



Seventh-day Adventist
HOME SCHOOLING



BUC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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Preface

My interest and experience in home schooling stretches back over 10 years when I first became acquainted with committed home schoolers in the church. In 1987, I met and became friends with a family that home-schooled their two daughters. They were very enthusiastic and organised in their home schooling. Sending their daughters to school was just not an option as far as they were concerned. I was impressed with the happiness and contentment of both girls, who seemed to be fully in harmony with this chosen option for their education.

About the same time, I also had the opportunity to watch a good friend of mine, in my local church, raise her daughter as a single mother, determined to home school her. She was convinced that this was the best option for her all-round education. We talked frequently and I shared my thoughts and insights as an Adventist teacher doing some explorative work, myself, with Christian education principles, in an Adventist school. I recognised the home school as an ideal context in which to develop and exercise these principles, perhaps to an even greater extent than I could in the classroom. These encounters with home schoolers made a significant impression on me, broadening my horizons on what was possible in Christian education.

Over the years, I became acquainted with many other Adventist families involved in home schooling, both here and abroad. Most of these families had strong Christian convictions about education, similar to my own. I was able to share ideas, from my experiences as an Adventist teacher. Later, I worked with and helped groups of families set up home schooling programmes.

My experiences convinced me increasingly of the need for strong parental involvement in the education of children. Home schooling seemed to provide the best opportunity for this. As I saw conventional education moving progressively toward a rigid, standardised and mass production approach, the beauty of tailor-made, individualised home schooling seemed more and more attractive—indeed, the ideal option.

As an Adventist teacher, always looking for new and improved approaches to teaching and learning, certain aspects of home schooling seemed to offer exciting potential for a more dynamic and meaningful learning experience. These include:








- ✦ personalised learning at a child's own pace
- ✦ vast scope for learning from real life sources in and outside of the home
- ✦ the spiritual development and all-round success of the children

- # mutual support and closeness within families
- # flexibility to explore and follow a child's interest
- # parents taking full responsibility for their children's character development
- # freedom and happiness of children in the more informal learning setting of the home
- # the sacrifice, dedication and commitment of parents, especially mothers.

Neal Lawrence.

Introduction

This handbook is a comprehensive and practical guide on home schooling for Seventh-day Adventists (hereafter referred to as Adventists), within the British Union Conference (BUC), in various capacities:

-  for parents considering or currently home schooling, it's a vital resource
-  if you're looking for a better way in your child's education, it will help you
-  those wanting to know God's plan for the education of children, and how to make it a reality, will discover a fresh approach
-  if you're in the field of education, working with children, it provides valuable insights into an interesting and effective alternative
-  as a church leader who wants to be more informed on the subject, it gives answers
-  perhaps you're concerned about the decision of a relative or friend to home school their child—it can clarify the issues
-  or maybe you're just fascinated to know what it's all about.

Well, whoever you are, this handbook seeks to address your questions, concerns, interests, fears, doubts or mere curiosity. If you're not already, it may help you to become an informed supporter of home schooling.

The handbook explains all of the important aspects of home schooling and the surrounding issues. Many illustrations, practical experiences and ideas for carrying out home schooling are included. The handbook has been set out for either extensive reading or quick access to specific information. Key points are shaded for emphasis.

The Bible and the writings of Ellen White are the main sources of the principles outlined and the quotations given.

Addressing your questions

- ☪ *“What’s home schooling all about?”*
- ☪ *“Are parents really the best teachers of their children?”*
- ☪ *“What’s home schooling got to do with Adventists?”*
- ☪ *“Is home schooling better than formal schooling?”*
- ☪ *“How do I start, practically?”*
- ☪ *“Is it biblical?”*
- ☪ *“What’s the financial cost?”*
- ☪ *“Is it legal?”*
- ☪ *“How can single parents home school?”*
- ☪ *“Why do parents choose this option?”*
- ☪ *“Is it really worth the bother?”*
- ☪ *”and many more....???”*

What is home schooling?

The term home schooling probably strikes different chords in different minds? What does it mean to you right now?

Home schooling is simply:

... the education of children at home rather than at school. Usually the parents, especially mothers, are the main teachers. It is in many respects tailor-made education, adapted to the specific character, circumstances and needs of the individual child. Above all, home schooling was God's original plan for education and still remains His ideal today.

Home schooling tends to vary considerably from one family to another. While some families follow the regular school curriculum quite closely, most opt for a more creative and flexible approach. Much depends on the reasons, experiences and abilities of parents when starting to home school.

Home schooling or home education?

In Britain today, the term home education is most widely used. This is largely because of a desire to move away from the narrow conventional school related concept of education. In America, the term home schooling tends to be more common. In practice the two terms mean the same thing. However, most Adventists in Britain are familiar with the term home schooling largely due to the American influence on Adventism in Britain. The two terms are used interchangeably in this handbook, although home schooling is the most widely used.

Home-based education








Home schooling could more accurately be described as home-based education. Many families use home as a base from which to engage in a wide range of out-of-home community-related activities and investigations rather than simply duplicating the conventional school programme at home.

Some children are home schooled all the way through their compulsory education years (5 to 16), while others are home schooled for just a part of this time. The early years up to 10 or 11 are seen as being especially important for some parents who want to retain control

over the formative stages of their children's characters and lives. Others, after initially putting their children into school, may start at any point along the age range.

Why teach your child, yourself?

The reasons for parents choosing to home school their children are wide ranging. They include deeply held religious, political and philosophical convictions, dissatisfaction with the school programme, concern over academic standards, avoiding peer pressure and geographical isolation, amongst others. Research evidence from home schoolers in Britain, has revealed the following reasons:

-  *over half related to school, such as 'unhappy with current school education', class sizes too large' and 'bullying'.*
-  *almost a third of reasons listed were child-centred; e.g. 'we wanted to stimulate our child's learning', 'its the child's choice', 'it meets our child's needs*
-  *one in five parents describe their motivation in terms of their beliefs, referring to their 'ideology', 'lifestyle', their faith and 'the lack of morality in society'.*
-  *some families adopted a more philosophical approach, often believing that the present education system needed reform.*
-  *close family relationship and being together and learning together*
-  *freedom and flexibility to do what we want, when we want*
-  *letting the children learn in their own style and develop naturally.*

☞ *see chapter 3 on reasons and chapter 6 on research*

A growing revolution

In Britain, America and many other countries a quiet but growing home school revolution has been taking place, in recent years, as more and more parents opt out of mass education into a more 'do it yourself' approach. In America, it is estimated that well over a million families are home schooling, while in Britain the numbers are over 10,000. Of these, between 1200 and 1500 are estimated to be Christians. There are probably between 10 to 20 Adventist families in Britain, today, that are involved in home schooling in some way.

You may be surprised by these figures, since few people in this country have ever heard of —never mind considered and tried—home schooling. Most people still think that sending children to school is compulsory because 'everybody else does it'.

What's home schooling got to do with Adventists?

Why should home schooling be of special importance to us as a Seventh-day Adventist living through the closing scenes of earth's history? As repositories of the last message of warning to the world, every aspect of life must be viewed in this end time context. The Elijah message of MALACHI 4:5,6 is to be given just before the end. Its focus is reconciliation between the hearts of parents and children.

Behold, I send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

This message implies that there will be at the end of time alienation between parents and children that must be addressed in the final proclamation of the gospel, which has been entrusted to Seventh-day Adventists.

Home schooling is important to Adventist with the great emphasis our message has always placed on the family and education. It is very much a part of our heritage. Home schooling has long existed amongst Adventists especially in America. Just after 1844 and before Ellen White started speaking and writing on the subject of education, there were those within Adventism who were sufficiently concerned about the adverse effects of public school education in America, to withdraw their children and teach them at home.

Many Adventist schools started as home-based schools with a few families and a teacher. In her many expositions on education, Ellen White was very explicit about the home being the most important educating agency in the lives of children. In her first testimony on education, 'Proper Education', written in January 1872, she wrote:

If parents could be aroused to a sense of the fearful responsibility which rests upon them in the work of educating their children, more time would be devoted to prayer, and less to needless display. They would reflect, and study, and pray earnestly to God for wisdom and divine aid, to so train their children that they may develop characters that God will approve. Their anxiety will not be to know how they can educate their children so that they will be praised and honored of the world, but how they can educate them to form beautiful characters that God can approve.

— FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION 30.

For Seventh-day Adventist parents today, this message is more timely and relevant than when it was written back in 1872. Home schooling is an opportunity to give our children an education according to God's plan without undue interference from the world.

Home schooling and the church's education work

Home schooling is one option in the broader educational work of the church in Britain. The British Union Conference Education Department sees it as serving three main purposes:

1. A complement to the church school programme

Home schooling provides another setting for Christian education, which the Education Department supports along with church schools and Sabbath School.

2. An alternative for children in state schools

The majority of Adventist children are currently in state schools. There are a number of reasons for this including: lack of access to Adventist schools, geographically; little understanding of the importance of Christian education; a lack of conviction about Adventist schools; financial reasons; the absence of local church initiatives for Christian education or a lack of unawareness of the options available for Christian education.

Whatever the reason, home schooling offers these families a way of making Christian education a reality for their children in an accessible and effective way.

3. A choice for those who specifically want this approach to Christian education

Those families who choose home schooling as the best way of giving their children a Christian education are also included under the umbrella of the Church's education work.

At the last British Union Conference session in 1996, there was a recommendation that came from the Plans Committee to make the educational work of the church more accessible to the wider constituency. It stated:

Whereas it is difficult geographically and/or financially for all Seventh-day Adventist children to attend Adventist schools, Recommended:

- (a) that the BUC Education department prioritise next quinquennium the preparation and completion of materials for home or church use that will broaden the SDA educational base provided for SDA children and youth, particularly recognising the challenge of the 11-14 group.*
- (b) that the BUC Education department explore the concept of study conferences for secondary/college age youth to allow exploration of various areas of faith and learning with SDA experts in their field.*

This handbook has come about partly in response to this recommendation. The BUC Education Department sees home schooling as a viable way of broadening the church's educational base, to benefit many who would otherwise go without a Christian education.

SECTION ONE
**THE BASIS OF
HOME SCHOOLING**

1

What is Adventist education?

A unique education in a special time

In every area of life, God has a distinct plan for His people. This was the case with ancient Israel and it is so with His people today. To Israel, He gave wonderful promises:

*And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will **set thee on high above all nations of the earth:** ...and thou shalt **lend unto many nations; and thou shalt not borrow.** And the LORD shall make thee the **head, and not the tail;** and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath;* — DEUTERONOMY 28:1,12,13.

In all ages, God's people were to stand out above the people of the world in every area of life including education. Today, as Christ seeks to prepare a people for His soon return, it is important to understand that there is a very specific plan of education as a necessary part of this preparation. We are to receive the seal of God in our foreheads (REVELATION 7:1-4) and have minds equipped to go through the darkest days of earth's history. This is why God has given to Seventh-day Adventist a unique system of education.

The Adventist mind

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God. — ROMANS 12:2.

The Adventist Christian experience calls for a renewed mind. Transformed by the grace of Christ, the Adventist mind views everything from a renewed perspective. The world and its ways no longer hold its allegiance. While engaging in temporal pursuits, Christian faith lifts it to the higher spiritual plane, from where it receives the broadest, most complete view and understanding of life. The spiritual realities of God are its constant reference point and measuring stick in making sense of what's happening all around on the temporal plane. The

Adventist mind will not be persuaded by the world that what it has to offer is the total sum of reality. It knows that this is an incomplete and distorted picture that cannot be trusted.

When it comes to education, therefore, Adventists look above and beyond what the world is doing to find out and engage in educational pursuits that are good and acceptable in God's estimate, in spite of the world's opinion. They seek to operate on what is the highest possible level of education. The perfect will of God is their goal—a goal as far from what the world calls education, as the heavens are above the earth.

The imperative of Adventist education

In view of this distinctive Adventist mindset, Adventist education becomes an imperative and not an option. In deed, rightly understood, in its entirety, it is a part of the foundational doctrines of Adventism and hence non-negotiable. To be an Adventist is to be a believer, participant and exponent of Bible-based Christian education. In seeking to accomplish the very purpose of its existence, Adventism will be no more successful without Christian education, than a body trying to run without legs.

Background to the Adventist education system

Establishing a distinct education system was not a part of the Adventist mission in the immediate period after 1844. Most Adventists believed that the return of Christ was imminent and therefore did not recognise the need for a formal education system of their own. However, there was a growing concern, by parents, of the dangers of American public school education. By the 1850s, there were several attempts to set up small private schools, run by Adventists for Adventists. These schools were not official Adventist schools and did not last long.

It was not until the early 1870s that the Lord, through His messenger Ellen White, began to bring before Adventists the need to formally establish a distinct system of education. In her first testimony on education, entitled 'Proper Education' written in January 1872, Ellen White addressed many of the failures in conventional school education at the time and outlined a comprehensive plan of education for Adventists. She began to present key principles in Christian education, which she later expounded on in greater depth.

*The forgoing is a statement of what might have been done by **a proper system of education**. Time is too short now to accomplish that which might have been done in past generations; but we can do much, even in these last days, to correct the existing evils in the education of the youth. **We are reformers**. We desire that our children should **study to the best advantage**.*

Clearly, there was now a need for Adventists to establish their own reformed system of education. This was to be built on a strong biblical foundation with parents and the home as the starting point. The need for institutions to prepare workers to carry out the mission of the church was clearly evident.

True education is missionary training. Every son and daughter of God is called to be a missionary; we are called to the service of God and our fellow men; and to fit us for this service should be the object of our education. – MINISTRY OF HEALING 395.

Young men and women must be fitted to engage in medical missionary work as physicians and nurses. – EVANGELISM 518.

We need a school where those who are just entering the ministry may be taught at least the common branches of education, and where they may also learn more perfectly the truths of God's word for this time. – IBID. 45,46.







KEY PRINCIPLES OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION

– IN THE BIBLE & WRITINGS OF ELLEN WHITE

1. **God is the Source of All Knowledge and Learning**
2. **The Bible as the Basis of True Education**
3. **Creation, Fall and Redemption, the Highest Context of Education**
4. **The Central Role of Parents in Their Children's Education**
5. **Balanced, Physical, Mental and Spiritual Development**
6. **The Place of Practical Work in Education**
7. **The Importance of Nature in Education**
8. **Preparation for Service**
9. **Christian Goals and Methods of Education**
10. **Church Provision of Education**

1. God is the source of all knowledge and learning

Knowledge

-  God is omniscient (JOB 36:4; 37:16; COLOSSIANS 2:3)
-  Knowledge of God is the source of all knowledge. All knowledge is God's knowledge. Ultimately, there is no distinction between the Christian and the secular (PROVERBS 2:6; EDUCATION 13,14,16; FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION 170,171)
-  Love is the basis of all revealed knowledge (1 JOHN 4:8,16)
-  Ultimately, knowledge is fact and truth. If something is false, it can be believed but it cannot be known (GENESIS 3:1-6; JOHN 8:32; 14:6; COLOSSIANS 2:3)
-  God reveals knowledge and He allows us to discover as much as He chooses (DEUTERONOMY 29:29; PROVERBS 2:6; JOHN 16:12)
-  Knowledge can be both intellectual and experiential (PROVERBS 8:16; ECCLESIASTES 1:16,17)

- 📖 Knowledge is not innate. It originates from an external source (PROVERBS 21:30; JOHN 15:5; ROMANS 1:21,22; 1 CORINTHIANS 1:19-21)
- 📖 Knowledge is infinite (EPHESIANS 3:19; 1 CORINTHIANS 8:2)
- 📖 Knowledge reveals God and leads to God (PROVERBS 9:10)
- 📖 Knowledge is certain. It is not built on theory, speculation or doubt (EPHESIANS 4:13, 14; JAMES 1:5-8; 2 PETER 1:19)
- 📖 Knowledge in and of itself is neither good or bad. It depends on the framework within which it is set and the use to which it is put (JAMES 2:19; FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION 111; COUNSELS TO PARENTS, TEACHERS & STUDENTS 38)
- 📖 Knowledge is the basis of faith (ROMANS 10:17; 1 CORINTHIANS 13:12; 1 TIMOTHY 4:3; HEBREWS 11:6)
- 📖 Human knowledge on any subject can never be final. Only God knows anything in totality (1 CORINTHIANS 8:2; 13:12)
- 📖 Knowledge on any subject assumes its correct position as it relates to God (1 CORINTHIANS 8:2; EDUCATION 17)
- 📖 The Bible and nature are two of God's main sources of knowledge and learning (PSALMS 119: 130; PSALMS 19:1-3; ROMANS 1:20; EDUCATION 77)

Learning

- 📖 Learning is a process designed by God for acquiring knowledge
- 📖 Man created in the image of God has the capacity for never ending learning (GENESIS 1:26,27; EDUCATION 15)
- 📖 Learning is a progressive movement toward God's perspective (PROVERBS 4:18; 1 CORINTHIANS 13:12)
- 📖 It is impossible to learn something if it is not true, though it may be believed (ROMANS 1:21-26; EPHESIANS 4:17,18; 2 THESSALONIANS 2:10-12)
- 📖 The highest quality learning is based on the harmonious development of body, mind and spirit (LUKE 2:52; EDUCATION 13)
- 📖 Learning is a means to an end—ultimately salvation (ISAIAH 26:9; ROMANS 15:4; EDUCATION 30)
- 📖 The Holy Spirit is an essential agent in the learning process (JOHN 16:13)
- 📖 Relationship with God influences the pace of learning (PROVERBS 9:9)
- 📖 Learning a part from God is truth mixed with error with no way of distinguishing between the two. Ultimately, it is a lie (GENESIS 2: 16, 17; 3:1-7; 2 TIMOTHY 3:7)
- 📖 Sin is a barrier to learning (ROMANS 1:21-26; EDUCATION 15,17)

2. The Bible as the basis of true education

Reveals God, the source of all knowledge, understanding and wisdom

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. — PROVERBS

9:10.

For the Lord giveth wisdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

— PROVERBS 2:6.

In whom (God) are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

— COLOSSIANS 2:3.

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life:

— JOHN

14:6.

Since God is the source of all truth, it is to Him we must go to understand what education entails. The Bible as the inspired word of God must occupy a central place in Adventist education. It is not to be sprinkled into the education process as just one flavour amongst many. Rather, it is to provide the framework and substance for every area of learning without competition from human authorities.

In a knowledge of God all true knowledge and real development have their source... *Whatever line of investigation we pursue, with a sincere purpose to arrive at truth, we are brought in touch with the unseen, mighty Intelligence that is working in and through all....* —

EDUCATION 14.

SOURCE OF ALL TRUE PRINCIPLES

The Bible provides both the foundation and the context for rightly understanding and experiencing every area of education. While it is not an exhaustive exposition of the content in every area of study, it does contain principles that give proper direction and true purpose to all study.

The Bible does this in several ways: It stimulates the proper functioning of the mind to engage in true learning; sifts and separates truth and error; presents God's perspective; sets all study in its proper and fullest context; brings a redemptive purpose to all study; provides a reason for learning; directs each area of education to play its part in the finishing of God's work.

The writings of Ellen White place great emphasis on the role of the Bible in education. In the book 'Education', the powerful impact of the Bible in education is well expressed:

Source of all-round development

.... God has provided in His word the means for mental and spiritual development.... The Bible contains all the principles that men need to understand in order to be fitted either for this life or for the life to come.
– p123.

Highest mental development

In searching out the various parts and studying their relationship, the highest faculties of the human mind are called into intense activity. No one can engage in such study without developing mental power....As a means of intellectual training, the Bible is more effective than any other book, or all other books combined.... No other study can impart such mental power as does the effort to grasp the stupendous truths of revelation. The mind thus brought in contact with the thoughts of the Infinite cannot but expand and strengthen. –
p124.

Spiritual development

And even greater is the power of the Bible in the development of the spiritual nature.... He who with sincere and teachable spirit studies God's word, seeking to comprehend its truths, will be brought in touch with its Author; and, except by his own choice, there is no limit to the possibilities of his development. – pp124-125.

Broad subjects

In its wide range of style and subjects the Bible has something to interest every mind and appeal to every heart. In its pages are found history the most ancient; biography the truest to life; principles of government for the control of the state, for the regulation of the household—principles that human wisdom has never equalled. It contains philosophy the most profound, poetry the sweetest and the most sublime, the most impassioned and the most pathetic.

– p125.

Redemption theme, the highest study

The central theme of the Bible, the theme about which every other in the whole book clusters, is the redemption plan, the restoration in human soul of the image of God....He who grasps this thought has before him an infinite field for study. He has the key that will unlock to him the whole treasure house of God's word.

The science of redemption is the science of all sciences;.... the science that will be the study of God's redeemed throughout endless ages. This is the highest study in which it is possible for man to engage. As no other study can, it will quicken the mind and uplift the soul.

– pp125-126.

Creative power in the life

The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in the word of God. This word imparts power; it begets life. Every command is a promise; accepted by the will, received into the soul, it brings with it the life of the Infinite One. It transforms the nature and re-creates the soul in the image of God.

The life thus imparted is in like manner sustained. "By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4) shall man live.

p126.

She goes on to look at the way the Bible should be taught and studied (pp.185-192) and the place of the Bible in specific areas of education. These include, science, business, biographies, poetry and song, History and prophecy (pp135-184).

3. Creation, Fall and Redemption: highest context of education

There are four principles which, rightly understood, provide the highest context for all learning:

*In order to understand what is comprehended in the work of education, we need to consider both the **nature of man** and the **purpose of God in creating him**. We need to consider also the **change in man's condition** through the coming in of a knowledge of evil, and **God's plan for still fulfilling His glorious purpose** in the education of the human race.*
— EDUCATION
14, 15.

All areas of learning can be developed in this broad creation, fall, redemption context. I.e. to understand anything, as fully as possible, requires an insight into how it relates to creation, fall and redemption and vice-versa. In this way, everything studied can be a step toward fulfilling the redemption purpose, the highest goal of education.

In the highest sense, the work of education and the work of redemption are one.
— IBID. 30.

