to include other visual and audio-visual aids where possible. (YouTube is a great resource!) Generally, however, there is no alternative to good, solid, studying, based on good literary skills (reading, understanding and being able to communicate well in writing). These are the skills that we need to concentrate on.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR THE CHILD TO MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE AND POETRY?

It is essential that the child’s memory be trained, as this is an essential component of the study skills which he will need to develop later. It also helps to prevent learning problems (such as ADD and ADHD), and if the child already has learning problems, it helps to cure them. God has designed children with an amazing ability to memorize, but this ability fades as they grow older. If the child’s memory is trained, however, it will help to discipline and organize his mind, which will tend to help him become a disciplined and organized person. The Bible says, *“As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.”* (Proverbs 23:7). The context here is not education, but the principle remains the same – the way we think determines the type of people we are. A child whose memory has been trained will find it easier to retain knowledge later,

and will also find it easier to extract from the work he is studying the main points and categorize them. We have found among our older pupils that those who do well in the memory work also tend to do well in their other subjects, whereas those who neglect the memory work tend to do badly. It is almost always the case that those who actually fail the memory work also fail the exams in general. Thus we are very serious about the memory work, and feel that its importance cannot be overestimated.

What about the content of the memory work?

The Bible says in Isaiah 40:8: *The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the Word of our God shall stand forever.*

In Isaiah 55:10-11, God promises us that His Word will not return to Him empty:

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Furthermore, Psalm 119:11 explains why it is so important to “hide God’s Word in our hearts” (i.e. memorize it):

Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee.

And in verse 15:

I will meditate in Thy precepts, and have respect unto Thy ways.

We cannot meditate on anything that is not in our minds and hearts. In the light of these Scriptures (and many others) it is clear that God’s Word should have a high priority in our lives and in the lives of our children. As they memorize portions of it, they are storing up in their memories God’s words “which will not return empty” to Him – He will use these words in their lives at a later stage. They are also forming a framework into which all other

knowledge and information will have to fit – in other words, they are laying down the foundation of a Biblical Christian World View.

The other part of the memory programme is poetry. When a child memorizes good poetry, he places into his memory the resources which he will one day need when he studies literature in high school. Children have excellent memories, and are able to memorize poetry relatively easily. It is important that we utilize this ability by giving him good poetry to memorize, rather than the words of secular songs, which may not be very beneficial to him. The Christian poetry is of particular importance, as these words help to give him a sound foundation in Christian doctrine and expression.

WHY DOES TCE USE THE KING JAMES VERSION FOR THE PURPOSES OF SCRIPTURE MEMORY WORK?

How will your child benefit from using the King James Version of the Bible for the purposes of memory work?

We need to remember, first of all, that English is a language with a past! English is more than twelve hundred years old and in that time a great amount of literature has been written. When we restrict our children to English as it is spoken today, we cut them off from that rich heritage. By requiring our pupils to memorize from the King James Bible, we introduce them to English as it was a few hundred years ago. This will help to prepare them for the serious study of English literature later on – and incidentally, the younger a child is when this process begins, the easier it is for him to grasp it.

It is important to be exposed to older versions of English for two reasons: firstly, we need to know how the language has changed. Certain words have lost their meaning, or even changed their meaning. It is of great benefit to the child to teach him that there are meanings of words that he needs to know, even though they are not used today. Without this knowledge, he will find much of English literature confusing.

Secondly, we need to know how the language has not changed. The basic structure of the language has remained the same throughout its history. Certain words used today were used in the same way twelve hundred years ago. One important thing to note is that slang normally does not become part of recognized English, as any older person will be able to tell you! Slang expressions used in the twenties, fifties or even eighties are no longer used today. Today's slang expressions will likewise be relegated to the dustbins of history. This is why it is so important that children learn to express themselves clearly without the use of slang, and that they learn to abide by the rules of grammar.

Apart from this, there are other excellent reasons for the choice of the King James Version of the Bible.