Righteousness by faith and education

The creation, fall, redemption context of education is for the purpose of restoring in man, the image of God, thus bringing about the full fruition of the Christian experience. Righteousness by faith is the process by which this high purpose is realised.

To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized,—this was to be the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life.
— EDUCATION 15-16.

This ultimate purpose of education and redemption is brought out in REVELATION 14:6-12. The messages of three angels incorporate the everlasting gospel to be given to the world. This is present truth and will bring an experience of righteousness by faith.

Before we can carry the message of present truth in all its fullness to other countries, we must first break every yoke. We must come into the line of true education, walking in the wisdom of God, and not in the wisdom of the world. God calls for messengers who will be true reformers. We must educate, educate to prepare a people who will understand the message, and then give the message to the world.

— SPECIAL TESTIMONIES SERIES B #11 p.30.

The third angel's message, the great testing truth for this time, is to be taught in all our institutions. God designs that through them this special warning shall be given, and bright beams of light shall shine to the world....

The third angel's message is truth, and light, and power, and to present it so that right impressions will be made upon hearts should be the work of our schools as well as our churches, of the teacher as well as of the minister.

— 6 TESTIMONIES 128,131.

Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, "It is the third angel's message in verity."

— 1 SELECTED MESSAGES

372.

Righteousness by faith and the third angel's message is one and the same. If the message of righteousness by faith is to be given to the world through Adventist educational institutions, then it must first impact on all aspects of their programmes. Their education must be redemptive in every sense and as distinct from the world as the life of the spirit is from the life of the flesh—the divine nature from the carnal nature.

4. The central role of parents in their children's education

God gave to parents the first role and responsibility to train and educate their children (DEUTERONOMY 4:5-9; 6:4-9, PROVERBS 22:6).

Original plan

*The system of education instituted at the beginning of the world was to be a **model for man throughout all aftertime**. As an illustration of its principles a **model school was established in Eden**, the home of our first parents....*

*Thus in course of time **the whole earth might be occupied with homes and schools where the words and the works of God should be studied**,The system of education established in Eden centered in the family.... Theirs, in the truest sense, was a family school.*

— EDUCATION 20-

22,33.

Parents, the first teachers

***Parents should be the only teachers of their children until they have reached eight or ten years of age**. As fast as their minds can comprehend it, the parents*

should open before them God's great book of nature.... The **only schoolroom for children from eight to ten years of age should be in the open air**, amid the opening flowers and nature's beautiful scenery. And their **only textbook should be the treasures of nature**. These lessons, imprinted upon the minds of young children amid the pleasant, attractive scenes of nature, will not be soon forgotten.

— FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION 21.

Special role of the mother

The child's first teacher is the mother. During the period of greatest susceptibility and most rapid development his education is to a great degree in her hands. **To her first is given opportunity to mold the character for good or for evil.** She should understand the value of her opportunity, and, above every other teacher, should be qualified to use it to the best account. Yet there is no other to whose training so little thought is given. The one whose influence in education is most potent and far reaching is the one for whose assistance there is the least systematic effort.

— EDUCATION 275.

Parents consecrated to God first

It is impossible for parents to give their children proper training unless they first give themselves to God, learning of the Great Teacher lessons of obedience to His will.

— COUNSELS TO PARENTS, TEACHERS & STUDENTS 108.

Parents as character builders

It should be the object of every parent to secure to his child a well-balanced, symmetrical character. This is a work of no small magnitude and importance—a work requiring earnest thought and prayer no less than patient, persevering effort. A right foundation must be laid, a framework, strong and firm, erected, and then day by day the work of building, polishing, perfecting, must go forward. —
IBID. 107.

Simple instruction

Parents, let the instruction you give your children be simple, and be sure that it is clearly understood. The lessons that you learn from the word you are to present to their young minds so plainly that they cannot fail to understand. By simple lessons drawn from the word of God and their own experience, you may teach them how to conform their lives to the highest standard. Even in childhood and youth they may

*learn to live thoughtful, earnest lives that will yield a rich harvest of good. —
IBID.109.*

Physical training

Physical training, the development of the body, is far more easily given than spiritual training. The nursery, the playground, the workshop, the sowing of the seed, and the gathering of the harvest—all these give physical training. Under ordinarily favourable circumstances a child naturally gains healthful vigor and a proper development of bodily organs. Yet even in physical lines the child should be carefully trained.

— *IBID.108*

Parents should seek to awaken in their children an interest in the study of physiology. From the first dawn of reason the human mind should become intelligent in regard to the physical structure....It is therefore of the highest importance that amongst the studies selected for children, physiology occupy an important place. All children should study it. And then parents should see to it that practical hygiene is added.

*Children are to be trained to understand that every organ of the body and every faculty of the mind is the gift of a good and wise God, and that each is to be used to His glory. Right habits in eating and drinking and dressing must be insisted upon. Wrong habits render the youth less susceptible to Bible instruction. —
IBID.125-126.*

Training in usefulness

One of the surest safeguards of the young is useful occupation. Children who are trained to industrious habits, so that all their hours are usefully and pleasantly employed, have no inclination to repine at their lot and no time for idle daydreaming. They are in little danger of forming vicious habits or associations.

In the home school the children should be taught how to perform the practical duties of everyday life. While they are still young, the mother should give them some simple task to do each day. It will take longer for her to teach them how than it would to do it herself; but let her remember that she is to lay for their character building the foundation of helpfulness.

— *I BID.122.*

Training for missionary work

*Upon parents rests the responsibility of developing in their children those capabilities which will enable them to do good service for God. God sees all the possibilities in that mite of humanity. **He sees that with proper training the child***

*will become a power for good in the world. He watches with anxious interest to see whether the parents will carry out His plan, or whether by mistaken kindness they will thwart His purpose, indulging the child to his present and eternal ruin. To transform this helpless and apparently insignificant being into a blessing to the world and an honour to God is a great and grand work. Parents, help your children to fulfill God's purpose for them. **In the home they are to be trained to do missionary work that will prepare them for wider spheres of usefulness.** Train them to be an honour for the One who died to gain for them eternal life in the kingdom of glory. Teach them that God has a part for them to act in His great work. The Lord will bless them as they work for Him. They can be His helping hand.*

— *IBID.* 130.

5. Balanced physical, mental and spiritual development

In the original plan of education at creation, every aspect of our being was catered for—physical, mental, spiritual and social. This necessitated learning opportunities that would engage each part of our make-up.

Physical (Genesis 2:15): Dressing and keeping the garden provided opportunity for physical development. It also would have stimulated mental and spiritual development.

Mental (Genesis 1:26,28): In order to control and look after the earth, properly, it would have been necessary to study and understand its make-up and functioning.

Spiritual (Genesis 2:16,17): Following God's commands afforded opportunity for experiencing continual love and obedience to God, vital for ongoing spiritual development.

Social (Genesis 2:18,21-25): Social interaction was provided for in marriage and family relationships. This was a method of learning in and of itself, crucial to man's balanced development.

True education promotes harmonious development in each of these areas. Development in one area of our being promotes development in all other areas. Today there is a need to return to this plan.

*Our ideas of education take too narrow and too low a range. There is need of a broader scope, a higher aim. True education means more than the pursuit of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is **the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the***

Health and education

A proper emphasis on health is essential for the highest quality of education. God has given health principles, which will promote and preserve health of body, mind and spirit.

Since the mind and the soul find expression through the body, both mental and spiritual vigor are in great degree dependent upon physical strength and activity; whatever promotes physical health, promotes the development of a strong mind and a well-balanced character. Without health no one can as distinctly understand or as completely fulfill his obligations to himself, to his fellow beings, or to his Creator. Therefore the health should be as faithfully guarded as the character. A knowledge of physiology and hygiene should be the basis of all educational effort.

— EDUCATION 195.

The main principles that God has given for both physical development and the preservation of health are sometimes called the eight laws of health. They are outlined in the following statement:

Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power—these are the true remedies. Every person should have a knowledge of nature's remedial agencies and how to apply them.

— THE MINISTRY OF HEALING 127.

BALANCE BETWEEN PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WORK

If the youth can have but a one-sided education, which is of greater consequence, a knowledge of the sciences, with all the disadvantages to health and life, or a knowledge of labor for practical life? We unhesitatingly answer, The latter. If one must be neglected, let it be the study of books.

— FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION 41.

Why is this? One reason is that practical activities, like agriculture, can provide for physical, mental and spiritual development all at the same time, whereas academic learning activities tends to focus on just mental development.

6. The place of practical work in education

*At the creation, labor was appointed as a blessing. It meant **development, power, happiness.** The changed condition of the earth through the curse of sin has brought a change in the conditions of labor; yet though now attended with anxiety, weariness, and pain, it is still a source of happiness and development. And it is a safeguard against temptation. Its discipline places a **check on self-indulgence, and promotes industry, purity, and firmness.** Thus it becomes a part of God's great plan for our recovery from the Fall.*

— EDUCATION 214.

Education does not consist in using the brain alone. Physical employment is a part of the training essential for every youth. An important phase of education is lacking if the pupil is not taught how to engage in useful labour.

— COUNSELS TO PARENTS, TEACHERS & STUDENTS 308.

Agriculture, the A, B and C of education

Agriculture was the work originally given to man (GENESIS 2:15). Working with the land uniquely combines physical, mental and spiritual development.

*To Adam and Eve was committed the care of the garden, "to dress it and to keep it." Genesis 2:15. Though rich in all that the Owner of the universe could supply, they were not to be idle. Useful occupation was appointed them as a blessing, to **strengthen the body, to expand the mind, and to develop the character.***

— EDUCATION 21.

Today agriculture is just as important in carrying out true education.

Study in agricultural lines should be the A, B and C of education given in our schools. This is the very first work that should be entered upon. — 6
TESTIMONIES 179.

For this reason the cultivation of the soil is good work for children and youth; it brings them into direct contact with nature and nature's God.

— COUNSELS TO PARENTS, TEACHERS & STUDENTS 186.

Work in the garden and field will be an agreeable change from the wearisome routine of abstract lessons, to which their young minds should never be confined.

— COUNTRY LIVING 18.

Other manual work

As well as agriculture, there are other types of manual work and industrial training that should be part of a Seventh-day Adventist education programme. Again, the benefits of this work are physical, mental and spiritual.

For every child the first industrial school should be the home. And, so far as possible, facilities for manual training should be connected with every school. To a great degree such training would supply the place of the gymnasium, with the additional benefit of affording valuable discipline.

*Manual training is deserving of far more attention than it has received. Schools should be established that, in addition to the highest mental and moral culture, shall provide the best possible facilities for physical development and industrial training. Instruction should be given in agriculture, manufactures—covering as many as possible of the most useful trades,—also in household economy, healthful cookery, sewing, hygienic dressmaking, the treatment of the sick, and kindred lines. Gardens, workshops, and treatment rooms should be provided, and the work in every line should be under the direction of skilled instructors.
— EDUCATION 217,218.*

A high standard

*The work should have a definite aim and should be thorough. While every person needs some knowledge of different handicrafts, it is indispensable that he become proficient in at least one. **Every youth, on leaving school, should have acquired a knowledge of some trade or occupation by which, if need be, he may earn a livelihood.*** —
EDUCATION 218.

Today, there are many other practical trades, important for the modern economy, that could be included in a manual work programme: E.g. building, carpentry, electrical work, engineering, motor mechanics, painting and decorating plumbing, welding etc.

MANUAL WORK RATHER THAN COMPETITIVE SPORTS

Manual work is God's plan for physical development rather than competitive sports, which are so prominent in the world's education. Competitive sports can be more dangerous physically and detrimental to mental and spiritual well-being.

The greatest benefit is not gained from exercise that is taken as play merely. There is some benefit in being in the fresh air, and also from the exercise of the muscles; but let the same amount of energy be given to the performance of useful work, and the benefit will be greater. A feeling of satisfaction will be realised, for

such exercise carries with it a sense of helpfulness and the approval of conscience for a duty well done.

....Thus the students learned how to clear the land, to cultivate the soil, and to build houses; and these lines of work were largely carried on in time that would otherwise have been spent in playing games and seeking for amusements.

– COUNSELS TO PARENTS, TEACHERS & STUDENTS 308,310.

7. The importance of nature in education

The original setting for education was a garden in nature:

And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

– GENESIS

2:8.

Nature's wonders and mysteries were to be a continual revelation of God's glory—a constant lesson book in man's education. As well as being a source of learning, it was to serve as an environment conducive to the proper balanced functioning of the body, mind and spirit.

A leaning environment

The Garden of Eden was the schoolroom, nature was the lesson book, Here, amidst the beautiful scenes of nature untouched by sin, our first parents were to receive their education....The book of nature, which spread its living lessons before them, afforded an exhaustless source of instruction and delight....

The laws and operations of nature, and the great principles of truth that govern the spiritual universe, were opened to their minds by the infinite Author of all....

Thus in course of time the whole earth might be occupied with homes and schools where the words and the works of God should be studied, and where the students should thus be fitted more and more fully to reflect, throughout endless ages, the light of the knowledge of His glory.

– EDUCATION 20-

22.

Physical benefits

Many children have been ruined for life by urging the intellect, and neglecting to strengthen the physical powers.... Small children should be left as free as lambs to run out-of-doors, to be free and happy, and should be allowed the most

favorable opportunities to lay the foundation for sound constitutions... In order for children and youth to have health, cheerfulness, vivacity, and well-developed muscles and brains, they should be much in the open air, and have well-regulated employment and amusement. — FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION 21,22.

Mental benefits

The constant contact with the mystery of life and the loveliness of nature, as well as the tenderness called forth in ministering to these beautiful objects of God's creation, tends to quicken the mind and refine and elevate the character; and the lessons taught prepare the worker to deal more successfully with other minds.

— EDUCATION 112.

AESTHETIC APPRECIATION

God is a lover of the beautiful; and in the world which He has fitted up for us He has not only given us everything necessary for our comfort, but He has filled the heavens and the earth with beauty. We see His love and care in the rich fields of autumn, and His smile in the glad sunshine. His hand has made the castle-like rocks and the towering mountains. The lofty trees grow at His command; He has spread earth's green velvet carpet and dotted it with shrubs and flowers.

— COUNSELS TO PARENTS, TEACHERS & STUDENTS 185.

Spiritual benefits

REVEALS GOD

Upon all created things is seen the impress of the deity. Nature testifies of God. The susceptible mind, brought in contact with the miracle and mystery of the universe, cannot but recognize the working of infinite power. — EDUCATION 99.

AID TO CHARACTER BUILDING

Educate the children and youth to consider the works of the great Master Artist, and to imitate the attractive graces of nature in their character building. As the love of God wins their hearts, let them bring into their lives the beauty of holiness. So shall they use their capabilities to bless others and to honour God.

— COUNSELS TO PARENTS, TEACHERS & STUDENTS 186.

Location of education

Clearly, nature is one of heaven's appointed sources of learning. Education is incomplete when nature is not given a central role. In the locating of Seventh-day Adventist education

programmes, whether in the home or in the school, proximity to nature is a vital consideration.

So far as possible, let the child from his earliest years be placed where this wonderful lesson-book shall be open before him. Let him behold the glorious scenes painted by the great Master Artist upon the shifting canvass of the heavens, let him become acquainted with the wonders of earth and sea, let him watch the unfolding mysteries of the changing seasons, and, in all His works, learn of the Creator.

In no other way can the foundation of a true education be so firmly laid.

— EDUCATION 100-101.

Never can the proper education be given to the youth in this country, or any other country, unless they are separated a wide distance from the cities....

Schools should be established where there is as much as possible to be found in nature to delight the senses and give variety to the scenery.... We should choose a location for our schools apart from the cities, where the eye will not rest continually upon the dwellings of men, but upon the works of God; where there shall be places of interest for them to visit, other than what the city affords. Let our students be placed where nature can speak to the senses, and in her voice they may hear the voice of God. Let them be where they can look upon His wondrous works, and through nature behold her creator.

— FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION 312,320.

8. Preparation for service

Man was originally given the role of steward with the responsibility for looking after the whole creation (Genesis 1:26,28). This provided opportunity for development through service to others. Today, service is still important for his development. With the special mission entrusted to Adventist of taking the everlasting gospel to the world, it is vital that we train our children and youth to play their part, through lives of unselfish service. They need to be willing participants in this.

*It (true education) **prepares the student for the joy of service** in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come.*

IBID.13.

True education will help to reveal and develop the particular gifts and talents that God has given to each child and rightly direct these gifts and talents for service to others. Without this emphasis on service, our children and youth will simply not attain to their full potential.

Like the first is the second commandment—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Matthew 22:39. The law of love calls for the devotion of body, mind, and

*soul to the service of God and our fellow men. And this service, while making us a blessing to others, brings the greatest blessing to ourselves. Unselfishness underlies all true development. **Through unselfish service we receive the highest culture of every faculty. More and more fully do we become partakers of the divine nature.** We are fitted for heaven, for we receive heaven into our hearts. — IBID.16.*

☞ see chapter 11 on careers

9. Christian goals and methods of education

Aims and objectives

1. To give the student a thorough knowledge and understanding of God and His word applied to all areas of life (DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9; EDUCATION 16,17).
2. To lead the student to make a complete surrender of his or her life to Christ (PROVERBS 22:6; 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17).

*To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized—this was to be the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life.... —
IBID.15,16.*

3. To train the student to dedicate his life in service to God and man according to his specific calling (the way he should go) in life (PROVERBS 22:6).

It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come....

*Through unselfish service we receive the highest culture of every faculty. More and more fully do we become partakers of the divine nature. We are fitted for heaven, for we receive heaven into our hearts. —
IBID.13,16.*

4. To prepare a generation of youth to finish the Gospel commission (MATTHEW 28:19,20, REVELATION 14:6-12).
With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to

the whole world! How soon might the end come--the end of suffering and sorrow and sin! How soon, in place of a possession here, with its blight of sin and pain, our children might receive their inheritance where "the righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever;".... —

IBID.271.








Curriculum content

In selecting the content and teaching and learning methods for Adventist education, we need to start by considering the aims and objectives that we are seeking to achieve. Once these are clear, they will determine what needs to be taught and how. We must avoid the danger of:

Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

— 2 TIMOTHY 3:7.

We need to consider those things which:

-  enable us to better understand and reveal the character and glory of God
-  assist in our all-round development, physical, mental, spiritual, social
-  help to secure our salvation
-  have practical application and use in life
-  enable us to accomplish the essential duties of life
-  help to fulfil God's specific plan for our individual lives
-  assist the church in fulfilling its mission.

All unnecessary matters should be weeded from the courses of study, and only such studies placed before the student as will be of real value.

— COUNSELS TO PARENTS, TEACHERS & STUDENTS 444.

A range of practical, vocational and academic areas of learning and work emerge as essential content for Adventist education. Many of these are referred to directly or indirectly in the Spirit of Prophecy.

Areas of learning

Accounts, Agriculture, Artistic Expression, Arithmetic, Bible Study, Business, Computer, Cooking, Domestic Science (home management), Geography, History, Health, Language (mother tongue and foreign), Manual Trades, (Building, Dress-making etc.), Music, Natural Sciences, Nature, Physiology, Voice Culture.

Specific vocational training

Colportering, Medical, Health, Ministerial, Missionary, Printing & Publishing, Teaching

These areas of study will not, of course, be taken by everyone or all at the same time. They simply incorporate the essential elements for accomplishing the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church. They are a menu from which we can safely select that which is relevant to our individual contributions in fulfilling this mission.

Studies should generally be few and well-chosen, and those who attend our colleges are to have a different training from that of the common schools of the day.

— FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION 115.

The examples above are not exhaustive. There may be other more specialised areas of learning and training to be added, as and when necessary.

Teaching and learning methods

Adventist education may have good well-chosen content providing broad scope for development. However, the strength of the curriculum is also dependent on the best choice and use of teaching and learning methods. These methods of teaching and learning must be dynamic agencies giving life and vitality to the curriculum content. Ultimately, they must translate the content into real life. The wrong choice of teaching and learning methods can counteract or undermine the good things being taught.

Basic principles for teaching and learning

- ✠ *learning, a natural process. You don't have to be formally taught to learn*
- ✠ *teaching and learning should appeal to all faculties of the mind (e.g. conscience, reason, intellect, imagination, curiosity, memory etc. (EDUCATION 15; FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION 15)*
- ✠ *interest is a powerful starting point in the learning process for meeting the needs of learners (EDUCATION 41)*
- ✠ *developing thinking powers (ISAIAH 1:18; EDUCATION 17-18)*
- ✠ *there should be some practical application of all learning in order for knowledge to be fully assimilated (EDUCATION 230)*
- ✠ *learners have different styles which need to be recognised and catered for*

- ✠ *mixing age groups and allowing learners to develop at their own pace (COUNSELS TO PARENTS, TEACHERS & STUDENTS 177)*
- ✠ *engaging all the five senses in the learning process.*

TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS USED IN THE BIBLE

1. *delegated instruction (GENESIS 6:8-22; 7:1-5)*
2. *dialogue / question and answer (GENESIS 3:8-13)*
3. *discipline (GENESIS 3:16-24; 11:1-9)*
4. *directed questions (MATTHEW 16:13-17)*
5. *experiential / discovery learning (GENESIS 2:15)*
6. *face to face verbal instruction (GENESIS 1:26,28; 2:15-17)*
7. *family relationships (DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9).*
8. *lectures (MATTHEW 5:1-7:29)*
9. *line upon line and precept upon precept (ISAIAH 28:9,10; LUKE 25:25-27)*
10. *metaphor (LUKE 7:31-35)*
11. *object lessons (GENESIS 13:15; 15:5)*
12. *observation (DEUTERONOMY 4:1-8; 28:9-13)*
13. *parables (MARK 4:10:12)*
14. *personal association (MATTHEW 4:18-22)*
15. *personal interview (JOHN 4:5-26)*
16. *promises as incentives and goals (GENESIS 13:1-3)*
17. *real life demonstrations (HOSEA 1)*
18. *rebuke (MATTHEW 17:14-21)*
19. *repetition and enlargement (DANIEL 2,7,8)*
20. *stories (throughout the Bible)*
21. *symbolism (EXODUS 25, DANIEL, REVELATION)*
22. *tests (GENESIS 22)*
23. *thought provoking statements capturing attention (JOHN 8:58)*
24. *warning with cause and consequence appealing to reason (GENESIS 6:5-7)*
25. *written sources of information (EXODUS 17:14).*

TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS PRESENTED IN THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN WHITE (*Education 230-239; 275-290*)

- 🏠 *power of application (p232)*
- 🏠 *developing of weaker & stronger faculties (pp232,233)*
- 🏠 *simplicity, effectiveness, illustration (p233)*
- 🏠 *enthusiasm (p233)*
- 🏠 *achievable goals (pp233,234)*
- 🏠 *pace of progress based on ability (p234)*
- 🏠 *language: pure, kind & true (pp234,235)*
- 🏠 *character-building through all studies (pp238,239)*
- 🏠 *making abstract concepts practical (pp238,239)*
- 🏠 *role-modelling principle being taught (p277,281)*
- 🏠 *using students to teach and help each other (p286)*
- 🏠 *giving all a chance to excel (p286)*
- 🏠 *working with the will (pp288,289)*
- 🏠 *better to request than command (p290).*

The teacher and the learner relationship

Gift of teaching

As well as parents being the teachers of their own children, God has also placed a gift of teaching in the church for a wider purpose:

*And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly **teachers**, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversity of tongues.*
— 1 CORINTHIANS
12:28.

*And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and **teachers**; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*
—
EPHESIANS 4:11-13.

Looking at the gift of teaching in this broad context, it would certainly include those called to support parents in giving children and young people an education for life, as well as teachers of the scriptures.

Qualified teachers

The gift and call to teaching is the first qualification for Adventist teachers, and then an understanding of God's principles of education.

The necessity of preparatory training for the teacher is universally admitted; but few recognize the character of the preparation most essential...

*He only who created the mind and ordained its laws can perfectly understand its needs or direct its development. The principles of education that He has given are the only safe guide. **A qualification essential for every teacher is a knowledge of these principles and such an acceptance of them as will make them a controlling power in his own life.***

— EDUCATION

276,277.

Beyond eight to ten years (FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION 21), other teachers can play a part, as much as necessary. These should be teachers who God recognises. Parents should work in combination with such teachers rather than pass on their responsibility to them, wholly.

The relationship between the teacher and the learner is an important part of the learning process. The relationship is a prerequisite to ongoing effective learning. In many respects, the teacher and learner relationship is a teaching and learning method in its own right. This is the case in our relationship with God.

Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

—

PSALMS 32:7,8.

Jesus and the disciples

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

— 1JOHN 1:1-3.

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP

*The most complete illustration of Christ's methods as a teacher is found in His training of the twelve first disciples....To them, above all others, He gave the advantage of His own companionship. **Through personal association He impressed Himself upon these chosen colaborers.** "The Life was manifested," says John the beloved, "and we have seen it, and bear witness." 1 John 1:12.*

Only by such communion—the communion of mind with mind and heart with heart, of the human with the divine—can be communicated that vitalizing energy which it is the work of true education to impart. It is only life that begets life.

In the training of His disciples the Saviour followed the system of education established at the beginning. The Twelve first chosen, with a few others who through ministry to their needs were from time to time connected with them, formed the family of Jesus. They were with Him in the house, at the table, in the closet, in the field. They accompanied Him on His journeys, shared His trials and hardships, and, as much as in them was, entered into His work. — EDUCATION 84-85.

Jesus employed a five stage teaching and learning process with the Twelve, of which relationship was the foundation. Teaching and learning by:

*Relationship —> Instruction —> Observation —> Experimentation & Evaluation
—>Ongoing Experience*

In the writings of Ellen White, the importance of the teacher and learner relationship as an essential prerequisite for education is highlighted in several ways:

- ✠ *the teacher connected with God (FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION 260)*
- ✠ *teacher and learner bound by the love of Christ (IBID.262)*
- ✠ *social relationship necessary (EDUCATION 280)*
- ✠ *teacher showing no partiality (IBID.)*
- ✠ *constant care (IBID.281)*
- ✠ *co-operation (IBID.285)*
- ✠ *teacher and parent relationship (IBID.284-285)*
- ✠ *respect and discipline (IBID.289,290).*

Assessment

With the great goals to be achieved through Adventist education, assessment has an important role to play. The principle of assessment is biblical, e.g. at creation we see God assessing His own work (GENESIS 10, 12, 18, 25, 31). He assesses people constantly throughout the Bible, e.g. Abraham (GENESIS 22). He also invites people to assess Him, e.g. in returning tithes and offerings (MALACHI 3:7-12).

*Our ideas of education take too narrow and too low a range. There is need of a broader scope, a higher aim. True education means more than the pursual of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the **harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world, and the higher joy of wider service in the world to come.*** —

EDUCATION 13.

Assessment in Adventist education is not merely to find out what a learner knows at the end of a certain course of study. It is not just about academic performance and the mental faculties. The broad purpose of harmonious physical, mental, spiritual development and service demand a much more comprehensive approach to assessment. If harmonious development in all these areas is the goal of Adventist education, they must each be assessed.

Ultimately assessment is not to highlight what the student knows, has done or can do. Rather, it reveals who the student is. The greatest purpose for the student is redemption—being like Jesus in character, and thus bringing glory to God, through his particular talents and abilities. Assessment must reveal how, when and whether this is happening.

Church provision of education

Education is central to the work of the Adventist church. In fact, the church's chief mission is education—educating its members in the gospel and educating the world through its members (MATTHEW 28:19,20). The church has a vital role to play in the provision of education at all levels.

Sabbath school

I feel a deep interest in our Sabbath schools throughout the land, because I

believe them to be instrumentalities of God for the education of our youth in the truths of the Bible.

COUNSELS TO SABBATH SCHOOL WORKERS 10.

Very much can be done for the education and moral and religious training our youth by well-organized, properly conducted Sabbath schools. Time and attention should be given to this branch of the work; for its importance in its influence upon our youth cannot be estimated.

–IBID.

Education of children and youth

While parents are clearly the first teachers of their children, God has also placed a specific gift of teaching in the church.

*And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly **teachers**, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversity of tongues.* — 1 CORINTHIANS 12:28.

*And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and **teachers**; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.* — EPHESIANS 4:11-13.

The perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry and the edifying of the body of Christ includes the all-round education of children and youth as well as the education of adults. Church schools with teachers who have the gift of teaching are important settings for Adventist education.

Schools for all

...all our youth should be permitted to have the blessings and privileges of an education at our schools, that they may be inspired to become labours together with God.

– COUNSELS TO PARENTS, TEACHERS & STUDENTS 44.

As far as possible, all our children should have the privilege of a Christian education.

– IBID.158.

Parent-led initiative

They (parents) should encourage the church of which they are members to establish a church school where the children within their borders could receive a Christian education.

– IBID.173.

Wherever there are a few Sabbathkeepers, the parents should unite in providing a place where their children and youth can be instructed. They should employ a Christian teacher, who, as a consecrated missionary, shall educate the children in such a way as to lead them to

become missionaries.

IBID.174.

Small schools

Smaller schools, conducted after the plan of the schools of the prophets, would be a far greater blessing. — 6 TESTIMONIES 137.

...schools should be established if there are no more than six children to attend. — IBID.199.

Levels of education

Parental education

Never will education accomplish all that it might and should accomplish until the importance of the parents' work is fully recognised, and they receive a training for its sacred responsibilities. — EDUCATION 276.

Home schools

In His wisdom the Lord has decreed that the family shall be the greatest of all educational agencies. It is in the home that the education of the child is to begin. Here is his first school. here with his parents as instructors he is to learn the lessons that are to guide him throughout life. — COUNSELS TO PARENTS, TEACHERS & STUDENTS 107.

It is in home school that our boys and girls are to be prepared to attend the church school. — IBID. 150.

Home church schools (primary/elementary)

*As we go forward in establishing church schools we shall find a work to be done for the children in places where it has been thought a school could not be maintained. As far as possible, all our children should have the privilege of a Christian education. **To provide this we must sometimes establish home church schools.** It would be well if several families in a neighborhood would unite to employ a humble, God-fearing teacher to give to the parents that help that is needed in educating their children.* — IBID.158.

Church schools (primary/elementary)

The Lord would use the church school as an aid to the parents in educating and preparing their children for this time before us. Then let the church take hold of the school work in earnest and make it what the Lord desires it to be. —
IBID.167.

In all our churches there should be schools, and teachers in these schools who are missionaries. —
IBID.168.

Flexibility in mixing age groups

The system of grading is sometimes a hindrance to the pupil's real progress. Some pupils are slow at first, and the teacher of these youth needs to exercise great patience. But these pupils may after a short time learn so rapidly as to astonish him. Others may appear to be very brilliant, but time may show that they have blossomed too suddenly. The system of confining children rigidly to grades is not wise.

— IBID.177.

Intermediate schools (secondary/high)

Intermediate schools are highly essential. In these schools thorough work is to be done; for many students will go forth from them directly into the great harvest field. They will go forth to use what they have learned, as canvassers and as helpers in various lines of evangelistic work. Many workers, after laboring for a time in the field, will feel the need of further study, and with the experienced gained in the field will be prepared to value school privileges and to make rapid advancement. Some will desire an education in the higher branches of study. For these our colleges have been established.
— IBID.203.

College/Higher education

What is higher education? No education can be called higher education unless it bears the similitude of heaven, unless it leads young men and young women to be Christlike,... — FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
467.

Higher education is that which places the Bible as the very foundation of all education. — SPECIAL TESTIMONIES ON EDUCATION
164.

Our college is designed of God to meet the advancing wants for this time of peril and demoralization. The study of books only cannot give students the discipline they need. A broader foundation must be laid.... Our school (college) was

established, not merely to teach the sciences, but for the purpose of giving instruction in the great principles of God's word and in the practical duties of everyday life. This is the education so much needed at the present time.

— COUNSELS TO PARENTS, TEACHERS & STUDENTS 87,88.

True education is missionary training. Every son and daughter of God is called to be a missionary; we are called to the service of God and our fellow men; and to fit us for this service should be the object of our education. — MINISTRY OF HEALING 395.

Vocational education

Young men and women must be fitted to engage in medical missionary work as physicians and nurses. — EVANGELISM 518.

We need a school where those who are just entering the ministry may be taught at least the common branches of education, and where they may also learn more perfectly the truths of God's word for this time.

— FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION 45,46.

It is essential that teachers be trained to act well their part in the important work of educating the children of Sabbath-keepers, not only in the sciences, but in the Scriptures.

— COUNSELS TO PARENTS TEACHERS & STUDENTS 168.

Lifelong learning

Life is too generally regarded as made up of distinct periods, the period of learning and the period of doing,—of preparation and achievement. — EDUCATION 265.

True education is more than the pursual of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being and the whole period of existence possible to man.

— IBID.13.

2

Does the Bible support home schooling?

The Eden school

From the beginning of the world, God established the home as the centre of education. In fact, there is no reference to separate schools and teachers outside the home in early history. The Garden of Eden was man's first home—a place of work, learning and family life. Hence home and education were intimately interwoven and inseparable. Life with its developments, necessities, duties and experiences were to be the basis of an education that would continue throughout eternal ages (see GENESIS 2:8-25).

*The system of education instituted at the beginning of the world was to be a **model for man throughout all aftertime**. As an illustration of its principles a **model school was established in Eden**, the home of our first parents. The Garden of Eden was the schoolroom, nature was the lesson book, the Creator Himself was the instructor, and the parents of the human family were the students.... Here, amidst the beautiful scenes of nature untouched by sin, our first parents were to receive their education....*

*The Garden of Eden was a representation of what God desired the whole earth to become, and it was His purpose that, as the human family increased in numbers, they should establish other homes and schools like the one He had given. Thus in course of time **the whole earth might be occupied with homes and schools where the words and the works of God should be studied**, and where the students should thus be fitted more and more fully to reflect, throughout endless ages, the light of the knowledge of His glory.... The system of education established in Eden centered in the family.... Theirs, in the truest sense, was a family school.*

—EDUCATION 20-22,33.

Home education in Israel

After the entrance of sin, home-based education was still the pattern. All of the early patriarchs would have been educated at home. In Ancient Israel, the role and responsibility of parents, especially the fathers, in the all-round education of their children was clearly set out by God. Education was to be based on the word of God. It was to be a continual and ongoing process throughout childhood, youth and adult life, in all contexts of life (see DEUTERONOMY 4:5-9; 6:4-9).

*The family was the school, and the parents were the teachers.... The **education centering in the family** was that which prevailed in the days of the patriarchs. For the schools thus established, God provided the conditions most favorable for the development of character. The people who were under His direction still pursued the plan of life that He had appointed in the beginning. —
IBID.45.*

Throughout Bible times, the responsibility to train and educate children was always placed first and foremost on parents. Children and youth were also commanded to follow the instruction of their parents (see PROVERBS 1:8; 4:1; 22:6). In New Testament times, God continued to direct parents to instruct and nurture their children in the admonition of the Lord (see EPHESIANS 6:1-3; COLOSSIANS 3:20,21).

Why schools?

During the Old Testament periods no mention is made of children attending schools. The ancient Greek concept of the school was not a part of Jewish culture. During the inter-testament period schools attached to synagogues did appear. However, these schools were for boys and only those over the age of eleven.

There is no New Testament teaching that would reduce parental responsibility toward their children. Schools for children are never mentioned in the New Testament. Rather, the Old Testament teaching on the role of parents is confirmed.

The Schools of the Prophets were only established as a support because parents had failed to educate their children properly at home (1 SAMUEL 10:5,10 [companies of prophets]; 2 KINGS 2:3,5,7,15 [sons of the prophets]; 1 CHRONICLES 25:8 [teachers & scholars]).

*Wherever in Israel God's plan of education was carried into effect, its results testified of its Author. But in very many households the training appointed by Heaven, and the characters thus developed, were alike rare.... **Fathers and mothers in Israel became indifferent to their obligation to God, indifferent to their obligation to their children.** Through unfaithfulness in the home, and*

idolatrous influences without, many of the Hebrew youth received an education differing widely from that which God had planned for them. They learned the ways of the heathen.

*To meet this growing evil, God provided other agencies as an aid to parents in the work of education. From the earliest times, prophets had been recognized as teachers divinely appointed.... For the training of such a class of teachers, **Samuel, by the Lord's direction, established the schools of the prophets.** — *IBID.* 45,46.*

No clear basis can be established from the Bible for formal schools as seen in modern times. While God can and does use the formal school model to bring about His purpose in education, the mass school idea in modern state education today is a human creation.

Jesus' education

Perhaps the greatest testimony to the importance and power of home schooling is the life and character of Jesus Christ. There is no record of His ever attending a formal school for any of His education. His mother, especially, and His father were His first and only known teachers. (see LUKE 2:40,51,52; JOHN 7:15).

*The child Jesus did not receive instruction in the synagogue schools. **His mother was His first human teacher.** From her lips and from the scrolls of the prophets, He learned of heavenly things. The very words which He himself had spoken to Moses for Israel He was now **taught at His mother's knee.** As he advanced from childhood to youth, He did not seek the schools of the rabbis. He needed not the education to be obtained from such sources; for God was His instructor. — *DESIRE OF AGES 70.**

*Jesus followed the divine plan of education. **The schools of His time, with their magnifying of things small and their belittling of things great, He did not seek.** His education was gained directly from the Heaven-appointed sources; from useful work, from the study of the Scriptures and of nature, and from the experiences of life—God's lesson books, full of instruction to all who bring to them the willing hand, the seeing eye, and the understanding heart. — *EDUCATION 77.**

The life of Jesus is powerful testimony of the potential of home schooling and by implication the possible dangers and limitations of formal schooling, even if religious in nature.

3

Why should I teach my child at home?

The command of God for the education of children in the home (DEUTERONOMY 4:5-9; 6:4-9) is the central reason. It was God's plan for the education of children originally and still is today. The most important reasons for home schooling today stem from this.

When Home schooling is contrasted with other education options, it has clear advantages, but it also presents unique challenges. The following reasons are presented in the form of a contrast between Christian home schooling and conventional schooling, especially state education. Each home schooling—or potential home schooling—family must decide on the importance of these reasons for themselves, in light of the highest aspirations for their children.

It is vital, from the outset, that you are very clear on your reasons for wanting to home school. Your reasons will be the basis of your long-term commitment, whatever lies before you. Your reasons should be largely positive, e.g. not because you don't like your child's school, but because you understand that warm loving parents are master teachers of their own children.

Why have children?

The reasons for choosing to home school have a lot to do with the reasons for having children in the first place.

Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.
— PSALMS 127:3.

Children are a gift from God and everything that God does is based on love. Therefore, every child ought to be born out of love. If children are the result of a Christ-centred loving husband and wife relationship, naturally the parents will want to pass on this love to their children. They will spare nothing to give their children the very best, even if it means sacrificing their own convenience and time.

Sadly, many children are born out of acts of lust and selfishness. For some parents, children are a nice idea and the expected norm. But many want the privilege and joy of having children without accepting the full commitment and sacrifice involved in giving them the very best in life. Children are often no more than cute little toys to be enjoyed for a season until their fascination wears off and they begin to demand too much of their parents' lives. They stand in the way of what parents would like to do if they never had children.

The circumstances surrounding a child's birth may have a lot to do with how far parents are willing to go in giving that child the very best in life that they are able to give. Home schooling presents a tremendous challenge for all parents to consider. Why did they have children? Only when this question is faced directly and addressed honestly will the idea of home schooling really begin to make sense and appear as the best option for their children's education, especially in the early years.

With God's help, even if children were born under the wrong circumstances and for the wrong reasons, it is possible for parents to get the right motivation of divine love as the basis for all that they do for their children. God is willing to forgive, cleanse and restore.

In love, faith, and prayer let parents work for their households, until with joy they can come to God saying, "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me."

—ADVENTIST HOME 159.

Ideally, Adventist young people should be taught to consider and begin to make provisions for children before courtship and marriage. The earlier the preparation for children's education and lives, the better.

The sheer privilege of educating your child

Why should others have the privilege of experiencing your child develop in those fascinating childhood years. For most teachers, working with children is a standardised task that can in no way rival the thrill you can experience creating your own child's life and character—hands on. Too few parents realise the continual happiness that it is possible to have in rearing their children. What can match the joy of watching the minds you helped to create opening up like buds to the Spring sunshine? God has given this wonderful privilege to mothers in a special sense.

The child's first teacher is the mother. During the period of greatest susceptibility and most rapid development his education is to a great degree in her hands. To her first is given opportunity to mold the character for good or for evil. She should understand the value of her opportunity, and, above every

other teacher, should be qualified to use it to the best account. Yet there is no other to whose training so little thought is given. The one whose influence in education is most potent and far-reaching is the one for whose assistance there is the least systematic effort.

—EDUCATION 275.

In modern western society, the role of the mother in the home has been greatly devalued—indeed trodden underfoot. Sadly, the clear message coming through is that a career outside the home is a more prestigious and worthwhile pursuit, than the routine of mothering day in day out.

In carrying out, one of the case studies for this handbook, I interviewed a friend who has been home schooling for many years. As I listened to her, it dawned on me afresh how highly complex and vital the work of a true mother is. It is in many respects, both an art and a science. What profession can rival this in terms of personal development? It calls for character development of the highest order in constantly role modelling the 'fruit of the spirit' under all circumstances. It involves, being a cook, a nurse, a counsellor, a social worker, a teacher, a life style educator, an accountant, a business person, an administrator and other roles as and when necessary.

While families can benefit materially from having a second income, this should not be allowed to outweigh so easily the time needed for developing the characters and preparing the destinies of their children. What children most need is not so much more material possessions, but more of their parents hands-on love, time, attention and involvement in their lives.

Home schooling offers a wonderful opportunity for the personal development of faithful parents and equally it sends a powerful message to children that they matter and are of such importance to their parents, that they are willing to sacrifice, their own personal interest to give them the very best of themselves. In this age of absent parents, poor self-esteem and confused identity, what can do more than home schooling to tell children that they are loved—they are somebody of value with great potential?

You're the best teacher for your child

We have been led to believe that formal training and qualifications are vital for the effective teaching of children, but this idea is not supported by real life observation and experience.

The best formally trained teachers cannot match a parent of average ability in educating their own child. Studies by Dr Marcell Geber in Uganda proved that tribal mothers who did not know how to read or write reared children who were more intellectually and socially

alert and secure by Western standards than well-educated mothers. The difference? Tribal mothers were close to their children. So-called higher class mothers tended to share the care of their children with others. There are a number of important prerequisites for learning that parents can provide most effectively for their children:

Knowing and loving your child more than anyone else

As a parent you know and love your child better than anyone else. The importance of this knowledge should not be underestimated. It is a vital element for effective learning. It enables you to transmit to your child, just what he or she needs, at the right time and in the

best ways. School teachers with 20 plus children in a class, scarcely have the time and energy to do this anywhere near as effectively as you can, however well intentioned they may be.

Warmth, responsiveness and consistency

These are far more important for your child's learning than your level of education. They are the very things that your child's developing mind responds to. Again they are prerequisites for opening up the mind. Like a young bud opening up under the sun's warm rays, so your child's mind with its in-built curiosity and desire to learn, will respond to personal loving warmth, responsiveness and consistency. The one-to-one attention that can be given through home schooling is an ideal situation for learning. In the typical school, children cannot be given this individual attention or be treated with partiality. They are just another number in the class register.

Emotional and psychological ties with your child

These ties from conception are powerful avenues for child training that no teacher can or should try to replace. Your natural bonds with your child are vital for their happy state of mind and their emotional and psychological development. As a parent, you can provide greater security, closeness, empathetic understanding, sharper insights, greater continuity and more time than the staff of the best schools. Sound caring relationships lead to sound teaching and learning.

☞ *see chapter 6 on American research*

Higher ambitions for your child

If you really love your child and see her as a gift from God, you will have high ambitions for her. You will expect more of your child—better character development, a higher standard of work, more obedience, more self-control etc., than most teaches.