1. The KJV is more faithful to the original Greek manuscripts than are the modern versions.
2. The KJV is actually easier to read and memorize.
 - a) It uses simple one- or two-syllable words.
 - b) New versions often use more than twice the number of words and syllables to say the same thing as the KJV.
3. The KJV has a proven record as far as readability and educational value are concerned.
4. The language of the KJV is of a high standard; in fact, the KJV is the only English version of the Bible which has been recognized as part of English literature in its own right. The language used is simple, yet beautiful. The main aim is to communicate, not impress with high-sounding and complicated words.
5. The translators of the KJV went to a great deal of trouble to ensure that the meaning of the original manuscripts was not lost because of the debasing of language. For example, the difference between the singular and plural forms of "you" (which we no longer use) is retained in the KJV, helping towards understanding the intent of any particular passage. While it may

take a little extra effort for a child to learn the difference between “thou / thee” and “ye / you”, it is well worth the trouble in the end. The “-st” or “-th” endings on the verbs used in the second or third person are likewise fairly easy to master.

6. The care that children (and others) need to put in to reading the KJV is well worth the effort. Because some words need to be explained, parents and children spend a little more time on the memory passages, learning what they really mean. Many fruitful discussions can come out of such study, and this can only benefit the child.
7. Finally, the KJV has a very important place in English literature, making it academically important for our children to be familiar with it.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN A HIGH ACADEMIC STANDARD?

The years before twenty-one are the most important years in a person’s life. In that time he or she determines the future course of his or her career. It is during this time that habits are formed (good or bad) that will last the rest of his or her life, that world views are formed (to be set in concrete later on), that talents are recognized and begin to be developed, and often that a life-partner is chosen. Our society wastes most of this time with “fun” projects for young people to help them not to be “bored”. (Strangely enough, many young people are bored, in spite of all this fun!)

We believe that God has called our children, at this time of their lives, to be students. They only have a limited period in which to do this: most children do not continue with their studies into adult life on anything like the scale that they had to at school. Also, this is the only time in their lives when they will be free to devote their entire attention to study – they do not have to earn a living, support a family, care for a home, etc. Furthermore, their minds are young and able to absorb information far more easily than they will be able to do later on.

We believe that children and young people need to be challenged by the material. If they find it too easy, they will quickly lose interest in it. Of course, it must not be too difficult – it must suit their age and grade level – but these days the error seems to occur mostly on the side of “too easy” rather than “too difficult”. Furthermore, children should be required to work hard at their studies. Good habits of diligence learned now will stand them in good stead later when they are out in the “real world” holding down a job. God has placed so much of interest into His creation – there is something for everybody! We rob our children when we oversimplify and scale down the tremendous amount of knowledge and wisdom out there waiting to be discovered.

Let us never forget that we are preparing these children for life as well as for eternity. Young people who have learned how to struggle with something difficult until they master it, how to push themselves to study hard for an exam, how to deny themselves pleasures in order to complete their assignments (in other words, how to do their duty), will be a tremendous asset to society. Such people will become leaders. We will see society being turned around as these young people grow older and get into positions of influence. It has happened in the past, and, by God’s grace, it will surely happen again.

Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.

... Proverbs 22:29

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR PARENTS TO BE INVOLVED IN THE SCHOOLING PROCESS?

TCE is not a self-study system. This means that it is not designed to be given to a child, who must then “get on with it” on his own. There are various reasons for this.

First of all, we believe it is important for the parent to be involved in the teaching process. This is commanded in Scripture:

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates ... And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, "What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you?" Then thou shalt say unto thy son, "We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

... Deuteronomy 6: 6-9; 20-21 (KJV)

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

... Ephesians 6:4 (KJV)

God gives children to parents so that they can teach them His ways. This includes their schoolwork. Just as God does not expect us to learn of Him with no help whatsoever from others, so He does not expect a child to learn without any help from their parents. As the parent teaches the child, the relationship between them is built up and strengthened. When questions arise concerning spiritual, moral or social issues, the parent is there to discuss them with the child. The parent does not have to know all the answers. Together they work through the material and find the answers they are both seeking.

Secondly, children are not able to take the responsibility of their education squarely on their own shoulders. God has not designed them to do this – He has designed the family to love, care for and shield the children from adult responsibilities until they are old enough to bear them. **Even a responsible high school pupil will find it difficult and discouraging to have to work entirely on his own.** Again, the parent's academic qualifications (or lack thereof) are not important here; what is important is that the child sees the love and care of his parent demonstrated in that parent's willingness to sit with him and work through the material together. Together they find ways of

solving problems. If a subject is too difficult (e.g. Maths) they could find an extra Maths teacher and go together to the lessons. The child should never feel that he has been “cast adrift” by an uninterested parent.

HOW DOES A STRUCTURED APPROACH ASSIST A HOMESCHOOLING FAMILY?