Teaching, not so much what you know, but who you are

What should be important to you as a parent—especially in your child's early years—is not so much what your child knows, but who he knows and who he is learning from. In my experience as a teacher, I have come to realise that the most important thing that I transmit to my pupils is not information, but rather my values, beliefs, character and lifestyle. Even if I do not talk about these things directly, they will come through one way or another.

The educational exchange is such that it is impossible to separate the work of the teacher from the character of the teacher. You, as a parent have the awesome privilege of transmitting yourself to your child. What does this say about your own character development as a parent? But which teacher would you rather have taken your place?

As much for parents as for children

Home schooling is as much about the character-building of parents as that of children. It can test, reveal and strengthen the Christian experience of parents like few other things can. In fact, the character development of parents is one of God's most important reasons for them having children in the first place.

The sympathy, forbearance, and love required in dealing with children would be a blessing in any household. They would soften and subdue set traits of character in those who need to be more cheerful and restful. The presence of a child in a home sweetens and refines. A child brought up in the fear of the Lord is a blessing.

Care and affection for dependent children removes the roughness from our natures, makes us tender and sympathetic, and has an influence to develop the nobler elements of our character.
— ADVENTIST
HOME 160.

The close association of parents and children, through home schooling, will amplify this character-building experience. This is a vital element in home schooling that must be

understood by parents, as early as possible, otherwise they may not even consider it, or give up when they find themselves severely tested in unexpected ways. Ultimately, the very salvation of parents is bound up in how they relate to and train their children.

Opportunity to constantly model your teaching

Learning is more often caught than taught. Children learn from what you do far more than from what you say. The constant contact and time spent with your child allows you to be the most important role model in his life. You are his natural example. You have potentially the greatest opportunity to model before him the very principles and values that you want him to accept as his own.

Controlling the learning environment

The home is an excellent real life learning environment, far more effective in many respects than a classroom. A good home atmosphere is generally a good learning atmosphere. Parents can control and shape this atmosphere so that it best facilitates their children's education.

Without ever ringing a school bell, monitoring a recess or opening a course-of-study manual or even knowing the inside of a college, their (parents) teaching and care in their home are for their children under eight or ten easily superior to the most skilled professors outside of it. And a combination of all natural parental advantages will instinctively or with simple and most modest help usually bring out children who excel academically, behaviorally, morally, and socially. —HOME GROWN KIDS 33.





You have all the necessary qualifications

One of the first thoughts of some parents when presented with the possibility of teaching their own children is, "I am not qualified!" So why are you potentially the best qualified person to teach your own child? The fact that God has clearly instructed parents to educate their children, in both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy means that every parent has the potential to be the very best possible teacher of their child. God has not just made parents responsible, He has equipped them for the task. Whenever He bids us to do something, He also enables us to do it to the highest level.

There is much discussion over what qualifies a person to teach. History shows that it has little if anything to do with being formally trained. There is no evidence to support the idea that formally trained teachers do better than those not formally trained. According to John Holt:

Educators....define "qualified" to mean teachers trained in schools in education and holding teaching certificates. They assume that to teach children involves a host of mysterious skills that can be learned only in schools of education and that are in fact taught there; that people who have this training teach much better than those who do not; and indeed that people who have not had this training are not competent to teach at all. None of these assumptions are true. — TEACH YOUR OWN 53.

To be qualified to teach your child you need a few basic things:

-  acceptance of God's call and enabling power to teach your child
-  a willingness to learn, develop and be a godly example
-  understanding and accepting what it takes in terms of time and commitment
-  sacrificing less important alternatives in life to make this a reality.

With these basic requirements met, you can be the best qualified person to teach your child.

Fulfilment of potential

*And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness:...So God created man in his own image, **in the image of God** created he him; male and female created he them. — GENESIS 1:26,27.*

*Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do... **Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children.** Godliness—godlikeness—is the goal to be reached. — EDUCATION 17,18.*

*No other creature that God has made is capable of such improvement, such refinement, such nobility as man... Man cannot conceive what he may become. Through the grace of Christ he is **capable of constant progress.** — MARANATHA 229.*

Home schooling provides an opportunity for developing a child's potential to the highest level. It eliminates certain factors that hinder development. Conventional school education tends to narrow the mind and confine it within certain limits. There simply isn't the time or scope for individual potential to be realised. There are set programmes of study with standard measurements of attainment by which a child is judged to be a success or a failure.

Our ideas of education take too narrow and too low a range. There is need of a broader scope, a higher aim. True education means more than the pursuit of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come. —
EDUCATION 13.

The account of creation in Genesis chapters one and two reveal elements of the original education programme for humanity which was to promote never ending development and improvement of all aspects of our being through the home school experience. Home is the ideal setting for harmonious development and service—the goals of true education. There the physical, mental and spiritual dimensions of life naturally occur, function and blend together. In most schools, by contrast, these areas are either unbalanced, under-emphasised or artificially stimulated.

According to the Smithsonian Institution in America, every child is capable of genius in at least one area of life. Interestingly, the ingredients they give for genius have much to do with the way the child is educated rather than some innate spark, destined to ignite. From a biographical study of twenty men of genius, three important success factors emerge:

1. a high degree of attention focused on the child by parents and other adults with warm responsiveness and abundant love
2. very limited interaction with other children, especially outside the family
3. a lot of freedom to explore natural curiosities and interests.

Evidently home schooling, provides the best context for these success factors. Research shows clearly that home schooled children excel over conventionally schooled children in national tests. In a Christian home schooling context, the potential for real genius is even greater since these three factors are amplified to a higher level. Ultimately, the parents are to be channels of the love of God, the greatest motivation in the universe. Such parents and other appropriate adults and children, chosen carefully by the parents, will provide children with the best quality social interaction away from mass peer pressure. Isolation from other children should also be based, in part, on a desire to equip children to be able to minister more effectively to their peers as they reach maturity. Also, children, in whom biblical principles have been instilled, will be guided into appropriate explorations of their curiosities and interests and not just anything that comes to mind.

☞ see chapter 6 on research

Education: earlier the better or better late than early?

In Britain today, there is a great emphasis on earlier schooling. The assumption of the government and most other people within and outside the field of education is that the earlier a child starts her formal education, the better and faster her progress will be.

Indeed, the quality of children's pre-school and primary education has been shown to have a major impact on their achievements at 16 and their wider social skills.... We are committed to securing high quality places for all 4 year olds whose parents want them, and shall set targets for places for 3 year olds.

— EXCELLENCE IN SCHOOLS (Government's education agenda) 14, 15.

It is easy for parents, in the current education climate, to get caught up in the early schooling agenda on the assumption that the earlier children start school and the more time they spend there, the better they will learn. However, this emphasis on early schooling is unsubstantiated by both scientific research and empirical evidence. Indeed, there is clear evidence and good reason to suggest that the opposite of this is more the reality. Above all, this is not God's plan for young children. What is His plan?

[WHO?] Parents should be the only teachers of their children [WHEN?] until they have reached eight or ten years of age. *As fast as their minds can comprehend it, the parents should open before them God's great book of nature.... [WHERE?] The only school-room for children from eight to ten years of age should be in the open air, amid the opening flowers and nature's beautiful scenery. And their only text book should be the treasures of nature. These lessons, imprinted upon the minds of young children amid the pleasant, attractive scenes of nature, will not be soon forgotten.*

[WHY?] Many children have been ruined for life by urging the intellect, and neglecting to strengthen the physical powers. *...injudicious parents and school-teachers....forcing their young intellects, by flattery or fear, when they were too young to see the inside of a school-room. Their minds have been taxed with lessons, when they should not have been called out, but kept back until the physical constitution was strong enough to endure mental effort. Small children should be left as free as lambs to run out-of-doors, to be free and happy, and should be allowed the most favorable opportunities to lay the foundation for sound constitutions. (words in brackets supplied). — FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION 21.*

It is important to recognise here that Ellen White is not advocating that children receive no education at all until between the ages of eight to ten. She is rather addressing the nature of their education. The reasons for starting and continuing education in the home

for longer than is generally practised are many and varied. Those given above are supported by both observation and modern research.

A few years ago, the leading teacher in one of Paris' finest preschools was asked how she would compare the responsive care she was able to give her preschoolers with the care they could have in the home. Her response was an emotional wish: "Oh, if I could only have them two or three at a time in my apartment!"

In their book 'Better Late than Early', Raymond and Dorothy Moore state the following reasons for delayed formal education:

1. **Any school situation at these early ages is at best a substitute for the home.** Gesell Institute's Louise Ames points out that home provides a "three dimensional" experience of real living, while school tends to be a "two dimensional" alternative. This comparison which Dr Ames applies to primary schools is even more valid during the preschool years.
2. **Some children sense their placement in preschool or day care as parental rejection.** And in many cases, they are right. Parents often place their personal freedom before the child's welfare.
3. **In a preschool an intimate relationship with an adult is virtually impossible for every child,** especially in terms of the loving personal responses every small child needs.
4. **Separation from parents at this age usually causes a degree of insecurity to all children,** some more than others, even though it may not be obvious to the parent or teacher. In some cases this separation lays the base for severe emotional and learning problems later on.
5. **In sending them away from home, parents subject their children to influences that they cannot control,** not only as far as the teacher is concerned, but also with regard to the collective and individual influences of other children. Since the children are unable to reason consistently, they are often confused by mores and values in the home that conflict with those in school. Children in preschool centers frequently tend to accept other adults and other environments in place of the parents and the home and gradually ignore or reject their parents. It is not unusual for them to place the word of their teachers ahead of their own parents.
6. **A few nursery schools are excellent, and many schools are outstandingly staffed.** Yet many others are not good nor well staffed, and public supervision of these schools is seldom adequate. **Fluctuations of personnel because of illness,**

- vacations, and other circumstances have been found to be traumatic to a child** who has established an attachment to the teacher or aide who is absent.
7. **Children sometimes find out that preschool is more “dessert” than “vegetables.”** Certain freedoms not possible at home, the abundance of toys and equipment and the absence of chores may make them resentful of home restrictions before they are able to understand the reasons for the differences.
 8. Mothers and fathers, noting the apparent anticipation in their youngsters when they first trot off to school, fail to see that **their excitement sometimes may be a symptom of anxiety.** It may also signal the children’s desire for a change from home or because “the other kids are doing it.” Unfortunately, these experiences often bring frustration or disillusionment simply because the children are not mature enough for school.
 9. At a time when every effort should be made to keep a child’s life quiet, simple and uncluttered, **preschool often complicates his life with hurrying, daily transportation, and overstimulation of a group** when he is not mature enough to cope with more than a few children at a time.
 10. **Competition with a number of his peers for toys and space, and in physical or mental abilities usually is a strain on young children.** Family life for the first 8 years tends to prepare a child more gently for the competition he must eventually face.
 11. **Once a child enrolls in school he usually becomes locked into institutional life for the remainder of his childhood years,** and desirable family freedoms are gone. Whether or not the parents see this as a sacrifice, it usually turns out to be so for the child.
 12. **There is no sympathetic evidence from research that supports the need for nursery schooling for the child who has a good home.**
 13. **Parents often use preschool as a crutch—passing to the preschool certain childhood problems they cannot handle or behavior they cannot understand.** In our society, it is the parents, not the preschool teachers, who are accountable for their children’s behavior. Furthermore, parents are frequently frustrated by their children, because of their own failures in rearing them. These parents frequently fail to think of their children as individuals in the home, with their own privileges and responsibilities. They grant privileges to the children but do not help them learn responsibility, order, industry, honesty and similar values. When they can no longer control their children, many parents punish them, in effect by sending them away to school instead of enjoying them and working daily with them to build their values.

- 14. A good home provides far more freedom than a preschool.** *There are exceptions, but normally, as soon as children are placed together in group care, the operation tends to become standardized. The child generally has to adjust to the norm, which almost always interferes with his legitimate freedom. The brighter he is, the more he feels the restrictions. Yet by the nature of this kind of care, rules must be applied that curtail a number of his normal liberties.*

☞ see chapter 6 on Moore's research

Clearly, young children in their formative years are better off in the security of home with loving understanding parents who have the time to meet their peculiar needs. As each budding flower responds to the sun, and other needed stimuli for growth, in its own way, so young children respond to the warmth of caring individualised attention from their parents.

Education: A battleground of the Great Controversy

For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

—MATTHEW 24:24.

How will all but the very elect be deceived? Is it in any way conceivable that Satan would leave the arena of education untouched knowing its power for shaping minds? Since the entrance of sin into the world, the battle has always been over the minds of men. The educational process by which our minds are formed will ultimately determine where we will stand at the end of time. A Christ-centred education will help prepare us for heaven, while a Christ-less education will hinder or thwart our preparation for heaven.

Home schooling provides Adventist parents with a unique opportunity to take full responsibility for developing the powers of their children's minds in line with God's eternal purpose for them. As their minds receive true wisdom from God and they are led to accept Christ for themselves, they will have the discernment to sift and reject the deceptions of Satan. For our children to be amongst the very elect, no ordinary education will do. They must have a high and holy education that will equip them to live through the darkest days of earth's history and come through with characters unscathed, purified for eternity.

Now as never before, we need to understand the true science of education. If we fail to understand this, we shall never have a place in the kingdom of God.

—CHRISTIAN EDUCATOR 1897.

Thinkers or conformists?

Generally speaking, learners might be categorised as either thinkers or conformists depending on the type of education they receive and the way their minds develop. Conformists are those who are content to take in and reproduce the knowledge and thinking of others. They conform to the education programme, its curriculum, teaching and learning methods, goals and measurements of success without much question. Hence they never explore independently to arrive at truth for themselves. Paul describes such learners:

Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of truth. — 2 TIMOTHY 3:7.

And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. — 1 CORINTHIANS 8:2.

On the other hand, there are thinkers whose minds are active, creative and free to perceive and accept the true wisdom of God in every area of learning. Rather than conformists, they are transformed by the renewal of their minds. They have the discernment to know and prove the very will of God in all that they do.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God. — ROMANS 12:2.

*It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be **thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought.** Instead of confining their study to that which men have said or written, let students be directed to the sources of truth, to the vast fields opened for research in nature and revelation. Let them contemplate the great facts of duty and destiny, and the mind will expand and strengthen. — EDUCATION 17-18.*

The tendency of education today is to create non-thinking conformists, well able to take in, memorise and regurgitate information but destitute of independent thinking and idea creation. With the move toward a much more standardised national education system, all who wish to make it through 'successfully' must conform to the established channels of learning and assessment. There is little scope for original thinking and creative expression, even at postgraduate level, quite often.

Mass schooling aims at producing scholars filled with the ideas of others. To show learning, one must be able to quote and reproduce the thinking of the leading scholars in the field. To think for oneself, bypassing the established literature, is unacceptable and seen to be without a credible foundation. What is the result of this?

As the student sacrifices the power to reason and judge for himself, he becomes incapable of discriminating between truth and error, and falls an easy prey to deception. He is easily led to follow tradition and custom. —
IBID.230.

This education is producing a mindset that Satan will be able to control en masse at the end of time. It could be preparing minds to receive the Mark of the Beast. Home schooling, by contrast, offers the freedom for children to exercise their Divinely entrusted reasoning powers without the shackles of a standardised education system and its arbitrary measures of success. They can be more creative, having the time, space and encouragement to ask questions, think and learn freely, developing their God-given potential.

Government or God's education agenda?

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. —MATTHEW
6:24.

The Labour government came to power in 1997 with the motto, Education! Education! Education! Why this great emphasis on education? What's the real agenda?

Learning can unlock the treasure that lies within us all. In the 21st century, knowledge and skills will be the key to success. Our goal is a society in which everyone is well-educated and able to learn throughout life. Britain's economic prosperity and social cohesion depend on achieving that goal. —EXCELLENCE IN
SCHOOLS 9.

The agenda is clearly humanistic in its foundation—economic, social and ultimately political in its goals. Humanistic because according to the Bible, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Christ, not in ourselves. And while economic prosperity and social cohesion are worthy goals to an extent, their central place in the government's education policies, exposes an agenda in which the stakeholders are mere pawns in a massive political game, ultimately preparing men and women to stand in opposition to God at the end of time. Should Christians be a part of this?

Home schooling offers you the freedom to base your child's education on an entirely different agenda to that of the government. As a parent, you can, under the guidance of God, set your own goals for your child's education and determine the best ways and pace for attaining these goals.

Truth or truth mixed with error?

There are profound issues of great importance increasingly surfacing in schools which ought to cry out loudly to Adventist families for another option. While some are blatant like peer pressure, others are more subtle like the teaching of relative values with no absolutes. The following is a list of some of the current issues which home schooling can either bypass altogether or deal with from a distinctly Christian viewpoint:

Issues in state school education

- ✚ Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development without a Christian basis
- ✚ Multi-faith comparative religion placing all religions on the same level
- ✚ Eastern philosophy & hypnosis for relieving stress
- ✚ The Occult
- ✚ Neuro linguistic programming (NLP) mind control methods
- ✚ Relative values
- ✚ Evolutionary basis and bias in all areas of the curriculum
- ✚ Different versions of sexuality and the family
- ✚ Infidel textbooks and pagan literature
- ✚ Narrow National Curriculum based on set a body of knowledge for each age group, prescribing learning.

Teaching methods

- 🏠 Rote-memorisation / teaching to the test largely bypassing the powers of reason and conscience
- 🏠 Over-emphasising academic performance, rather than all-round harmonious development
- 🏠 Conformity destroying individuality and creativity
- 🏠 Little scope to accommodate preferred learning styles of individual pupils
- 🏠 Overtaxing some mental faculties while others are underdeveloped
- 🏠 The artificial division of the curriculum into subject areas can impede learning.

School environment

- ✚ Competition and conflict between the main stakeholders. E.g. teachers & parents

- ⚡ Pressure on teachers & schools to perform
- ⚡ Low teacher morale
- ⚡ Discrimination & stereotyping of pupils
- ⚡ Policies more important than pupils
- ⚡ Discipline problems
- ⚡ Extreme measures like zero tolerance.

Peer interaction

- 🏠 Peer dependency & pressure
- 🏠 Bullying

Eternal gamble of state education

Right now, many Adventist children and young people are being profoundly influenced and shaped by their past and current educational experiences in state education. As a result, they are making decisions, which may ultimately effect their eternal destiny. While many are undoubtedly achieving high academic success, many are also struggling over issues of conflict with their faith.

The current programme in state education, centres around a Christless curriculum delivered by Godless teachers (on the whole) in a spiritually hostile school environment with delinquent peer influences. To expect our young impressionable children to be exposed to this agenda for eleven years, or more, of their lives and come through this battle unscathed is a nonsense—an impossibility. Many have gone astray. Some are losing their way. Still others will be lost as a result.

As important as it is, even a good family devotional life may not be enough for some children. A few hours in Sabbath school and Pathfinders is not going to make all the difference. While some, by the grace of God, will survive spiritually with this input and become committed Adventist Christians, others who needed closer attention in their early years will not survive.

Ultimately, it is true that no matter what you do for your children, they will have to decide for themselves, some day. However, you need to know that you have done as much as possible with God's help to give them the very best opportunity to choose Christ. Some children need more input than others. It is your privilege, as a parent, to know your children and to give each just what they need to become all that God wants them to be.

Remember the battle, ultimately, is not about whether your child is located in a church pew each Sabbath morning, but rather it has to do with the location of her mind and heart.

If there is no Adventist church school around, you do not have to take this gamble with the eternal destiny of our children. Home schooling is an accessible and viable option for a solid Christian education.

Artificiality of school

Recently, I observed the behaviour and play of children at a local secondary school—supposedly one of the better schools in the area. As I looked, my mind was struck as I considered the hours every day, and the years of their lives, that children spend in school. Some questions ran through my mind like, “Whose idea was it to mass the nation’s children together in large schools, confined to those of their own age range? What are they there for? What’s the thinking behind this and why? In fact, where did the idea of schools like this, with their system and forms, come from in the first place? Wouldn’t the home, with loving understanding parents be a much more natural and obvious place to base the education of children? And couldn’t schools just be an optional supplement available for use as and when necessary. Isn’t the home the real educational centre of gravity for children? How easily we have come to take the modern concept of school as a given unquestionable norm.

As a place for learning, the modern school is in many respects an artificial world when compared to the home. The increasingly rigid and standardised format of school education bears little resemblance to the complexity, flexibility and unpredictability of the real world. While consistency and order are important elements for stability in the formative years, there is an artificial regimentation that is destructive to individuality, creativity and free expression. The child is shaped to fit the system rather than the system being shaped to fit the child.

The methods and content of learning often do not address the questions children are asking and the real issues in life they are grappling with. The legitimate use of toys and other representations of reality in the early years of schooling can unwittingly be continued into the later childhood and teenage years through a system of artificial theoretical learning unrelated to the real world of the learners.

School Phobia

Recent reports suggest that about two percent of secondary school children in Britain have a phobia about attending school. These children are not naturally at ease in the school environment. There are factors in the school set-up that repel them from school, or home circumstances that draw them to staying at home rather than going out to school. The sizes

of schools, with hundreds and even thousands of children, their busyness and structure are just too much for some children to cope with.

The specific causes of the phobia include: separation anxiety for younger children starting school; academic stress especially in today's competitive education environment; negative experiences like bullying; lack of individual attention from busy and overworked teachers; problematic family situations which convince some children that they need to be at home rather than at school. Children can experience headaches and sickness when it comes to school time and are even known to run out of class when things get too much for them.

The two percent estimate is based on the more acute known cases. However, most children probably experience some sort of aversion to going to school, at times. Recent government policies introducing stricter measures for tackling truancy, with parents being held accountable, reflect the fact that school, for many children, is no more than a holding station for their restless energies, rather than a desired place to be.

Generation gap

In scarcely any arena of life are people so rigidly separated by age as in school. While it is true that cognitive development has some links with age, especially in the early years, there is no justifiable reason for confining children so closely to those within a year of their own age. This may be convenient when dealing with large numbers, but can be detrimental to the development of flexible and well informed social skills. Children are ill-equipped to make the transition from school to the adult world of work in which they must constantly mix with those of widely differing ages.

Age segregation tends to promote the so-called 'generation gap', which is so undermining of healthy relationships across the age ranges. It creates a false divide encouraging children to disrespect and often shun the company of their seniors including their parents. It cuts children off from vital sources of learning and development.

Age segregation encourages peer dependency in which children are dependent upon pleasing and gaining the approval of their peers rather than that of their parents. It promotes the false divide of the generation gap. Parents have become all too used to losing their children's strong affections—and even sense of awe at their very presence—as others hijack the affections and loyalty of their offspring. Their authority is thus undermined through an ongoing war of attrition often just simmering but sometimes breaking loose in all out conflict, especially during the teen years.

In contrast, home schooling offers flexibility in shaping the education to the needs of the individual child. God's original plan at creation was that the home with its rich diversity of relationships, personalities, age groups, circumstances and tasks, would be the most natural educational agency. This can still be a reality for your child.

The Children's Rights Movement

There is clear evidence to suggest that in recent years there has been a strong concerted and deliberate attempt to erode parental control and influence over their children. This campaign has been orchestrated by certain pressure groups who have exercised power far disproportionate to their small size and representation. The ideas and goals of the Children's Rights Movement include:

- ☛ parents as holders of all rights and responsibilities of children no longer accepted as either possible or desirable
- ☛ pitting the interests of the child against the parent
- ☛ parents are assumed to be hostile to the interests of their children until proved otherwise
- ☛ children are vulnerable because of parental attitudes
- ☛ the marginalisation of parents as the principal protectors and educators of their children as professionals from outside the family are brought in to do the job
- ☛ banning all smacking of children at school and at home.

The movement has been very influential right up to parliament and government levels. They succeeded in making a decisive contribution to the Children's Act of 1989. The practical result of this Act is that a rebellious child can appeal to a social worker to escape the care and control of its parents, even when that care and control is entirely in the interests of the child.

The rights of children are being emphasised in the absence of any clear responsibility for the actions which come from the exercising of these rights. Rights without responsibility are potentially lethal. Recently, in a TES (Times Educational Supplement) article entitled, 'God's unholy children' (Dec 2000) secondary head teacher, Stuart Newton wrote:

Our society no longer encourages people to take responsibility for their actions, or for each other. In recent years, we have gone overboard on human rights as the key to happiness....Is it surprising that young people do not get the message, when society at large has a blind spot about the importance of individual responsibility? As long as we ignore the idea of personal and collective responsibility for what goes on in society, we should not be surprised when things deteriorate....

How do we expect our young people to learn any standards if we, as responsible adults, appear to have abandoned them....Our duty is to provide some signposts for young people. If we, as a society, are not prepared to do that, there will be

plenty of others who will do so. These people may provide signposts that we disapprove of but then it will be too late because we will not have taken our chance.

The divisive agenda of the Children's Rights Movement is partly a fulfilment of Christ's and Paul's prophecies concerning end time family conditions:

*Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and **children shall rise up against their parents**, and shall cause them to be put to death.*
— MARK
13:12.

*This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, **disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy**,*
— 2 TIMOTHY
3:2.

The antidote to the Children's Rights Movement is the Elijah message of Malachi. Seventh-day Adventists, of all people on earth, need to demonstrate the true model of the family as brought out in this message. Home schooling can help turn the hearts of parents and children to each other in clear distinction to the current trend of division and alienation in the families of the world. With all that's needed for successful home schooling, it will help rebuild families like almost nothing else can.

Rebuilding the family

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.
— MALACHI 4:5,6.

In an age of busy parents, broken homes and state sponsored permissiveness, children need a stable loving home life more than ever before. Home schooling allows quality time and an ideal context for building parent and child relationships. Parents reserve to themselves the development and allegiance of their children instead of delegating these to the state. Someone has insightfully said, "*The earlier you institutionalise your children, the earlier they will institutionalise you.*" Old people's homes are a sad consequence of an alienation between parents and children from a young age as teachers have unwittingly usurped the authority of parents as the main educators in their children's lives. Parents would not take time for their children and so children have no time for them in their later years.

4

How does home schooling relate to the work of the Church?

Harmonising 3 pillars: home, church & education

...a threefold cord is not quickly broken. — ECCLESIASTES 4:12 (last part).

Imagine for a moment a stool with just one leg. Could it defy the unchanging law of gravity and stand upright? Probably not—except by way of some freak balancing act. What about a two-legged stool? This might have a better chance. But there would be greater certainty, by far, with a three-legged stool—providing, of course, that all three legs were of the same length and proportion.

The three legs of a stool are like the three strands in the cord that bind our children to Christ from birth, home, education and church. We may also think of them as the three pillars on which our children's lives are built with each grounded on the foundation of Jesus Christ.

...But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. — 1 CORINTHIANS 3:10,11.

Before any Adventist parent utters the profound words, "I did my best for my children", they must check these three pillars. Were they all in place? Were they all of the right length and proportion? And most importantly, were they all founded on Jesus Christ? These three pillars are clearly identified as of vital importance to the lives and destiny of our children.

*If ever we are to work in earnest, it is now. The enemy is pressing in on all sides, like a flood. Only the power of God can save our children from being swept away by the tide of evil. The responsibility resting upon parents (**home**), teachers (**education**), and church members (**church**), to do their part in co-operation with God, is greater than words can express. (words on brackets supplied)*

— COUNSELS TO PARENTS, TEACHERS & STUDENTS 166.

But which of the three has the first responsibility in carrying out the commission of Proverbs 22:6 to train a child in the right way, parents, teachers or the church?

Parents, in the home, have the first responsibility and privilege to educate their children (see DEUTERONOMY 6:6-9) and then, church members which could include teachers in both the church and school settings. Clearly, the home is the most important of the three pillars. Education in the home must be the basis of the child's development.

It should be accepted as the norm, that home is the natural setting for the child's ongoing all-round education with the church and the church school, operating as supports to back up the work of parents as and when necessary.

Adventist culture, a channel for learning

Home schooling offers an excellent opportunity for extending and strengthening the Adventist mission and lifestyle to the next generation. There is interesting research evidence which highlights the important role of culture in the transmission of learning skills to children. It shows that where cultural identity is clear, cohesive and strong, it serves as an effective vehicle for the early learning and later development.

For most children, home culture is the first context in which they experience cognitive awareness and develop basic learning skills. The stronger and more cohesive the culture, the better it will serve this learning purpose. Adventism is a way of life, a culture in itself, transcending any national or racial cultural identity. Often Adventists experience a close affinity to one another, despite differences in nationality or race. Christian culture connects them. This reflects the ideal that Paul presented to the Galatians:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. —

GALATIANS 3:28.

If Adventist culture is strong and cohesive in both home and church, it will serve as a powerful vehicle for transmitting early learning.

In this context 'culture' is not defined as a static inventory of behaviours but, rather, as the process by which knowledge, values, and beliefs are transmitted from one generation to the next. (It is also the process by which mental functions develop). In this sense cultural deprivation is the result of a failure on the part of a group to transmit or mediate its culture to the next generation.

— FEUERSTEIN & HOFFMAN, 1982:57.

Reuven Feuerstein worked in postwar Israeli education at the time when many Jews were repatriating to Israel from different parts of the world. The children of the new arrivals coming from backgrounds where their Jewish culture had been kept in tact tended to get on and do better in their education than those whose culture had been fragmented.

[Hence,] the most successful members of society and, for that matter, the most successful societies are usually those who have access to their own cultures. Furthermore, knowing your own culture—having a sense of dignity and place within it—is surely the prerequisite to being able to adjust to or indeed assimilate another culture without losing your own identity. One of the primary tasks for parents and educators, therefore, must be to make that culture available to the child. Unless they do so, the children will fail educationally and cultures will ultimately die out.

— BURDEN & FLOREK, 1991:85.

The more Adventism impacts and shapes the home, education and church experiences of children, the more likely they are to maintain their Adventist identity throughout life. A truly Adventist home in which children are being educated in the Adventist lifestyle will be a great support to the church in advancing its broader mission. Equally, Adventism in the home will provide an effective framework for teaching values and the Christian lifestyle through a balanced and practical education.

Home schooling is an essential link between the church today and the church tomorrow. It is a most dynamic context for Adventist expression. Clearly, it is in the interest of the church to support it as a vital part of its youth and educational work. Indeed, it is an investment in its future.

Church support for home schoolers

The education of the church' children is the responsibility of all members, not just parents. Whichever option parents choose for the education of their children, it is important that the church be as supportive as possible and play a complimentary role according to the needs. An alliance between parents, teachers and church members for the saving of our children is what's needed.

Home schooling parents and children, especially need understanding and support. For parents who have chosen to home school their children from the outset, and perhaps more so those who have decided later on to withdraw their children from school, home schooling can be a lonely, isolated and misunderstood venture with little sympathy or support. Indeed, church members keen to see children 'get on' in life may even be critics and opponents.

What home schoolers often need from fellow church members perhaps more than anything else is respect for their judgement and decision, though they may not fully understand or

even agree. The support and encouragement of the minister is especially important. He can play a part by visiting the home to contribute to the children's spiritual nurture and character development.

Educational support

Home schooling is not about parents being experts in every area of learning before they can start. Others in the church with experience, expertise and talents can come in and play an important supportive role and teach specific areas of the programme.

The Seventh-day Adventist church membership has an abundance of knowledge, expertise and vocational experience, which can be used for helping its children and youth. Churches in which there are home schooling families could make a directory of skills that church members are able to offer, and when they would be available to give help. If all church members see themselves as having a responsibility for the children of the church—whether they are parents or not—they will offer their support in whichever ways they can.

Church members could be a very important resource for home schooling parents to tap into, providing further pieces in a rich learning mosaic. I have seen this work well in certain instances where church members have offered regular time each week to give specific help to home schooled children and without any charge.

Support for single parent families

Over the years, I have come across several single parent families who have been very keen on home schooling (I might also include here families where one parent as a committed Adventist is interested, but the non Adventist spouse is not). In quite difficult circumstances, some have taken the step. Such families need special support. A single parent mother who decides to home school her children is committing herself to almost limitless contact with her children each day. This is a lot for one person even with the best will and intention.

It is here that church members can come in and play a vital supportive role. They could give regular time helping the children, relieving the parent to have a much needed break and change. If there are other home schooling families nearby, it would be good for them to meet up, with them as and when suitable, to share experiences and encourage each other.

☞ *see chapter 9 on single parents*

Financial support

There may also be a need for financial or other material assistance from time to time. Home schooling families are usually quite economical but they do at times face financial pressures from extra costs incurred in educating their children themselves. Like those who send their children to fee paying church schools, home schooling parents may have to pay extra for their children's education on top of what they are paying in their taxes. Church members could adopt and sponsor home schooled children in a similar way that they do for children attending Adventist schools.

The church should take in the situation, and by their influence and means seek to bring about this much desired end. Let a fund be created by generous contributions for the establishment of schools for the advancement of educational work. We need men well trained, well educated, to work in the interests of the churches.

— COUNSELS TO PARENTS, TEACHERS & STUDENTS 44,45.

If some families have chosen home schooling as the way of fulfilling God's purpose in their children's education, should they not be as entitled to financial support as those who choose the church school option?

Local churches can establish education funds and encourage members to give systematically according to their earnings. Some may want to do this in the form of a second tithe, a part of which would be set aside for the education fund. This fund could be used by home schooling families to finance joint or individual home schooling ventures.

In this way, the whole church can play their part in making Christian education a reality for all its children, however families choose to do it.

Use of church facilities

Depending on the home environment, home schoolers may need additional facilities for space or just a change of setting. If several home schooling families want to come together, a church hall might be a useful venue from time to time. The availability and use of church facilities would be a practical gesture of support from the church and would help to establish the church as an ongoing educational centre during the week, rather than just on Sabbaths.

A church hall may be a place where groups of home schoolers could invite guest educators with particular expertise to help their children.

Home schooling associations

With Adventist home schoolers being scattered through the country, national and regional home school associations could provide a good support system. There could be regular meetings, workshops, guest speakers, sharing of resources, one-to-one networking and joint-home schooling ventures etc. These associations could come under the umbrella of the BUC Education Department.

Church promotions

The local church and conference education departments should understand, support and promote the merits of home education. It is important for education leaders to acquaint themselves with all that's involved in home schooling so that they can address the issues in an informed way. Along with the church school—if there is one locally—home schooling should be presented as a viable Christian education option which the church promotes, encourages and supports.

Home education emphasis days

As a part of, or in addition to, the regular education days, there could be special emphasis days highlighting home schooling and general Christian education in the home. Parents and children could share their experiences and church leaders could take the opportunity to endorse and encourage home schooling.

Spirit of Prophecy on home schooling

Ellen White in both her writings and her life was instrumental in the education work of the church. A central theme running through much of her writings on education is the role of parents and the home in educating children. It becomes clear that there is a far greater responsibility resting on parents than on teachers.

Children should virtually be trained in a home school from the cradle to maturity. And, as in the case of any well-regulated school, the teachers themselves gain important knowledge; the mother especially, who is the principal teacher in the home, should there learn the most valuable lessons of her life.

— CHILD GUIDANCE 26.

In her writings, there is a great emphasis on the home as the starting point of a broad education for life. There is also a more specific emphasis on appropriate teaching and learning content and methods.

Useful sections to read include the following:

'The Home School'

— *COUNSELS TO PARENTS, TEACHERS & STUDENTS 107-162.*

'Home Church Schools' — *IBID. 158, 159.*

'Parental Responsibility' — *FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION 139-144.*

'Home Education' — *IBID. 149-161.*

'Preparation' — *EDUCATION 275, 276.*

Home school and church school combinations

For those home schoolers living within access of an Adventist school, it could be helpful for them to be allowed the opportunity to utilise the school's facilities and programme, as and when necessary. Arrangements could be made for their children to attend certain classes and to join in other school activities. Home schooling parents could also offer their expertise to the school. In this way, there would be closer links between these two arenas of Adventist education, home and school, with mutual benefits.

Religious liberty issue

For many Adventist and other Christian parents, religious convictions that state schools are a bad influence on their children's spiritual and moral well-being are significant in their reasons for home schooling. Therefore, home schooling can be seen as a religious liberty issue, that all should be aware of. Any attempt by the state to encroach on this right could become part of a wider restriction on liberty. When the local officials tried to stop the apostles from teaching about Jesus, Peter had a straight answer:

We ought to obey God rather than men. — ACTS 5:29.

Jesus in MARK 12:17 and Paul in ROMANS 13 further broaden the principle. They point out the importance of compliance with civil authority as long as there is no conflict with our faith.

It is important to understand that the state has no right to interfere in the education individual parents choose for their children. It provides education for the masses mainly due to the lack of awareness, interest or motivation on the part of most parents, when it comes to the education of their children.

The freedom to educate your child according to your own religious principles and convictions is a right enshrined in both national and international legislation. However, the highest authority comes from God. If the state seeks to withdraw this right, it is exercising an illegitimate prerogative that is unlawful in the sight of God.

Adventist in Britain today should avail themselves more to the comparative liberty that they have in the education of their children. In other European countries like Germany, this privilege is not so available. The more families there are, home schooling, the stronger it will be as a viable option. Indeed, it could become a norm in its own right.

Home schooled children, assets to the church

There seems to be an ongoing crisis within Adventism, today, over the state of our youth. There are concerns over their apparent lack of interest in spiritual things, their attraction to the world and their lack of involvement in church life. The reasons? Well, the state of our homes has much to do with it, together with the education that is shaping their minds. As a consequence, the church is being robbed of a generation of young soldiers desperately needed to wage and win the final battle of the great controversy. In the home and education lie the keys to reversing this trend.

Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even today do I declare that I will render double unto thee; When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim and raised up thy sons O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man.
—ZECHARIAH
9:12, 13.

The sons of Zion are symbolic of those youth who are experiencing a true education based on the living Word of God. They will ultimately triumph over the sons of Greece, those who are receiving a worldly education, which has strong roots in the humanistic philosophies of the Ancient Greeks—men like Plato, Socrates and Aristotle.

Children who have had a balanced Christian education in an Adventist home are important assets to the Church for the advance and completion of its mission. The training of these children will be geared toward service to God and man. Such youth will have a vision of a finished work that to them is fully attainable in their generation—not in a later one.

With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world! How soon might the end come—the end of suffering and sorrow and sin! —

EDUCATION 271.

Home schooling is an important means toward this end. It is an avenue for developing an army of youth, “rightly trained”. Parents are in a powerful position to decide, from the outset, the direction and ultimate destination of their children’s education. In contrast, conventional school education takes the reins out of the hands of parents putting them firmly into the hands of those who are a part of the opposite forces. Which side will our children be on?

5

Is it legal to teach my child at home?

Authority of God and His word

The authority of God in His word has already been established as the basis for home schooling. This God-given privilege and responsibility of parents to train their children is the highest legal authority to which appeal can be made for home schooling. If it is legal with God, this overrides all human authority on the matter. However, as Christians we need to be informed of our position according to the laws of the land, so that we can intelligently:

Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things which are God's.
20:25. —LUKE

Law in Britain

In contrast to other European countries like Germany and Austria, parents in Britain have the full freedom to teach their children themselves, as they see best. This includes children who are said to have special educational needs (see section 10). Most people wrongfully assume that it is illegal for children not to go to school. In Britain, education is compulsory for children between five and sixteen, but school is not. British law places the responsibility for children's education with their parents. Most parents delegate this responsibility and send their children to school to be educated but an alternative is allowed for in the law.

Education Act 1944 (amended by section 36 of 1981 Education Act):

*It shall be the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school **or otherwise** (emphasis supplied).*

The phrase 'or otherwise' allows for education other than at school. It is under this section that parents exercise their right to educate their children at home. It is no mere accident that the words 'or otherwise' were included—there is no loophole there that parents use to get around the law. It is important to bear this in mind: it is a legal right, not something about

which you have to avoid detection or be granted special permission. 'Otherwise' is one of the options open to parents just as school is. Alternatives to school were considered and allowed for when the law was drawn up.

Section 76:

*In the exercise and performance of all powers and duties conferred and imposed on them by this Act the Minister and local education authorities shall have regard to the general principle that, so far as is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable expenditure, pupils are to be **educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents.***

This makes it clear that the parents have the right of choice over their children's education and that the education authorities must respect the parents' wishes. Generally, this section is interpreted in relation to the parents' choice of school but, taking into account Section 36, this underlines the idea that the parents are responsible for the education of their children in a wider sense.

One thing that does complicate matters slightly is the **1956 School Attendance Regulations**. If a child already attends a county or voluntary school, then she is registered to be a student and to attend that school. It is an offence for that child to fail to attend without good cause. However, in view of the wider legal position, choosing to home school your child for good reasons would be sufficient to satisfy the 'good cause'. None of the Education Acts passed since 1944, including the Education Reform Act of 1988, have altered this right.

Local Education Authority (LEA)

If your child has never been to school, you are not obliged to inform the LEA of your intention to home school. The ignorance of LEAs on this matter can complicate matters unnecessarily. If for any reason, they do contact you, a short letter informing them of your decision to home school, should be sufficient. There is certainly no need to produce timetables, schemes of work and the like.

If you are withdrawing your child from a state school, then legally his name needs to be removed from the register before starting education at home. Often this can be achieved simply by asking the head teacher. Sometimes the LEA requests to be told what alternative provision is to be made for the child's education. The LEA has the legal right and responsibility to keep a child's name on a school's register until it is satisfied that suitable alternative provision has been made. Usually, this is not as daunting as it sounds and many LEAs have a very helpful attitude toward home educating families.

Generally, the best policy is to be open, co-operative and understanding. The law is on your side. Don't just give negative, but clear positive reasons why you have chosen this option. It is also important to be aware that LEAs vary widely in their attitude toward home schoolers. Many are very co-operative, some reluctantly tolerate them, while some, unfortunately, are known for being difficult. Many authorities do not have a definite policy on home education; it is left up to the individual advisers to assess situations. The response which families receive from LEAs may vary considerably.

As Adventists, it is important to be honest, open and above board, in all our dealings with secular authorities. While it may certainly be necessary at times to be 'as wise as serpents and harmless as doves', there should be no hint of the deceptive or evasive. Adventists having deep spiritual convictions as part of their reasons for home educating their children, must be consistent in our principles when dealing with those not of our faith. Our religious faith is not the issue that the law is concerned with, but rather the following of stipulated procedure. As long as this is done, there should be no major problems. Paul admonishes us to follow properly ordained secular authority, which is actually authority delegated from God:

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For their is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

—ROMANS 13:1-3.

Further legal considerations

To better understand the possible responses of LEAs, it is useful to be aware of the obligations that the law imposes on them.

Education Act 1944, Section 37

If it appears to a local education authority that the parent of any child of compulsory school age in their area is failing to perform the duty imposed upon him by the last forgoing section, it shall be the duty of the authority to serve upon the parent a notice requiring him, within such time as may be specified in the notice not being less than fourteen days from the service thereof, to satisfy the authority that the child is receiving efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

This section obliges LEAs to ensure that all children in their area are receiving a satisfactory education. It has been argued by some families that LEAs have no right to

intervene unless it has cause to believe that the education provided at home is unsatisfactory. I.e. if parents are not appearing to fail then they are under no obligation to satisfy the LEA. However, if parents are not going to send their children to school they may at some stage be asked to show the LEA that education is actually going on.

Most LEAs today, recognise the 'otherwise' option that is open to families. If a notice is served and parents fail to satisfy the LEA, they may then be served with a 'school attendance order'. If this is not complied with they may eventually find themselves in court. Should the matter go this far, it is possible to argue the case for education at home as a defence. However, as far as is reasonable and possible, it is recommended that parents satisfy the LEA before matters escalate this far.

For those parents withdrawing their child from school to start home schooling, there is another legal consideration.

Section 39:

If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered student at a school fails to attend regularly thereat, the parent of the child shall be guilty of an offence against this section.

If a child is registered at a school then he must be de-registered before the parents can legally pursue his education themselves. This is an important difference which parents planning to withdraw their children from school should be aware of.