For every project in life, even small projects like making the dinner or a dress, planning is essential. Homeschooling a child takes a lot of planning. We at TCE have tried to take some of the load off the homeschooling parent by selecting the textbooks, dividing them up into “bite-size chunks” by drawing up a scheme of work, designing a continuous assessment programme so that the parent can feel confident that the child is progressing well and giving various guidelines, tips and suggestions for the handling of the material. With this load of administrative work off her shoulders, the homeschooling parent is free to use her creativity in doing the job she is uniquely suitable for – teaching her own child.

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 14:40, *Let all things be done decently and in order*. This applies as much to schoolwork as to anything else. We supply a scheme of work (known as our curriculum) which lays out the work in 40 weekly divisions. This curriculum also contains other information to do with the foundational Biblical world view, the character qualities of God, and the various subjects. It helps to answer questions and give guidance to parents starting out who have not had formal teacher-training. It acts as a record of work as well; the idea is that the parent fills in the date next to each item as it is completed. If there is any question later (by education department officials or anyone else), this curriculum becomes documented proof that the work has been covered in sufficient quantities and in an orderly way.

The curriculum is meant to be a guide and a help – not a taskmaster. If you find that your child is struggling with a certain section of work, by all means take longer over it in order to give your child the time he needs to master it. If you get behind on the curriculum, it does not matter. Usually, once the problem has been dealt with, the child is able to go ahead at a faster pace

and so catch up. If he does not, it does not matter – there is no time limit on the curriculum. Please note, however, that the work assigned in the curriculum must be done in the order in which it is set out, and that all of it must be covered.

Although the work in the various subjects is clearly set out, the work for Art, Music and Physical Education is given in the form of suggested activities. If you feel there is something else you would rather do in these subjects (which are not examined), please feel free to do it.

WHY DOES TCE USE AMERICAN TEXTBOOKS?

The Christian school and home school movement has been going for a considerable time in the U.S.A. We are only at the beginning of this phenomenon. It takes time to produce Christian textbooks of the standard reached by the American publishers, and time is something we do not have when considering the education of our children. At TCE we have gone the route of Christian Liberty Academy in the U.S.A. This is the biggest homeschooling organization in the world. They have looked around at the vast amount of material available there and have put together a set of textbooks which combine academic excellence, user-friendliness and economic viability for the home-school market.

We have adopted their approach and use a large number of their books, although in some cases we have substituted or added others. We do not use their books on American history or geography; instead, we have written our own South African notes covering the syllabus requirements of these subjects. As much as possible we have tried to do this from a Christian point of view. We also supply South African books in Afrikaans. We do use American books for world history, however.

WHAT IS CREATOR STUDIES?

“Creator Studies” is a combination subject made up of Bible, History, Geography, Science and Biology or Health. It is done every day. The reason for this arrangement is two-fold:

First, it is more practical for a parent to be able to prepare one thing at a time, rather than little bits of several different subjects. With the exception of Bible, which is done every week, the subjects are dealt with one section at a time. For example, you may be studying History, and be busy with it for a whole week. During that time you will not do Science, Geography or Biology. The next two weeks may be devoted to the structure of the atom (Science) or some other topic. The child is able to “get his teeth into” the work, rather than having to try to remember from week to week where he was. By the end of the year all the work in all the subjects will have been covered.

Secondly and more importantly, it is the essence of the Biblical Christian world view that “God applies to all of life.” Children need to know that when they are studying Science or History, they are learning about God just as much as when they study the Bible. Each subject is dealing with different aspects of Him. The subject is called “Creator Studies” because we are studying the Creator through the things He has made.

HOW CAN WE TEACH A CHILD TO READ?

Possibly the most important skill your child will ever learn is that of reading. It is the one skill that we all need to use on a daily basis. We may be able to get through a day without doing any mathematical calculations (although that is doubtful), but it is very unlikely that we will get through a day without reading something - newspaper headlines, instructions, letters, adverts, magazines, books, - the list is endless.

A Christian, however, has a far more powerful motivation. God has chosen to communicate with mankind in written form through His written Word - the Bible. It is essential for any human being to be able to read that written Word

- his or her eternal salvation depends on what is taught therein. This is why the Church traditionally laid such emphasis on education.

The "Look-and-Say" method is the one currently used in South African schools. In this method the child is required to memorize whole words by their shape. After a very short time, the child brings home a "reader" which contains a story using only the words the child knows. Everyone is very impressed; however, the child cannot read - he can only recognize the words he has memorized. Soon there are too many words to remember, and the child becomes "dyslexic" or simply a "non-reader". The result of the adoption of the "Look-and-Say Method" of teaching reading has been the rising rate of illiteracy in American schools, and South African schools as well.

The result of this folly is that we find ourselves today in a very similar position to those people of the late Middle Ages who had no access to the Word of God because they were unable to read, and who did not even realize how they had been robbed! Our young people do not read the Word of God because they are often simply unable to do so - the words contained therein are not found in their "Look-and-Say" readers. Even those children and young people who have managed to master the skill of reading - and there are many - have wasted many years of valuable time and have not had time to develop the love of reading which is an invaluable asset to anyone who wants to know more about the wonderful world in which we live, and about the wonderful Creator Who made it.

Another disturbing result of the "Look-and-Say" method which should be mentioned is the devastating effect it has had on people's ability to spell. Children are just not taught that there is a connection between the way a word sounds and the way it is written down. They are often dimly aware of the letters in a word, but are very confused as to the order in which those letters are placed. The result is a nation of non-spellers.

The other way to teach reading is by the "Phonics" method. This method is the one used by any missionary who wants to translate the Bible into a previously unwritten language. He identifies the sounds of the language, assigns a symbol to each one, and proceeds to represent the spoken word

through written symbols. The system is easy to teach – in a very short time the entire population can be literate. This method has been used through the centuries. It has never failed. The only way to make it fail is not to teach it. It is easy, logical and quick, though it may take a little time initially. It is the method all remedial reading teachers use. It is the method we use when we learn a foreign language, such as French, German, Greek or Hebrew.

In English there are 44 sounds. Because of its 1200-year-old history, coupled with its habit of adopting words from other languages, English has developed a complicated spelling system, so that there are some 120 different ways of spelling these 44 sounds. Some sounds can be spelled as many as 12 different ways. Hardly any of them have only one spelling. However, this is still better than trying to memorize 40 000 – 120 000 words! By going one step at a time in a logical sequence, it is possible for a child to learn to read English in 6 – 8 months, after which time he should be able to read anything, even if he is not able to understand it.

By the end of Grade 1, TCE pupils can read. After that, it is simply a matter of practice. For those pupils who come into the system higher up than Grade 1, and who have a reading problem, we sell a separate reading scheme which they can use to learn how to read (and to spell) without having to go back to Grade 1.

Remember that once a child has learned to read, the job is only half done. **The next challenge is to help him develop the habit of reading.** There are so many distractions today (e.g. T.V., sport, outside activities, etc.) that often a child simply has no time at all to read. He will never become a good reader unless he has daily practice, and he certainly will never learn to love reading unless he can do it really well! We recommend that you set aside a certain time every day (preferably in the middle of the day when he is not too tired) when he must be in his room with a book for at least an hour. By all means let him select his own books – the important thing here is that he gets the necessary practice in reading which will consolidate the skill he has learned. In addition to this, you need to limit the amount of T.V. he watches (it is best to eliminate it altogether, but that is not always possible), as T.V. tends to make children lazy to engage their minds, whereas reading stimulates the mind

and encourages creative thinking. It is also good to read to the child – a bedtime story is still a great way to end the day – but don't let this take the place of his own personal reading.

HOW CAN WE ESTABLISH A SOLID FOUNDATION IN MATHS?

Our approach to Maths is based on the premise, “you cannot run – much less fly – before you can walk”. During the first three years of school a child should concentrate on getting the foundation down on which he will later build mathematical skills. He needs to learn to count, add and subtract (in his head, not with a calculator), multiply and divide. The number combinations and tables must be committed to memory. During the next three years he will learn to apply his knowledge to fractions, decimals, percentages and word problems (which help apply mathematical concepts to everyday situations). By the end of Grade 6, and at the latest, Grade 7, these things should be second nature to a child. He is then equipped to attempt high school Maths, with its many complicated ideas and methods.

For many years in South Africa educators have been experimenting with Maths teaching. In an effort to get away from so-called “boring, mindless drill” (the children don't find it boring and mindless – if they are at the right age), they have destroyed the foundation children need for the more interesting Maths later on. The results have been disastrous. The subject most hated, most feared, and most failed in high school, is Maths. The only way to remedy this problem is to go back to the foundations. This we attempt to do at TCE.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR A CHILD TO MASTER CURSIVE WRITING?