If your child attends a non LEA independent or private school, the LEA will have no record of your child's attendance at school. Therefore you do not need to notify them of your decision to home school. If they do contact you, subsequently, you can do as recommended above within the parameters of the law.

“Full-time” education

The law does not specifically define what is meant by full-time education. You therefore have the freedom to shape your programme according to your own commitments and lifestyle. You don't have to keep to school hours, terms and holidays. Learning at home is a natural ongoing process not bound by specific time schedules.

It is not necessary for your child to stay at home during school hours. But if your child is out alone, you need to equip them for dealing with accusations of truancy, which is actually illegal. Most people, having never heard of education at home, will think your child should be in school. Today, there are truancy officers patrolling, in places like large shopping

areas, and even police rounding up and taking truants away. To equip your child in dealing with possible confrontations, you can do the following:

- ✚ inform them of the legal aspects of home education
- ✚ let them carry a signed letter stating that they are being educated at home in accordance with section 7 of Education Act 1996
- ✚ give them a membership card of any home education organisations you have joined
- ✚ tell your child not to go with anyone, unless its a police officer (police have the power to accompany a child to a place of safety if they have good reason to fear that a child is in immediate danger) Your child should ask for identification first.

In reality, most home schoolers have few problems when their children are out in the community during school hours. You really have nothing to fear. The law of the land is on your side. Remember, *“The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.” (PSALMS 34:7).*

Northern Ireland and Scotland

Education otherwise than through attendance at school is allowed throughout the UK. In Ireland the Education (Northern Ireland) Act 1947 contains sections identical to those in the 1944 Education Act. In Scotland there are parallel sections in the Scottish Education Act (1980), Sections 30 and 28 of the Scottish Act corresponding to Sections 36 and 76.

Department of Education & Employment guidelines

The following document contains the latest government guidelines on home education in England and Wales:

Educating Children at Home (England and Wales) 1999

1. *Parents (those who have legal parental responsibility) must ensure that their child receives an efficient full-time education, suitable to his or her age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise (section 7 of Education Act 1996).*
2. *Although parents are not legally required to inform the Local Education Authority (LEA) when they decide to educate their children at home, it is helpful if they do this. Parents should also inform the LEA of any significant change of circumstance, or change of address.*

3. *The LEA will need to satisfy itself that a child is receiving suitable education at home, and will probably ask to visit the family home to talk the parent and the child, and to look at examples of work. The LEA will need to be satisfied that the parent is willing and able to provide a suitable education. At the initial meeting the nature and frequency of future contact should be agreed.*
4. *LEAs have no automatic right of access to the parents' home. Parents may wish to offer an alternative way of demonstrating that they are providing suitable education, for example through showing examples of work and agreeing to a meeting at another venue.*
5. *Where it appears to an LEA that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving efficient or suitable full time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, the LEA are under a duty to serve notice on the parents, requiring them to satisfy the authority that their child is receiving suitable education "otherwise than at school". If the parents' reply is unsatisfactory, or if they fail to reply, the LEA may issue a school attendance order.*
6. *A number of home educators are Travellers. For this group specialist support in securing children's integration into schools and continuity of learning may be available through an LEA Traveller Education Service.*

Home schooling groups and school status

If you plan to carry out a joint home schooling programme with other families, it is important to understand when the law recognises such a programme as a school and the implications of this.

An independent school is defined in the Education Act 1996 as any institution providing full-time education for 5 or more pupils of compulsory school age, other than one maintained by a local education authority, a grant maintained school, or non-maintained special school. If your establishment fits this description you must by law seek provisional registration with the department of Education and Employment (DFEE) as soon as the school opens.

– DFEE REGISTRATION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS 1.

To be registered, a school would need to meet certain stipulated criteria and be regularly inspected by HMI (Her Majesty's Inspectors). According to the law, for education to be full-time, it must be for 190 days a year with at least two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon.

If your establishment falls outside of the definition given above, because it provides education for fewer than 5 pupils of compulsory school age, you should get in touch with the Local Education Authority for your area who will need to be satisfied that the parents of the children attending are discharging their duty to secure sufficient and suitable education for their children.
— *IBID.*

As stated earlier in this section, if you are withdrawing your child from school, you can simply inform the school and leave it to the LEA to contact you if they wish. If your child has never been to school, there is no need for any contact with the LEA.

To maintain the freedom and flexibility of the home schooling approach, families coming together can arrange their programme so that it falls outside of the DFEE's definition of an independent school. E.g. meeting up for three days a week rather than four; having no more than four children at a time. or meeting up for activities in the evenings and at weekends.

International policies

The principle of parental rights and responsibilities in the education their children is further endorsed in European law. This has been ratified by Britain and therefore should be enforceable. The United Nations also acknowledges the leading role of parents.

European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Article 2 1952:

No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any function which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the state shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching is in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions.

United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights, Article 26:

- 1. Everyone has a right to education.*
- 2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality.*
- 3. Parents shall have prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.*

While this is primarily a declaration of intent, with no legal force in Britain, it clearly advocates the principle that parents should determine the sort of education their children receive.

Withdrawing your child from school

There can be misunderstanding on the part of teachers and LEAs about the freedom that parents have to home school, due to a lack of knowledge, especially when children are being withdrawn from school. There is nothing they can do to stop you but they may, due to ignorance, create unnecessary procedural issues. For this reason, withdrawal of your child from school should be done with tact and as smoothly as possible, keeping your explanations clear and to the essential. Much will depend on your existing relationship with the school.

Plan ahead to withdraw your child at the end of a school term, if possible. This can make the transition smoother. However, if you're impressed to start sooner rather than later, you need not wait until the end of a term. Whenever you plan to start, make sure that you're prepared.

Find out from you LEA what information they have about home education. LEAs usually provide guidelines for home educators and sometimes a form to fill in. If the form requests information about the qualifications of tutors to be employed, this does not mean that you must have tutors. You can write "not applicable" if you don't intend to use tutors.

To keep things simple, it will probably be better to inform the school by letter at the end of your child's last term so as to avoid any unnecessary face to face deliberations. You need not be critical. Your letter can be positive and appreciative of the school's work with your child. Remember that you are not requesting permission but informing them of your intention as a parent having the legal duty to educate your child as you see best. Keep a copy for future reference. The following letter serves as an example:

20 July 2001

Dear Mrs Smith,

I would like to express my appreciation for the work that you and your staff have done for my son Paul over the past two years.

I want to inform you that as of next term, Paul will not be returning to the school. I have made arrangements for his education at home. Please pass on my sincere thanks to all the teachers, especially Mrs Brown his class teacher.

Best Wishes

On receiving your letter, the school should remove your child from the register, straight away. They should then inform the LEA within two weeks of the date of your letter. The LEA has a legal duty to check on the education you are carrying out at home. If you are withdrawing your child from an independent school (one that does not come under the LEA), the school is not obliged to inform the LEA and the process of withdrawal from school can virtually stop there.

If, in response to your letter, you are contacted by phone you may want to convey the same message politely and confidently, informing them of what you have chosen to do, rather than seeking their approval. The school may expect to have some criticism levelled at them, but refrain from anything negative. In fact, you need not feel obliged to go into any of your deeper reasons unless you think this is necessary and helpful. If so, concentrate on the positive reasons for your decision.

You can maintain the same approach, if you are contacted by the LEA, directly. Use it as an opportunity to respond to their questions or concerns and if necessary, explain more clearly your reasons for choosing to home school. Again you should be as positive as possible.

However, you need not wait to hear from the LEA, before starting. When you are contacted, their Adviser, or other representative, will arrange to visit fairly soon to make informal inquiries about the education you're providing. Keep a record of the names and titles of anyone that you have to deal with, for future reference. After three to six months, you may be visited by the LEA's Education Welfare Officer (EWO), who is more like a social worker, than a teacher.

The EWO will want to satisfy herself that you as parents understand and accept your duty to provide "efficient full-time education suitable to his (your child's) age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have..." at home instead of school. She will also want to satisfy herself of the general welfare of your child.

At this stage, she will not be making detailed observations. You can give a brief outline of your intentions and she will then make a report based on the information gathered from the visit. This will be a part of the LEA's assessment of your provisions for home education. This visit may be followed up by another one from the Education Adviser. Try to ensure that both you and your spouse are present and give him an opportunity to observe your programme in operation, if he wishes. It would be good to have your plan at hand to show them that you are following a programme suitable for your child.






If your child is of primary school age, he may be particularly keen to find out what you are doing in Maths and English. Present what you are doing in a positive light so that they can see the obvious advantages. The issue of your child's socialisation will probably be

another issue raised. You can inform him of your links with other home schooling families, organisations or with other people in the community, which provides your child with adequate social interaction.

After this visit, if the LEA is satisfied with the education you're providing, your dealings with them should be over. For all such visits, an appointment should be made in advance. If you have an unscheduled visit, you can ask whoever it is to come back at a mutually convenient time.

If, when visited, you are asked to show a plan, this can be a general one covering the main things you intend to do including social interaction. The Education Adviser's recommendations will usually be ratified by the Education Committee. You should receive a copy of the report with the recommendations and an invitation to attend the committee meeting.

Remember that the only duty the LEA has, is to ensure that education is taking place. Their role is not to check that you are doing the same as in school. If anything is raised in terms of the legality of what you're doing, this handbook contains enough to furnish you with the appropriate answers. This will impress them that you know your rights and liberties, which may even come as a surprise to them. Once it's clear to them that you're within the law, there should be no reason for the LEA to press you further. You are under no obligation to do any of the following:

-  agree to regular visits by them
-  provide them with regular updates on your child's progress
-  have your child take national tests
-  involve teachers in your programme
-  follow the National Curriculum.

If you have joined a recognised home schooling organisation like Education Otherwise, they can give you specific advice in dealing with any problem issues, especially those pertaining to the law. Of course, if your child has never been to school, most of the above, you will not need to consider.

If your child is not yet five and you've registered with a state school. All you need to do is write them a letter informing them that your child will not be attending. It is not necessary to mention your intention to home educate your child. The LEA has no jurisdiction for children below the compulsory age of education. If you are moving to a new area with a different LEA, you can let the previous school know that you are moving, but when you start to home educate there, you do not need to inform anyone.

Withdrawing your child from school in Scotland

The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 deals with the law on home education. It states that children must be educated, but not necessarily at school. The procedure is similar to that in England and Wales, except that the education authority may not be as involved. You can send them a copy of the letter that you sent to the school informing of your intention to withdraw your child. If you do not hear from them by your proposed start date, you can take it that they have no objections. You need not wait until your application has been processed.

6

What research has been done into home schooling?

What is the purpose of research evidence into home schooling? Does it need to be substantiated by research, to prove that it works, when God has already made it clear that this is the best plan for the education of children? A lot of what has been presented in this handbook is based on observation and empirical evidence. The case studies are examples of this. Clearly, there is a lot of evidence that supports the effectiveness of home schooling.

However, for most people—including most Adventists—home schooling is a new phenomenon in education. Many people can only measure educational performance in conventional ways. For these, research evidence can be a useful eye opener. Also, because there are often so many people that home schoolers have to explain themselves to, especially when they start, it can be helpful to have research evidence to share.

God's word on education in the home is of course the greatest evidence. Research, rightly conducted and understood, simply reflects what God has already said.











British research


There is a small but growing body of research evidence into home education in Britain. In America, extensive research has been done into many aspects of home schooling. The research presented here is mainly British-based and secular. This is followed by two examples of American research.

**HOME-BASED EDUCATION EFFECTIVENESS
RESEARCH
& SOME IMPLICATIONS**


—ROLAND MEIGHAN (summary of main findings, 1995)


Approaches to learning

-  Given the fact that there are over 30 differences in individual learning styles, any uniform approach to the curriculum or to learning is intellectual death to some, and often most, of the learners and is therefore suspect. A teacher faced with a class of 30 children in one room and required to deliver the same material within a given period of time, say 45 minutes, to all of them, means drastic harm to the quality of learning of many of the class and the resultant loss of a great deal of potential learning is inevitable. Home education families rather take it for granted that learning styles differ and vary the learning situation accordingly.
-  Children of school age do not need to be formally taught if they are to learn. In school this may be the case but at home they can learn just by living.
-  As a learning environment, it is hard for school as currently organised to match an alert, organised and energetic family. Only a few schools even get near it.
-  Flexible learning (and as a result the production of flexible people) is more likely to be found in home-based education.
-  Learner-managed learning (autonomous education) is at present more frequently found in home-based education: schools tend to focus on 'how to be taught', whereas homes tend to teach 'how to learn'. Schools, therefore, tend to teach you to be stuck with the gaps in your knowledge, homes how to fill them.
-  Variety in the curriculum is commonplace at home, but currently much rarer at school.
-  Families can monitor, evaluate and change their learning programmes as and when necessary.
-  Schools at present tend to focus on one-dimensional education, homes more frequently develop multi-dimensional education.
-  Co-operative forms of education are more likely to be found in home-based settings, because of the dominance of the authoritarian school management model. (Davis 1994)
-  Homes are more likely than schools to achieve 'the child in pursuit of knowledge and not 'knowledge in pursuit of the child'.


 Enthusiasts for the crowd-instructor (teacher in the classroom) role ignore the evidence about its inefficiency. The short-term recall of learners after formal instruction averages 10% with a usual range of 0% to 20%. The long term recall averages 5% with a usual range of 0% to 10%.

Reading

 Home schooling parents showed less anxiety when their children showed no inclination to learn to read at the usual age. The children who learned to read relatively late still went on very quickly to read material suitable for their age. Most of the children were voracious readers (Thomas, 1994).

 The time and effort spent on teaching reading also flies in the face of the facts that it usually takes about 30 hours to learn, provided that it takes place in a learner-friendly environment. This figure comes from Paulo Freire's work with illiterate peasants in South America where he logged the progress of cohort after cohort of reading classes. Those home-schoolers who have also logged progress, report similar results.

Maths

 One home-educating family decided to ignore Maths unless it cropped-up in the course of other investigations. Later they said how pleased they were with this policy and how well it had worked out in practice. With CD-ROM interactive discs now available that will teach you Maths in a quarter or less of the time of a taught course, you can take the subject on board whenever you wish.

Three learning systems

Twenty years of research reveal three learning systems, which have been shown to get better results. These are ideally suited to home education.

1. **Purposive conversation** between two and up to eight people. This is one of the reasons that home-based education is so remarkably successful, in getting the learners, on average, two years ahead of their schooled counterparts and in some cases, up to ten years ahead. Between 40% and 60% of the time is spent in purposive conversation which replaces the inefficient crowd instruction method in schools.

2. **Teaching something to someone else.** This is one of the reasons why people are so easily fooled by formal teaching methods. Because the teacher remembers up to 90% of the material, it is easy to assume that the learners do too. They do not. When they fail to do so, the disappointed teacher cannot face the idea that it is the method that is poor and is likely to blame the learners.
3. **Learning co-operatives.** As well as being successful in the standard tasks of memorising and reproducing institutionally approved material, learners also developed bonus skills in resourcefulness, flexibility, curiosity, skill in learning, readiness to unlearn, research techniques and enhanced personal confidence.

Natural learning and ‘dovetailing’

🏠 Young children are natural learners. They are explorers or research scientists busily gathering information and making meaning out of the world. Most of this learning is not the result of teaching, but rather a constant and universal learning activity, as natural as breathing.

🏠 Parents appear to have no predetermined plan of language teaching, they simply respond to the cues provided and give support to the next stage of learning as the child decides to encounter it (Wells 1986).

🏠 A prize-winning New York teacher, John Taylor Gatto, describes schooling as training children "...to be obedient to a script written by remote strangers...Education demands you write the script of your own life with the help of people who love or care about you."

Application of various forms of discipline

Children need to understand and experience various forms of discipline in their lives:

- 🏠 Authoritarian discipline: taking instructions from others
- 🏠 Democratic discipline: agreeing rules and co-operating with others
- 🏠 Self-discipline: choosing to behave within certain parameters of their own volition
- 🏠 The discipline of how to research and retain information

The experience of families educating at home has demonstrated how these various forms of discipline can be achieved. The learners sometimes direct their own studies. At other times, they work in co-operation with others and on other occasions submit themselves to

instruction. The parents can act as instructors, facilitators, co-learners and often as sources of encouragement.

Efficient use of time

Children who have come out of school into home-based education often comment on the efficiency of learning, i.e. learning a lot more in a shorter period of time. This helps to explain why children who are 'behind' at school soon catch up at home, and also why they can end up two to ten years ahead of their schooled counterparts.

Non-hostile learning environment

The relaxed atmosphere at home, encourages children to be increasingly confident in taking over the management of their own learning. When they start school at five years of age, they are asking about 30 knowledge or enquiry questions an hour (Wells 1986), but this soon drops and eventually gets to around zero. In home-based learning, their interest in learning, curiosity and questioning begins to build up again.

Direct access to information

Children don't need to go to school to get information. There are information and learning sources all around, including the home, libraries, computers, internet. There are thousands of workplaces and opportunities for service.

Learner-managed learning; plan, do, review

When learners take responsibility for their learning experiences from beginning to end, they will be better learners. They do this by planning their own learning, experiencing learning and reviewing their learning. This is the pattern in home-based learning, which is more efficient than school.

Parents as learning coaches, avoiding unwanted teaching

How can one or two parents replace the team of experts of a school staff? Home educating parents see themselves more as 'fixers' or 'learning site managers', who help arrange the learning programme, and may often operate as fellow learners, researching alongside their children, rather than as instructors.

Plenty of first-hand experience

Home-based education assumes that large amounts of first-hand information are essential for effective learning.

Social skills

- ☛ Confidence-building is currently more likely to be found in homes.
- ☛ The habit of peer-dependency and the tyranny of the peer group produced by school operating the officially approved model can be reversed by home-based education.
- ☛ Equal opportunities in education can be achieved more easily at home than under the present models of schooling.
- ☛ Discrimination against loners: Loners in school can often become the target for bullying because the normal expectation generated by the socialisation superstition, is that you will allow yourself to be taken over by the peer group. This assumes that the artificially created peer group of school is actually worth joining.

So if your child seems content with their own company and yours it is not an automatic cause for concern.

Teachers as home educators

Currently, about 33% of home schoolers are members of the teaching profession. They have decided that home-based education is the best option for their own children.

A NATIONWIDE STUDY OF HOME EDUCATION

– PAULA ROTHERMEL (*summary of main findings 1998-2000*)

This research explored the aims and practices of home-educators in the UK. The three year study involved 1000 home educating families, approximately 2000 children with particular focus on under 11s. Several hundred children participated in the first national assessment programme of children educated electively outside the school system.

These assessments measured psychological stability, academic attainment and social skills. One main area of the research consisted of 135 interviews with home educating families in their homes. The research is to be published soon.

Early findings




There were four main findings:










1. The home educators came from mixed socio-economic class.
2. The educational methods adopted by families varied. Moreover, parents adapted to individual children's needs, employing where appropriate, different approaches at varying stages of each child's development.
3. In general, the children were not neurotic social isolates but competent social beings with the ability to interact with others, adults and peers alike, as equals. The children were generally confident and independent.
4. Within the age range, 4-11 years, subjected to a program of assessment measures attached to this research, the home educated children were generally progressing more positively in developmental/academic terms than their school counterparts.

However, there were huge variations within the group. Whilst some excelled socially, others did not, whilst some read to a high standard, others did not. It is important to note that the findings above relate to the sample as a group and that there were exceptions at both extremes.



Tentative results suggest that the children assessed, demonstrated high levels of ability and good social skills. They appeared to benefit from a curriculum tailored to their individual needs and from the attention given to them by their families. The wider implication is that children may benefit from the self-motivation that stems from greater parental participation in their learning process, a more flexible curriculum and an individualised educational programme that reflects their own interests.

Family background

-  Home education is not a middle class phenomenon. More parents were involved in manual and semi-skilled occupations than professional
-  Children whose parents were classified at the lower end of the social scale did substantially better. They outperformed their higher social class peers. This is unique because previous research supports the idea that parental social class does effect educational outcomes. The reasons for this are not clear and further analysis is needed to see whether this applies to older children.
-  Mostly mothers were the trained teachers who had only taught for a short time, if at all.

-  Two out of three parents had received no training
-  In many cases, teacher-parents said that their training made them realise that parents could teach
-  71% of parents considered their own schooling to have been 'good' or 'average'
-  43% ceased 'formal' education at 16 years of age.
-  Trained schoolteachers made up 23% of the parents. Whilst some parents found their teaching experience a hindrance, others found it an asset. The consensus was that teacher training equipped parents to better communicate with their local education authority.
-  This study also found that home education was not confined to any particular social group. The sample included travellers, those on very low incomes and families whose children had been in care, mixed race families, deeply religious families and single parent families.
-  Parenting styles ranged from libertarian to autocratic.
-  There was more or less an equal spread between parents who did and did not hold professional qualifications. Parents in manual employment however, outnumbered those employed professionally.
-  Often following commencement of home education, a shift in family convention occurred. Most notable, was 'loss' of one income. Parents often altered their working patterns to accommodate the children's learning and within many families both parents worked part-time. Parents also regularly took to studying. The research found that for many, the onset of home-education led a previously conventional family to radically alter their perspective on life and education.

Learning programmes

-  The national curriculum was followed by just 14% of families with 58% stating that they did not use it; 28% families referred to it occasionally.
-  Learning routines, partial or otherwise, were followed by 74% of families. Routines were often organised around seasonal changes, practicalities such as work and externally organised activities.

- ✦ Whilst the research at hand agreed with the idea that 'flexibility' was a characteristic trait of home-educators, the study found that within families, parents adopted different approaches to different children at different times. Flexibility may have resulted in a shift from informality to formality just as often as the reverse; thus emphasising the highly individualised curriculum that home-educated children experience.

Performance on national assessments

Home educated children were assessed according to Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) for the start and end of reception year. In the first batch of assessments (PIPS Project 1997, 1998), a group of 36 families was followed over a year: the families were interviewed twice and their four year olds assessed at what would be the 'Start' and 'End' of their 'Reception Year'. Home educated children are referred to as the sample.