Writing is one of the original “3 R's” which have come under so much attack in recent years. Because children need to learn to print first, there is often resistance from them when it comes to learning to use “real” (cursive) writing in Grade 3. As a result, many teachers (not wanting to be unpopular) have simply given up and allowed the children to continue to print. It is a great pity

that primary school teachers never teach high school pupils, especially matrics, because if they did they would not irresponsibly allow children not to become proficient in cursive writing! (Unfortunately, often they never find out the results of their laxity.)

Pupils must write neatly, of course, but this is not all that is required. They also need to be able to write fast. At first they are obviously able to print faster than they write, but as they get older, this will change. When a child prints, he has to pick up his pen after every letter. This takes extra time (an infinitesimal amount, admittedly, but it adds up) and extra energy. At primary school level this is not too serious. However, as the child goes into the higher grades, he is going to find that the work load increases dramatically, and so does the amount of written work he needs to do. Printing is simply going to slow him down, tire him out and make him discouraged. When he gets to Grade 12, he has to write the Cambridge A Levels. Here he is required to write an essay of 600–900 words in an hour. That includes thinking and planning time. A child who prints is simply not able to write fast enough to be able to do this, and will also find that his hand gets very tired – especially as there are two essays to do in two hours in many papers. We take our responsibility towards our pupils very seriously, and this includes making sure they are properly equipped to write those very important Cambridge exams.

New research has recently come to light that cursive writing is actually very important for the child's mental development. Apparently, the action of writing in cursive produces a "fluid wave" in the brain, which helps a child to connect information – a vital component of developing good study skills. The researchers say that this is particularly important in the treatment of children with learning disabilities, as very often the problem is that the child cannot connect information in a meaningful way and apply it. Cursive writing also helps those who have problems with reading, as the words are kept separate from one another, and the letters are connected within the word. This is especially the case with children who tend to confuse 'b' with 'd' in printing – in cursive the letters are quite different, and this doesn't happen. It seems strange that writing with one's hand can affect what goes on in one's brain, but this is what has been discovered, and as we know so little about the brain, we would probably be wise to take this into consideration. We found this out

after we had decided to insist on cursive writing for our pupils, and were gratified to find that we had made the correct decision.

Finally, let us remember that cursive writing is simply a skill. It never does a child any harm to master a skill, and the earlier he does, the easier it is for him. He will thank you for it later.

HOW DO I GO ABOUT TEACHING MY CHILD USING TCE?

The first thing is to do some careful planning. The curriculum gives you a basic scheme of work which covers all the work for a year in weekly programmes. We also give you a suggested daily timetable, and a blank so that you can work one out that suits you and your family.

At the beginning of each theme you need to get an overview of what work will be covered in that theme. We have supplied a “theme planner” for this purpose. The books that will be used are listed, but you have to fill in the other information.

Every week you need to sit down and work out how you will cover the work assigned for that week by breaking it down into daily lessons. We have supplied blank “daily planners” to assist you in this. If you have more than one child, it becomes more difficult, but not impossible. Here you need to make sure that you will be spending individual time with each child in turn, while the others have work, assigned by you, that they can do on their own. Children need to learn not to interrupt their siblings’ lessons unless it is a matter of extreme urgency.

The most effective teaching method ever devised is the tutoring, or one-on-one method – and this is what we use in home schooling. You do not need to be an expert in the subject. You do not need to memorize all the work beforehand so that you can just tell it to your child. Your general attitude and approach should be that the two of you are learning together. As you bring an adult mind to the work in the child’s textbooks, you will find that you are better able to understand it and explain it than you perhaps thought!

You need to establish a high standard of discipline and orderliness in your teaching – this is done mainly by starting at a set time every day and sticking to your timetable. Of course, from time to time there may be family emergencies which preclude this, but they should be the exception, not the rule. Expect a high standard of work from your children – don't allow them to get away with sloppy, untidy or unfinished work.

Please remember that TCE does not prescribe *how* you should teach your child. The actual content of the lessons has been given to you in the textbooks, and the Curriculum gives you the amount of time you should spend on a particular section. Other than that, it is up to you! Sometimes it would be better to handle the material as a project, and use the textbook as one of your sources. Often you can do “discovery learning”, using the textbook as a guide as to what to look for. Maths games, phonics games, etc. can be part of your school day. Occasionally you might like to have your lessons outside and write in the sand, on slates or on a blackboard, rather than in the books. Give your creativity free reign – and you will come up with all sorts of innovative ideas!