An analysis of the resulting background data revealed that:

- 🏠 for 71% of families, neither parent had undergone formal teacher training;
- 🏠 58% of parents had received their own education at a comprehensive school;
- 🏠 11% of the sample were single parent families;
- 🏠 Higher education qualifications were held by just 37% of the parents whilst the remaining 63% had no professional qualifications.
- 🏠 Families without a television in the home totalled 36%. Computers were represented in 33% of households: 14% owning a computer but no television and 19% both a computer and a television. For 22% of families, there was neither computer nor television in the household.

The children came from very mixed backgrounds: amongst the sample were traveller families, city dwellers, rural inhabitants, children living in very depressed economic conditions and those living in comfortable, stereotypical 'middle class' families.


The most cited 'problem' with home-education, was, 'other people's opinions', a sad reflection, perhaps, on our unwillingness to accommodate change and difference.


Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) start & end of reception assessment data (1998)


The assessments with these children revealed interesting results:


- ☛ Where the national average score was 54, the home-educated children scored 97 at what would have been their 'Start of Reception'. Translated into standardised scores this indicated that, at the 'Start of Reception', 63% of the home-educated sample fell into a score bracket usually occupied by just 2-3% of children nationally.
- ☛ Despite the high percentages of home-educated children achieving above average scores at the 'Start of Reception', their performance in terms of value-added progress during the year, was rather poor: for Maths, they maintained the expected learning incline over the period, whilst in English, only 27% of the group managed average, or above average, progress. However, the impact of these low value-added scores was marginal in view of the finding that by the 'End of Reception' 21% of home-educated children still scored significantly above the norm, where nationally, there were 2-3% of children.
- ☛ Curiously, at the 'Start of Reception' the children performed significantly better at maths than reading, but by the 'End', they scored significantly worse at maths than reading.
- ☛ At no stage, however, was there a significant difference between genders.
- ☛ Comparing assessment results from the home-educated four year-olds with the classifications of parental social class (Rose and O'Reilly 1998), it was found that the average score of children from professional families (classes 1 and 2) was significantly inferior to that attained by children at the lower end of the socio-economic class scale (classes 3, 4 and 6).
- ☛ Preparatory analysis of the PIPS baseline assessment data indicated that 65%, or 23 children, scored over 75%; nationally, the figure for children achieving over 75% was 5.1%. The average national score was 45%, whilst that of the sample was 81%. When assessed nine months later, it appeared that the children's progress over that period was slower than that associated with school children during their reception year (Tymms, Merrell, and Henderson, 1996).
- ☛ This later observation was offset by the home-educated children's baseline attainment and indeed, a majority were still ahead of the school educated children at the end of their 'reception year'. At the end of 'reception year', the national average score for Mathematics was 51.5%; the average for the sample was 68.7%. The 'end of reception year' national average for Reading was 44.9%, whilst that of the sample was 59.3%.


What might the results mean?


 If children can achieve high levels of learning, at home, from a parent, or parents, without formal training, where the socio-economic level of the family is low to moderate and the family is not necessarily the traditional kind, why are we placing increasing numbers of very young children into schooling and letting them and parents believe, from early on that gender (Cassidy 1999), poverty and family circumstance alone will commit their children to failure (Davies 1999)?

 Since Rothermel's (1999b) home-educated sample began their 'Reception Year' at such a high standard and finished it still ahead, this may indicate the benefits of supported, intensive parenting for young children generally and could be taken as evidence that a later formal education starting age would offer a positive benefit to children. Similarly, if 'no school' equates to 'no gender differences', boys, who are usually thought to be at an educational disadvantage in particular (Cassidy 1999), might derive especial benefit from a later school starting age.

 The exceedingly high number of home-educators who do not use televisions may itself be a contributory factor to the children's high performance under relatively informal regimes.

 With respect to class distinctions between levels of attainment, it was plausible that the parents at the lower end of the social spectrum were conscious of their divergence from the norm and were thus keen that their children should remain on par with national standards. It might have been the case, too, that local education authorities made more demands on low income families, echoing their anxieties for the children. As the results demonstrated, there was no need for such concern.

 More importantly, if the absence of school can remove the socio-economic education bias towards the better off, then there must surely be a place for such a system that can, for some and by choice, remove school from the equation, in the quest to raise standards of education. The idea of maintaining the mediocre when there is potential for the best, is surely ludicrous.

 The children from families at higher socio-economic levels may have been learning under more liberal values, but this method, as the results illustrated, was nevertheless, a recipe for success. The key to these findings, for all families, was, it seems, the availability of parents, on tap.

The research, as highlighted, did not only involve these few baseline assessed children. Besides the 2000 or so children covered by the questionnaire survey, 210 children were assessed individually, using a variety of academic, social and psychological testing. The points raised above, whilst relating specifically to the 'Reception' cohort, apply across the

whole group. Throughout the primary age range, the home-educated children outperformed their school counterparts.

Overview

The main points that have come from this paper and from the research generally are that, a great number of children and their families are not happy with the current educational options. For most, this, so-called, 'choice' is between, for 'better or for worse' inclusion, or total exclusion. Many children go to school because they and their families are too anxious about the consequences of not doing so—fears of retribution from families, friends and authorities. Many more are not even aware that they have a choice between school and 'otherwise' education.

Family cohesiveness is more beneficial to development than any amount of state imposed caring educational provision. As the revised national curriculum for the Year 2000 comes into existence and target setting for 3 year olds becomes a reality, we are simply looking in the wrong direction.

Motivation to home educate




- ☛ Over half of reasons given related to school, such as 'unhappy with current school education', class sizes too large' and 'bullying'.
- ☛ Almost one third of motivations listed were child-centred; e.g. we wanted to stimulate our child's learning', 'its the child's choice', 'it meets our child's needs.
- ☛ One in five parents describe their motivation in terms of their beliefs, referring to their 'ideology', 'lifestyle', their faith and 'the lack of morality in society'.
- ☛ When families become acquainted with other home educators, as well as related literature they often adopt a more philosophical approach, often believing that the present education system needed reform.
- ☛ Close family relationship and being together; learning together.
- ☛ Freedom and flexibility to do what we want, when we want .
- ☛ Letting the children learn in their own style, developing naturally.
- ☛ The most cited 'problem' with home-education, was, 'other people's opinions', a sad reflection, perhaps, on our unwillingness to accommodate change and difference.

Reasons for success






There are many possible explanations as to why the children generally performed to such a high standard on the assessment program. Some possible factors are considered. Further, or alternative, explanations may yet emerge.

The children aged 4 to 7 years who contributed to the programme had, for the most part, never attended school. It is conceivable that they were, as a group, more intelligent than children in general. If so, contributory factors may have been:




- 🏠 genetic inheritance
- 🏠 that about 10% of the sample did not own televisions, and many, but not all, of those families who did own one, were selective with their viewing; this may have signified that the children were less exposed to the pacifying, non participatory effects of TV
- 🏠 the sheer quantity of parental attention
- 🏠 the child-led curriculum evident, overtly or subtly, in most of the participating families; even amongst families who exercised the strictest idea of what a home-education should be, there was a flexibility that may have nurtured individual talents
- 🏠 a sense of security associated with long term parental attachment
- 🏠 the close sibling attachment observed in many of the home educated children, whereby the children shared a common childhood as opposed to having been separated by differing experiences at nursery and school
- 🏠 that the families who home educated from birth had worked with their children gradually, at their own pace, without the transition at an early age, to the very different environment of school
- 🏠 the absence of over-stimulation from peer-group social contact, such as playgroups and nursery schemes
- 🏠 it is feasible that those children participating in the assessment program were essentially a mixed ability group who had been motivated and encouraged by:
 - 🏠 a low adult to child ratio
 - 🏠 love and security within the family, even where the offspring were in a one parent family
 - 🏠 the absence of peer pressure


-  the absence of academic pressures often associated with schooling
-  learning through talk
-  individualised learning experiences largely following the children's own interest

School experience

-  It is possible that those who had spent time in the school system, had in fact benefited from that system far more than the average child, but that this 'benefit' had manifested itself by seeding the problem that had led to withdrawal (i.e. the child had read early and thus become uncomfortable in the classroom, and possibly disruptive).
-  It is conceivable that had these children either entered, or remained in, school, they might have achieved even higher potential. However, given the diverse socio-economic backgrounds of these children, it appears more likely that it was their common experience of home education that was the major contributory factor to their high level performance. What is more difficult to determine is exactly which components, or combination of factors, contributed to the sample's positive assessment outcomes.
-  The assessment program focused upon those children aged up to 11 years of age and thus cannot reflect upon how children aged 11+ might have fared. Children in the upper age range would have been more likely to have spent time in school, whereas many of those in the under 11 age range had very often never been to school, or had been for a short time only.
-  Many of the parents with younger children had placed them into school initially whilst simultaneously experiencing doubts about the system. These concerns may have only manifested themselves after the child had spent a period in school.
-  If the preliminary indications are confirmed by further analysis, there will be a need for additional work and investigation of possible explanations.

Reasons for returning to school

-  Children under 11 returning to school is often because of a desire to have more friends
-  Some parents reached the stage where they needed more support
-  None gave the quality of school education as their reason

 Compromise was often a factor in such decisions, where home was no longer able, for whatever reason, to cater for the child's need.

Reading

- ### The literacy assessment was conducted with 60 six, eight and ten year-olds
- ### Home educated children demonstrated a high standard of literacy when contrasted with national attainment levels
- ### Even where children were described by their parents or by themselves as 'poor' readers, they were nevertheless, meeting or outperforming national targets
- ### Age-norm related reading skills were not necessarily a priority for home educators. Some children read exceptionally early, others were described by their families as 'late readers'
- ### Some children performed well, even though parents had felt that the children would have been unable to complete the test
- ### Some children, parents saw as high fliers, performed less well
- ### Throughout the research, it was observed that parents were unable to predict their children's abilities
- ### This may be because their children are not subjected to continual testing, they are able to learn in their own way, so the extent of their knowledge often goes undetected
- ### Non reading children between 7 and 11 tended to be literary minded, enjoying the literature despite not being able to read
- ### Notably, the children from religious backgrounds often read earliest: perhaps, the result of exposure to texts containing minimal illustration
- ### Within families, age-norm related reading skills were not necessarily a priority. At the extremes, some children read exceptionally early, while others were late readers. The data indicated that more home-educated children fell within these brackets than the norm
- ### Cross-referencing reading attainment scores with preliminary data on the 8 to 11-year-olds, suggested that such children were not unduly affected by their late reading

- ✎ Preliminary analysis of the National Literacy Programme assessments for years 1, 3 and 5, indicated that the home-educated children demonstrated a high standard of literacy when contrasted with national attainment levels.

Social skills

- 🏠 The children interviewed varied in age between babyhood through to adulthood
- 🏠 The children demonstrated a feeling of security within their family environment that apparently contributed to their self-confidence, self-motivation and generally high self-esteem
- 🏠 Tentative results suggest that the children assessed demonstrated high levels of ability and good social skills
- 🏠 They appear to benefit from a curriculum tailored to their individual needs and from the attention given by the family
- 🏠 Love and security in the family positively contributed to the children's ability to learn as did the absence of academic and peer pressures, often associated with schooling
- 🏠 The opportunity to learn through talk was also contributory
- 🏠 Children benefit from the self-motivation that comes from greater parental participation in their learning process, a more flexible curriculum and an individualised education programme that reflects their own interests
- 🏠 The family unity was often present, regardless of the social conditions under which the family lived. The preliminary findings suggested that the children, irrespective of whether they emanated from broken homes, poor housing or itinerant lifestyles, benefited from parental attention to the extent that, possibly, this factor alone gave them self-confidence and the encouragement to learn.

Conclusion

Home-educated children apparently benefited from receiving concentrated attention, coupled with a flexible curriculum designed to reflect their own interests. They appeared self-confident, self-motivated and demonstrated good levels of attainment.

The findings did not in any way suggest an indictment of teachers or schools operating within the confines of the existing system. The results do, however, raise questions about the inflexible nature of the strategy employed at present, for raising children, in the UK.

Religious and non-religious families

The question asking families about their religion was only included in later versions of the questionnaire. However, from those who did respond to this question:

☪ Religious: 57.35%

☪ Not religious: 36.87%

☪ Non-committal: 5.77%

Of the families who specified their religion:

☪ Christians: 26.44%

☪ Church of England: 23.05%

☪ Non-church-going Christians: 4.41%

☪ Jehovah's Witnesses: 18.64%

☪ Catholic: 7.12%

Other religious organizations with which participants aligned themselves were:

Quaker (4.07%), Pagan (3.73%), Buddhist (3.05%)

With under 2% representation:

Methodist, Mormon, Jewish, Brethren, Wicca, Islam, Free Church of Scotland, Christadelphian, Baptist and Spiritual (oriental).

Religious & secular comparison

This research shows that at about the age of four (the start of reception in schools) the children from religiously affiliated families performed on a par with the secular families.

🏠 The mean standardised score for the children from religious families was 69%, and for secular families 69.75%

🏠 By the 'end of reception' religious families' children averaged 65.4% and the children from secular families 56.71%

🏠 The mean for the standardised scores was set at 50% and about 66% of children were expected to score between 40 and 60: the 'End of Reception' mean score for children from secular families, therefore, had moved below this score band.

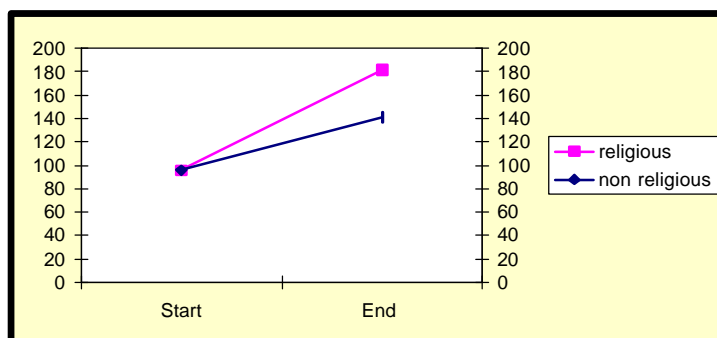
These scores suggested that all the home-educated children started the 'year' with above average scores, yet failed to maintain the same lead at the 'End of Reception', noticeably experiencing more difficulty with the second part of the assessment than the first. Relative to the standardised mean of 50, it was found that whilst scores relating to children from religious families fell 3.6 points over the ten month period, the scores of their secular peers decreased by 13.04 points as illustrated by the table, below:

STANDARDISED SCORES FOR CHILDREN FROM RELIGIOUS & NON RELIGIOUS FAMILIES

		Start of Reception mean score	'Start of Reception' points above norm 50	'End of Reception' points above norm 50	End of Reception mean score
Family	Religious	69	19	15.4	65.4
	Secular	69.75	19.75	6.71	56.71

There was no significant difference between the 'Start of Reception' raw scores for the religious and non religiously affiliated children, but there was a significant difference in raw scores between the two groups' 'End of Reception' scores¹. The chart below shows how the children from secular backgrounds demonstrated slower progression over the ten month period than their religiously affiliated peers.

'YEARS' PROGRESS OF CHILDREN FROM RELIGIOUS AND NON RELIGIOUS FAMILIES



Famous home schoolers

Many famous and influential people in the history of this world were educated at home. These are testimonies to the power of home schooling. They include the following:

Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, Joseph, Moses,

Philippe Melanchthon, CS Lewis, Sir Isaac Newton, George Washington Carver, Alexander Graham Bell, Leonardo da Vinci, Wilbur & Orville Wright, Albert Einstein, Yehudi Menuhin, Claude Monet, Abraham Lincoln, George Washington,

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION

—BY RAYMOND & DOROTHY MOORE

The veteran Adventist educators Raymond and Dorothy Moore have carried out extensive research for about 30 years on early childhood development and its effects on a child's learning. They are leaders in America's home schooling movement and their well-documented research is a powerful testimony in support of the fact that home with loving parents is the best environment for a child's development all-round up to at least eight to ten years of age. This is in line with the Spirit of Prophecy counsel.

While this research focuses primarily on early development and learning, it sheds light on educational issues that arise later as a result of misconceptions and mistakes in early childhood education. The following is a summary of the main findings documented in the Moores' book, 'School Can Wait':

☞ see *Spirit of Prophecy on home schooling pp.66-67*

The role of parents in early learning

- ☞ A child relates to people and to the world primarily through interaction with parents or parent surrogates. This effective tie or attachment makes it possible for the child to define himself as a person, separate yet related to those around him. Premature interference with this tie often threatens the child's stability and the satisfactory performance of his role as a social creature.
- ☞ **The home appears still to be the best place for acquiring a healthy attachment. At present no substitute is known for the family in this respect.** Frequent interaction with both parents enables the child to accept separation with the least problem. Nevertheless, most children cannot tolerate separation from their mothers before the age of five; and for the insecure, this intolerance may continue until age eight and for some as late as age ten.
- ☞ Even the best day care cannot completely neutralise the negative social, emotional, and cognitive effects of mother-child separation.

A child's values and self-concept




- ☞ A child's system of values and his self-concept are inextricably bound together and are concurrent in their influence on learning. Thus, a major task of early learning is an individual's identification of values—of defining his sense of self-worth.

- 🏠 The role of parents is crucial in establishing a sound sense of self-worth in a child and building his value structure. This is first and best accomplished in the example of the parents themselves.
- 🏠 In order for children to function effectively in a peer group, they should be able to comprehend reasonably their social identity within the primary family group.
- 🏠 In less than a generation the shift from parents to peers as the primary models appears to have moved substantially down from about grade seven to early grades, and it is believed that social contagion—imitating attitudes and activities of peers—is now believed well developed at the preschool level. Such peer orientation seems to have negative effects on young children. This is consistent with findings that **children who start school later—and wait therefore to come under the influence of their school peers—tend to be superior in achievement, behaviour, sociability, and leadership.**



The learning environment

- 🏠 The early learning of a normal child depends largely on the people and things in his immediate environment, as well as the opportunities he has to respond to them. Among the factors contributing to an effective learning experience are the following: personal approval and acceptance of his behaviour by adults; active, self-initiated—though leisurely—exploration and discovery of a healthy predictable environment adapted to the child's culture; active manipulation of the materials in his immediate world; active interest in a learning task; and less constant exposure to external stimulation rather than more.
- 🏠 Factors that inhibit early learning are: disapproval, fear, and uncertainty; confusion in the surroundings or in relation to authority figures such as parents, other adults in the home, older siblings, and teachers; passive absorption of continual sensory stimulation such as television; and structure learning, with its tedious repetition and boredom, particularly before the child is ready cognitively, neurophysiologically, and sensorily.
- 🏠 It is not so much the school environment that enables a child to learn in his early years as what he brings to the school. For children who are insecure, socioemotionally dependent, or disadvantaged in other ways, a structured situation will sometimes foster learning. **Yet the internal security of a stable home and family, which permits learning without deliberate structure, generally fosters greater progress.**


Readiness for school

-  Since children develop at different rates, including gender-related differences, researchers cannot pinpoint a specific age at which they are ready to begin formal schooling. Yet overwhelming evidence on readiness for normal children—including the gifted—points to later rather than earlier school entrance: seldom, if ever, before eight and often ten or older.
-  Experience has proven that the child delayed in entering school usually will catch up with, and often pass, those who have entered earlier.
-  Acceleration of bright children alone may sometimes be sound practice. However, research shows that a delayed schooling with acceleration at a later age is more effective and potentially less damaging—mentally, socially, and emotionally—than early school entrance.

Readiness for reading

-  Young children generally do not push themselves beyond their ability to achieve. On the other hand, **overanxious adults who apply pressures for early reading, along with pressures of keeping up with classmates, may cause many so-called reading and learning disabilities.** Parents and teachers who care, who respond warmly and consistently, who thus create an environment conducive to reading and support children's efforts, greatly facilitate children's learning to read. Motivation of this kind evidently does more for children's reading than exerting undue pressure to achieve or conducting special early school or other training programs.
-  Children who learn to read words without meaning may also be genuinely disadvantaged. This problem relates primarily to children who are pressured to read early, before they are able to reason consistently and to comprehend the concepts carried by the printed word.

Age and academic stimulation

-  **Cognitive development occurs in sequential stages which never vary in their sequence.** Intellectual growth is dependent on appropriate activities at each particular stage. It cannot be formally speeded up through special instruction or training.

- 🏠 Learning proceeds rapidly during at least two periods—the preschool years of four to six and the later childhood years of nine to eleven.
- 🏠 Primarily, the potential to learn is being acquired during the early years of life more than learning itself. The need for academic instruction at this stage is open to question since no conclusive evidence suggests lasting effects of preschool instruction. **Time provides for the maturation of physical and mental abilities and also permits the accumulation of life experience on which a child can build.** He can then find meaning in academic tasks that he can learn after age seven or eight with much greater efficiency and far less frustration and stress.
- 🏠 Formal training in cognitive tasks during early childhood does sometimes improve intellectual functioning, but induced learning is likely (1) to be limited in scope, (2) to lack permanence, and (3) to be of little benefit to the child in later learning and achievement. In fact earlier-than-usual formal learning is often detrimental to later learning (with the exception of handicapped or disadvantaged children—who often need early structured help).

Neuropsychological factors in learning

- 🏠 Many neuropsychologists and neurophysiologists now are aware that structure relates closely to function in the development of the young child's brain.
- 🏠 Vision and hearing, for example, are neuropsychological senses or processes which emerge from the brain. The eyes and ears are, in effect extensions of the brain. Learning activities that overload these senses may therefore also produce stress of the central nervous system.
- 🏠 Although most children achieve hearing acuity somewhat earlier than visual maturity, **the two major modalities, auditory and visual seem to equalize in perceptual capacity or function by age nine—the age auditory perception specialists suggest for readiness in basic skills learning.** Learning difficulties may arise from emphasis on new conceptual learning before a proper sensory-perceptual base has been reached.

Neurophysiology: Development of the brain and learning

- 🏠 It is apparent both from educational studies on how children learn and from our understanding of brain maturation that improved technology may not necessarily

improve or accelerate intellectual growth. First, **the child must achieve brain maturation appropriate to the learning task.**


- 🏠 Sufficient available data exist to suggest caution in mandating academic or academic-readiness schooling for children under eight years of age.