Finally, don't forget that this whole homeschooling project is meant to build up and strengthen your family – and an important part of that is having fun together and making memories! Take time off from time to time to go on outings, to do special things, to play games together, etc. In our family we made each child's birthday an occasion for an outing. As we had six, and four of them were homeschooling together at one stage, this gave us a considerable number of opportunities for outings! We always did P.E. together, and of course the first half-hour of every day was spent together as a family either in worship, musical appreciation, Bible Study or reciting the Bible memory passages and praying together as a family.

MAY I START ON TCE AT ANY TIME OF THE YEAR?

Yes, as long as you start at Week 1 of the Curriculum for your grade. When you get to Weeks 19-20, you will do your first set of exams (Grade 4 upward) or submit your first marksheet (Grades 0-3). At Weeks 39-40 you will do your

final set of exams for the grade (Grade 4 upward) or submit your second marksheet (Grades 0-3). This means that you will not finish the grade by the end of the year, but only some time in the next year. However, once you have submitted your second set of exams / marksheet, you may go straight on to the next grade. We have found over the years that most pupils catch up to the normal school year within two to three years. If they don't, this is not a serious problem, as Cambridge final exams can be written in June or November.

WHAT ABOUT EVALUATION?

For Continuous Evaluation, we supply marksheets (see end of this curriculum) on which you should record your child's marks for each test or evaluating activity listed. **The marksheets need to be submitted to TCE twice a year, and we will then issue a report to you.** We will not return the marksheets, so if you want a copy, you need to make one yourself.

In addition to this, pupils from Grade 4 up are required to write formal exams twice a year. **Both sets of exams (June and November) need to be submitted. We will not accept the November exams unless the June exams have come in at least three months before, together with the relevant marksheets.**

In education, as in every other field, we need to look to the Bible for our fundamental methodology. We know that testing is important in life and in education (which is preparation for life) because God tests us. If He, Who knows everything, finds it necessary to test us "to know what is in our hearts, whether we will keep His commandments or not" (Deuteronomy 8:2), surely we as fallible human beings need to test as an integral part of education.

Quite apart from this philosophical basis, however, there are a number of good solid reasons why testing is important.

It allows the parent/teacher to know where the child's weak areas are. Testing is not meant to be a negative thing: if a child gets a low mark, it is obvious that there is a problem that needs to be dealt with.

It shows the child where his areas of weakness or strength are. Many times a child *thinks* he knows, whereas we as adults know that he doesn't know. The best way to show him is to test him. At other times the child feels that he knows nothing – he gets depressed. Again, the solution is testing.

It gives both the child and the parent/teacher an objective standard. This is valuable for the self-confidence and sense of security that a home-schooling family needs. When you can say that your child has written and passed external exams – not set by you – other people (family, friends, school inspectors and other educational officials) are more likely to accept that you are, in fact, attending responsibly to the education of your child.

One of the most powerful reasons for exams is the motivation to study. It is an easily observable fact that people simply do not study unless they know there is an exam coming up. The discipline of sitting down and studying a subject is of vital importance in a child's intellectual development. He cannot be said to have mastered the subject unless he has been formally tested. This is why degrees and certificates are awarded after an exam has been written and passed.

Whether we like it or not, we live in an exam-orientated society. We need to prepare our children for the exams they will one day have to write. The more they write exams, and the more a parent communicates that exams are a normal part of life, the less stressful the whole process becomes. We need to let them make their foolish mistakes (e.g. taking too long over a question and not being able to finish the paper; not reading a question correctly, etc.) early, when it really doesn't matter, so that when they come to write important exams, they won't make the same mistakes.

Exams are in themselves a learning experience. Often the child has to apply knowledge in a new way – good practice for real-life situations later on.

Don't forget the rewards: when our children don't write exams we rob them of the possibility of success – that feeling of achievement and accomplishment which comes when we have studied hard and done well, or at least better than previously. As parents we should always focus on the improvements – not on how many marks less than 100% our children achieved. Of course, it goes without saying that children should not be compared to one another, or to their parents' past achievements, but only with themselves. If they are improving, this is cause for congratulation. If not, more work, or possibly a different approach, is needed.

Finally, let us not forget that we expect people who have anything to do with us to have been tested – doctors, dentists, electricians, plumbers, builders, etc. One day our children will fill these responsible positions. Let us help to prepare them ... with tests and exams!

WHAT ABOUT THE NEW BELA BILL?

Since the introduction of the BELA Bill, there have been some rumours flying around lately regarding the status of home education, and we would like to set the record straight, if possible.

1. There is no possibility that Cambridge qualifications will be banned in South Africa. Our universities are very happy to receive Cambridge candidates, and as this is an international qualification and accepted all over the world, they certainly would not refuse to recognize it. Cambridge University is not under the jurisdiction of the South African educational authorities and therefore cannot be affected by any decisions made by them. The BELA Bill itself states that homeschoolers are free to choose their own exit qualifications (Section 28:1).
2. The BELA Bill requires homeschoolers to be assessed by a "competent assessor" at regular intervals, at their own expense. In the case of TCE, **this does not apply**, because we offer continuous assessments from

Grade 0 – 12 and exams twice a year from Grade 4 – 12, plus Cambridge exams at the end of Grade 11 (IGCSE) and Grade 12 (AS).

3. The definition of a “competent assessor” is a qualified teacher who is registered with the South African Council of Educators. Alison Shortridge, our Principal, is registered with them (SACE Registration No. 12474549) and is thus regarded as a competent assessor. Thus TCE pupils meet the assessment requirements of the BELA Bill.

4. Over the years we have had over 130 pupils go through Matric with us (almost 60 of them wrote Cambridge AS levels). The majority of these received Matric exemptions and went on to university or some other tertiary institution. Many have successfully completed their undergraduate degrees, and some have gone on to Masters degrees or even Doctorates. Further details are available on request.

WHAT ABOUT MATRIC?

Pupils on the TCE system will write the British A Levels for their final Matric exam. They may write the first year of the A Levels (AS) in Grade 12. This will give them a South African Matric Exemption, which will enable them to enter a South African university or other tertiary institution. Pupils may decide to do the full A Level course by doing an extra year (Grade 13). The full A Levels are required if the pupil wishes to study further in the UK. The British A Levels are accepted throughout the world as a valid school-leaving qualification.

FACTS ABOUT THE CAMBRIDGE EXAMS

1. The pass mark is 50%. Below that it is not even graded. Each subject gets its own certificate, so there is no possibility of one subject being able to “carry” another. Five subjects are required for a South African Matric exemption, which means that the pupil must get at least 50% in each subject in order to pass.

2. There is a large amount of work to be studied. Pupils are examined on a full year's work, plus previous year's work as foundational, so that even if something is not specifically mentioned in the Grade 12 syllabus, a question can be based on it as previous knowledge that should be in place. Thus long-term memory skills are required.
3. There is a tremendous amount of reading required.
4. Good study skills are important.
5. The standard of written work is high. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are penalized in all subjects. Pupils who are unable to write in cursive are at a serious disadvantage.
6. Answers are to be given in paragraph or essay form. In other words, the pupil must be able to express himself clearly, fluently and appropriately in writing.
7. Questions are application-oriented rather than content-oriented. This means that knowing the actual content of the work is only the first step. Very few marks are given for this knowledge – as knowledge. The pupil needs to be able to apply the knowledge he has, often drawn from several different areas, to a particular problem situation.
8. Pupils have to be able to discuss a topic from different points of view. They must thus fully understand and be able to explain the humanist world view as well as the Biblical Christian world view. They must be able to answer from a humanist point of view while not compromising their own stand as Biblical Christians.
9. Is this a high standard? Yes! But it is the standard required, and it is the standard that children all over the world are able to meet – if they have been trained up properly in their school-going years. A child who has reached this standard can truly be said to be “educated”.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Just as we get our foundation from Scripture, so we must look in Scripture to find the end result of what we are building. Not only are we preparing our children for life and eternity (note that we must do both), but we are helping to speed the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him.

... Ephesians 1:9-10 (KJV)

Jesus told us to pray for this Kingdom, and to put it first in all our endeavours. Let us not become discouraged. What we are doing today will have far-reaching results far into the future, and will help to bring our earth into subjection to Christ, which is God's ultimate purpose.

Therefore take no thought, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek.) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

...Matthew 6:31-33 (KJV)

Be encouraged as you face the somewhat daunting task of undertaking your child's education. Do it thoroughly, as the most important thing you will ever do. Your rewards will be great!



TCE THEOCENTRIC
CHRISTIAN
EDUCATION

PIONEERS IN CHRISTIAN HOMESCHOOLING