Gender-difference effects

- 🏠 Physically, boys are about four weeks behind girls in skeletal maturity at birth and often nearly a year behind by school age. This generally increases to approximately eighteen months at nine years of age and to two years at adolescence. Normally, no significant difference exists in inherent intellectual abilities of boys and girls, but physically and emotionally young boys are more vulnerable to the environmental hazards of the home and school, and this may effect mental development.
- 🏠 Because of this, boys are more likely than girls to experience learning and behaviour problems....However as they grow older this vulnerability diminishes.
- 🏠 Educators seldom make allowances for boys' limitations in early learning situations; so their abilities are frequently masked by aggression, negativism, and low teacher ratings. Findings that boys are more negatively affected by early school entry than girls are therefore not surprising. However, **when boys are given the opportunity to mature until about eight to ten years of age before starting school, they usually do as well as girls.**

Effectiveness of early schooling

- 🏠 **There is no conclusive evidence that, in general, early schooling programs provide long-range benefits.** In fact, research findings generally support the opposite conclusion. For example, although preschool experience has sometimes resulted in short-term intellectual and social benefits for disadvantaged children, there is little, if any, reason for such optimism over the long term.
- 🏠 It is true that children from disorganised family systems do not develop optimum internal control and motivation for normal learning. So external control in a carefully structured school environment may benefit them. Although this leads to some desired cognitive gains, it does not provide the necessary internal motivation for self-initiated learning...Gains are almost inevitably lost unless this external structure is continuously maintained.

 Most intensive efforts to develop academic skills in the preschool years may be dangerous and shortsighted, correlating with frustration, anxiety, and apathy in later school years.

 Emphasis on parenthood education and family rehabilitation appears far more logical than early schooling if we are to ensure the child's optimum learning development—which is his right.

A positive approach to early learning

- ### Most people still accept the family as the primary educational delivery system for young children. In fact, even while the trend moves toward earlier schooling, psychologists are more and more pointing to the home. Many early childhood specialists, and others interested in the child's welfare, suggest that educational programs for parents and future parents should receive society's and government's first consideration.
- ### Family education generally produces desirable child development with much greater cost effectiveness than public care and other out-of-home programs for young children.
- ### **Therefore, much that Western children now learn early, can be more quickly and effectively learned at a later age—with less repetition, apathy, and frustration.** The earlier school years can then better emphasise physical health and effective, motor, and perceptual development, with the parents sharing home responsibility experiences, teaching their children to serve others as well as to be served.

Other American research supports the Moores' findings:

The American Academy of Pediatricians has expressed concern about the dramatic increase of "stress related symptoms being seen in young children. Frustrated kindergarten' teachers acknowledge they are contributing to pressure but say they feel caught up in having to prepare children for first grade expectations. Our failure to apply in the classroom what we have learned through research is evident in the secondary schools—boys outnumber girls 13 to 1 in remedial classes and by as much as 8 to 1 in classes for the emotionally impaired.

— Anne K. Soderman, *EDUCATION WEEK* March 14, 1984.

All of the learning necessary for success in high school can be accomplished in only two or three years of formal skill study. Delaying mandatory instruction in the

basic skills until the junior high school years could mean academic success for millions of school children who are doomed to failure under the traditional educational system.

— *Dr William D. Rohwer, learning psychologist at University of California, Berkley (HARVARD EDUCATIONAL REVIEW, 1971).*

Adolescence—not early childhood—is the best time for intellectual development... The latest body of research portrays early adolescence (between ages 10 and 14) as an extremely fruitful time for academic learning.

— *STANFORD RESEARCH INSTITUTE. REPORT.*

RESEARCH ON GROWN-UP HOME-SCHOOLED CHILDREN

— *J. GARY KNOWLES & JAMES A. MUCHMORE (University of Michigan)*



A recurring criticism of home schooling is that students are deprived of the interaction necessary for optional social adjustment. Life-history interviews of adults who themselves were home-educated as children, however, fail to substantiate the criticism. To the contrary, the adults reflected positively on their home education and their present occupations. Spirituality and a sense of moral purpose were values shared by many of the adults.

In the early 1990s, a lengthy survey with closed and open-ended questions was sent out to individuals in America and Canada who had been previously home schooled. 46 of the respondents were then interviewed. These were purposely chosen in order to represent as much diversity as possible across attributes such as age, sex, race, family background, formal school attendance, present and past residential locations (both geographically and urban/rural), and vocation. Ten of the interviewees are represented in the table below:


Name	Age	Age when Home-educated	Occupation	Attended College	Married	Children
Ronald	77	7-8, 10	Retired Judge	Yes	Yes	Yes
Katherine	47	5-7, 9, 13	Part-time College instructor	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rachel Yes	30	15-18	Crafts salesperson		Yes	Yes

Adam Yes	50	13?	Weaver	No	Yes	
Cora	50	till 7	Small garment factory owner	No	Yes	Yes
John	18	15-17	Pizza place worker	Yes	No	No
Sue	21	till 15	College student	Yes	No	No
David Yes	39	9-16	Librarian	Yes	Yes	
Ann	24	till 12	Interior decorator	No	Yes	No
Harold	41	3-6	Planetarium operator	Yes	Yes	Yes

Values and Beliefs

-  In spite of the overall diversity among the ten adults, they often expressed similar values, especially those regarding morality and society. Respect for individual differences and a concern for others, for instance, were values shared by all of them.
-  Half, however, expressed the feeling that society had lost its morality and that there was no teaching of right and wrong in the public schools.

Vocations, Work Skills and Functioning in Society

-  The life history data together with the survey data suggest that these adults were by no means a liability to society. Although most were earning relatively moderate incomes, none were unemployed, and none were on any form of welfare assistance. No evidence suggests they were not actively participating in their communities, although some did indicate that they were not as comfortable in this activity as they may have wished. In part, this feeling may have been related to the fact that many were, in a sense, dislocated from their home-country communities as they accompanied their parents travelling or working in foreign positions.

- ### Invariably, however, high levels of autonomy and independence were the common hallmarks of these individuals.

- ### These home-educated adults regularly credited their current state of employment and functioning in society, whether correctly or incorrectly, to their home education experiences and the independence they fostered.

- ### Contrary to the commonly expressed criticism that home education is synonymous with social deprivation, these adults pointed to the value of being able to interact with a wide range of people instead of being exposed primarily to age-group peers, as is the case for those attending formal schools.

Conclusion

The characteristics of the home-educated adults in this study suggests that they grew up with specific advantages that contributed to their independent views of society and their roles in it....They did not appear to exhibit characteristics that imply that they were disadvantaged as a result of their home education experiences, as critics of home education suggest. Even in times of growing unemployment, these people were gainfully employed and productive members of their communities.

SECTION TWO
ADDRESSING YOUR
MAIN CONCERNS

7

How do home schooled children socialise?

Perhaps the single issue most often raised whenever I talk about home schooling is a child's need to interact with other children. People often express their concerns about a child being isolated from other children, only being around adults, being too sheltered from the real world etc. A common assumption amongst many is that well-socialised children need the association that school provides. However, there is powerful evidence to suggest that the opposite is true.

I have already referred to the dangers of age segregation and peer dependency. These represent to varying degrees the common experience of school educated children. The flip side of these issues, for home schooled children, are the positive benefits of more versatile social skills and broader social interaction.

Sheltering children is a valid function of the home, that must not be undermined. Just like young tender plants needing protection from a vicious wind, so children need protection to develop sufficient moral strength to withstand the assault of an aggressively Godless and wicked society.

Jesus, Himself, had a sheltered home school education that equipped Him well to confidently interact with all ages and classes of people, even from His childhood. As far as possible, He tried to fit in and please others.

*And he went down with them, and came to Nazereth and was subject unto them:...
And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.*

— LUKE 2:51,52.

The story of His visit to Jerusalem at twelve and His dialogue with the Jewish leaders well illustrates His social skills at a young age.

As one seeking for wisdom, He questioned these teachers in regard to the prophecies and to events then taking place that pointed to the Advent of the

Messiah.... The doctors turned upon Him with questions, and they were amazed at His answers....
The rabbis knew that Jesus had not been instructed in their schools; yet His understanding of the prophecies far exceeded theirs. —DESIRE OF AGES 78,80.

He also showed his social skills in having to withstand the peer pressure of His brothers and friends in order to maintain His personal integrity.

His brother felt that His influence went far to counteract theirs. He possessed a tact that none of them had or desired to have... All this displeased his brothers. Being older than Jesus, they felt that He should be under their dictation....

Young companions urged Him to do as they did. He was bright and cheerful; they enjoyed His presence, and welcomed his ready suggestions; but they were impatient at His scruples and pronounced Him narrow and strait-laced. —IBID. 87,89.

Can the education of Christ be improved on for our children today? From His example, some key elements for successful socialisation emerge:

Self-concept

Healthy family relationships in the home provide the best environment for children to gain a positive and confident view of themselves. Loving responsiveness and quality time with parents will do more to give a child a positive view of him or herself than almost anything else.

When work, study and service are successfully combined in the home, children feel needed, wanted and useful. This develops, self-confidence, self worth and self-respect. Surveys in America show that the longer children are home schooled, the higher their self-concept, irrespective of parents' education levels. This is at a time when government schools are looking feverishly for ways of boosting the self-esteem of children.

Close friendship with parents

The foundation of any child's social relationships in life is her relationship with her parents. Ideally, this relationship has not only the dimension of superior and subordinate, but also the dimension of friends and confidants. Home schooling provides the opportunity and time to develop meaningful friendships between parents and children. Not only are there less rivals for their children's attention, but children will respond to the fact that their parents

value them so much that they are willing to reshape their own lives to give them the best education they can.

Better interaction with all age groups

Home schoolers have shown themselves to be better socialisers with all age groups. Having close natural bonds with their parents equips them to interact well with other adults outside of the home without all the hang ups associated with the generation gap that alienated, age-segregated school children have. They are better prepared for the diversity of real life interaction at work, church and in the community with people from all walks of life.

Leaders amongst peers

A child with a positive self-image can be a leader amongst his peers. Parental supervision of social interaction with his peers will allow a child to influence others rather than be influenced. The presence and support of parents will help a child to be himself continuing in the same vein as in his home life.

Some believe that Adventist children need to be in school of the world in order to be 'light and salt' amongst their peers. Children vary considerably in the pace of their character development. Some children are able to stand for what they believe at five while others are still easily swayed at 12. Is it right to expose our children to the risk of being engulfed by worldly influences under the fallacious notion that they are strong enough to be a witness to ungodly peers and teachers?

Bonds with siblings

Obviously, a child's bonds with her siblings provides opportunity for interaction with those of a similar age group, who have been brought up with the same values. This is safer than free and easy association with all and sundry outside of the home. Also boys and girls with siblings of the opposite gender can learn about the other sex in constructive real life ways.

Guarded contact with relatives

In order to protect the good foundation laid by proper home training, you need to be careful about your children's social contacts. Even with other relatives, you need to jealously guard your children.

Be careful how you relinquish the government of your children to others.

No one can properly relieve you of your God-given responsibility. Many children have been utterly ruined by the interference of relatives or friends in their home government. Mothers should never allow their sisters or mothers to interfere with the wise management of their children. Though the mother may have received the very best training at the hands of her mother, yet in nine cases out of ten, as a grandmother she would spoil her daughter's children, by indulgence and injudicious praise.... Men and women should pay all the respect and deference due to their parents; but in the matter of the management of their own children, they should allow no interference, but hold the reins of government in their own hands. — CHILD
GUIDANCE 288.

Home fortress





Like a fortress in time of war, home is a refuge for children to gain strength during their formative years in order to engage in the battles of life, successfully, later on.

There is no evidence to suggest that children are missing out on anything positive by being brought up in a loving protective environment. In fact, this is exactly what they need. Constant exposure to evil alternatives, through school, television, friends or any other source will not help children in any way. They need to be so grounded in what's right that when they do come in contact with evil, it will stand out in such marked contrast to what's right that they will see it for what it is and reject it as an unacceptable departure to their accepted norms.

8

What are the financial costs of home schooling?

In considering the financial costs of home schooling, there are some important questions you need to consider:

-  how important is home schooling amongst my priorities in life?
-  how far am I willing to go to make it a reality?
-  what will it actually cost me financially?
-  what are the best ways for me to meet the financial considerations?

Your priorities

Where does your children's education, lives and destinies come in your list of priorities? The true answer to this question is not so much what you say or what you think you ought to say. Rather, the answer lies in the way you spend your time, energy and money. How much of these are you spending on your children's education?

God has placed on parents a great responsibility for their children's lives and destinies. There is enormous potential in the lives of children rightly trained for God's service. Recognising this, what could be more important in your priorities than giving your children the very best education possible?

If you are convinced that home schooling is the best way for you to educate your children, you will spare nothing and make any sacrifice, financial or otherwise, to make it a reality. If you are unwilling to do this, it simply cannot be amongst your highest priorities in life.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. — MATTHEW 6:21.

How far are you prepared to go?

One of the biggest financial issues to do with home schooling centres around the role of working mothers. Whether married or single, a home schooling mother simply cannot work outside the home in the same way as when her children are in school. Each mother must look at her situation and decide whether her personal career, income and 'freedom' is more valuable to her children than giving herself to them as their best possible teacher, especially in the early years.

Interestingly, it has been calculated that what a married mother earns as a second income is actually worth very little after her work-related costs are deducted. Costs for child-care, travel, lunch etc. can be a significant portion, to say nothing of the cost to their children in terms of the time that she could have spent with them.

Looking at things in this light, the financial realities of home schooling become less daunting. Making home schooling a top priority will motivate you to go as far as you need to in order to make it a reality, even if it means having to go without some things or choosing cheaper versions.

Actual financial costs

The costs of home schooling depend very much on the style of programme and type of approach you use. Some home schoolers who follow more standardised or packaged programmes can pay out a fair amount for textbooks and materials.

However, home schooling doesn't have to cost as much as it might at first seem. If you compare it to free state education, where books and other resources are not directly paid for by parents, there are still expenses that home schooling does not incur. E.g. uniform, travel and lunch. With private schools, these costs are incurred together with the fees, themselves, which can vary considerably from one school to another.

On the whole, home schoolers tend to be quite thrifty. They are able to get the resources they need without a large outlay and tend to be good at improvising. Creative home schoolers can use almost anything from everyday life for teaching and learning activities.

The main expenditure will be for: a good home library (which every home with children should have); stationary; travel; a computer (optional); heating and electricity.

PRACTICAL WAYS TO ADDRESS FINANCIAL MATTERS

Economising

In view of the real costs of home schooling, you need not be involved in a lot of excessive expenditure. In fact, if there is sound financial management in your home it can be done extremely economically and even generate income.

There is a lot of unnecessary expenditure in most households, by parents and children. If you carefully evaluate your regular expenditure, it may become apparent that you are spending on items that are not really necessary or making payments on bills that could be a lot lower. There may be necessities that if used efficiently could be made to last a little longer. Things on which you can economise include, clothes, shoes, food, telephone bill, other bills, car expenses etc.

Effective ways of economising from my own experience include:

- # buying essential items of real quality when you come across them at a low price, even if you don't need them straight away
- # buying larger quantities of items on special offer
- # making phone calls as far as possible at the cheapest times
- # limiting length of phone conversations
- # using things until they can no longer be used
- # buying good quality second hand items from shops, car boot sales, jumble sales, libraries (old books) etc.
- # checking the reduced price section at supermarkets, regularly
- # shopping around before buying
- # keeping electric lighting to a minimum
- # using sunshine as much as possible for warming the home
- # keeping electrical gadgets to a necessary minimum
- # checking with friends to find out about cheaper prices
- # cooking or keeping food warm on top of other food being cooked
- # limiting major shopping trips to once per month (once weekly for fruits and vegetables).

Budgeting

In order to economise effectively and regularly, it is a good idea to budget. As a family you need to look at your household income and work out how much you can and need to spend on essential items, over the period of a month. Make it realistic but tight. The involvement of your children in this will help them to understand the reasons for the expenditure choices you have to make, hopefully encouraging their support for the budget. Let them help to keep a record of all household income and expenditure, throughout the month, and check to see that the budget is on target. Your aim should be to keep within the budget and if possible make a saving. If you spend outside the budget try to cut back on the amount overspent in the coming month.

Home business

This is an important part of your home schooling programme for its educational value and also for its financial benefits. A home business should be simple, not incurring large expenditure, and be beneficial to others. Depending on your skills and abilities, you could consider a range of possibilities. (You should also be prepared to acquire new skills if necessary). The following goods or services are possibilities:

Agricultural: growing and selling flowers, fruits, vegetables

Manufacturing: Bread-making, card-making, arts and craft items, health foods, clothes making, accounting

Services: freelance writing, childminding, natural therapies, washing cars, mowing lawns, sewing, typing, proof reading, parenting classes, tuition, gardening

Flexible freelance employment: interviewing for market research companies, suitable sales work, videoing homes for estate agents.

Wages, not pocket money

Most children today have come to expect some sort of income handed out by their parents in return for nothing on their part. This is not the best for the family's finances, nor for your children's monetary habits. To continually receive money in exchange for nothing can give your children a false sense of an easy-come, easy-spend life. It would be far better to give your children some regular employment, whether through household tasks, a home business or out-of-the-home work, and let them appreciate the value of good quality work in exchange for a honest wage. You may even want to give them a bonus if they perform a task particularly well.





Savings

For all family members, savings are a must. Your children should have savings accounts as soon as possible and learn how to save for future purposes. You can have a special savings account for your home schooling needs that you keep exclusively for this purpose.

For the unmarried, those who do not have children as yet, and those who plan to start home schooling in the future, it would be a good idea to start putting aside funds in a special account for your children's education.

Other sources of financial support

Depending on your financial situation, you may need to solicit funds from outside sources to support your programme. Extended family, church members and friends could be asked to sponsor the education of your children in several ways:

-  regular contributions to your home schooling savings account
-  purchasing items on your home schooling needs list
-  driving the children to out-of-the-home activities
-  birthday gifts based on home schooling needs—financial or otherwise.

Tithing and giving

Family financial management is not just about saving or earning as much as you can for yourselves. It is also about faithful giving both to the Lord and to others. The Lord has promised to bless us for the faithful return of our tithes and offerings:

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of host, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.

—MALACHI 3:10,11.

It is important that your children learn and practice the principle of tithing as soon as possible. God will faithfully bless your family, supplying everything you need as you endeavour to give your children the highest education for His glory. Some Adventist have

chosen to return a second tithe regularly, following the principle of systematic benevolence. They have testified to the fact that God both multiplies to 20% that they give and the 80% that they retain, so that they are never without (see PATRIARCHS & PROPHETS 525-536 and COUNSELS ON STEWARDSHIP 65-107).

You must ever remember that the purpose of your home schooling is the preparation of your children for service. In your endeavour to make ends meet, don't forget the needs of those less fortunate. As you and your children give of yourselves and your means in faithful ministry to others, God will surely not let your storehouse go empty.

Finance: stumbling block or opportunity?

Ironically, financial necessity is both an instrument of God and Satan. It can be a stumbling block or a stepping stone to higher things. God uses it to test us and for us to prove Him. Satan's purpose is that we use financial challenges as a reason for concluding that what God says is a good idea but not possible after all, when you consider what it will take financially.

If you are convinced that home schooling is the very best option for your children, based on the word of God, you must believe that God has already gone before you to put in place the necessary provisions, financial and otherwise, to make it a reality. If He hasn't, then He is merely teasing you with a good idea that you can never carry out. Our God of love doesn't do that.

Like Peter who responded to the one word of Christ, "come" it may be that not until we are willing to step out of the relative 'security' of free state school education—or some other education boat—onto the water, that we realise that God can keep us walking on the financial waters as we seek to give our children His education programme.

9

How can single parents home school their children?

Forty percent of families in Britain today are single parent families and the figure is rising. This is being reflected, to some extent, in the church community and amongst those families choosing to home school. There are several reasons why single parent families exist in the church setting. In this section, the term single parent refers to any of the following:

- ☞ unmarried single parents
- ☞ separated or divorced single parents
- ☞ widowed single parents
- ☞ spiritual single parents with non Adventist spouses unsympathetic to home schooling.

I have come across several single parents, who have home educated their children. But there are also those who are very attracted to the idea, but fail to see how they could ever make it a reality.

The exact circumstances, domestically, will certainly have an impact on the ability to home school. Some circumstances will be less amenable than others. While the biblical and ideal model for the family with a loving and co-operative mother and father is the best situation for home schooling, God is able to work with other family situations and bring the best out of the circumstances.

It cannot be stated strongly enough that whether or not you are a single parent family, what you decide to do and actually do in reality will to a great extent be determined by your Christian experience. Christ must be your wisdom and strength in everything that you do, and in facing all the possible obstacles. Remember the words of the Psalmist:

...thou art the helper of the fatherless. A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation....he relieveth the fatherless and widows:
— PSALMS 10:14; 68:5; 146:9.

God will help you to do the best for your child. Whatever the reasons for you being a single parent family, you need to accept God's counsels on parenting and the education of children as applicable to yourself, not just to others who seem to be in more favourable circumstances. If you will co-operate with God, He'll make a way for you.

With Him as your foundation, the following are some practical things that can help turn what might appear to be an 'impossible dream' into a pleasant reality for your family.

Help your children to understand the situation

According to the age of your children, you will need to let them understand and appreciate your situation, as much as possible. They need to be sensitive to the fact that you are seeking to do your very best for them without a spouse to depend on.

In a sense, you are more in a partnership relationship with your children in the absence of a spouse. The onus will be on you to make it as clear as possible why they are being home schooled and to solicit their willing participation. At times, they may try to exploit your vulnerability as a single parent, but patient understanding discipline, love and consistency, on your part, will win them over.

Working from home

Financial considerations are often seen to be a big obstacle to taking the plunge. As sole breadwinner, how can you reconcile giving so much time to your child's educational needs, when you've also got to meet their material needs? You need to carefully consider from the outset what level of material life you are willing to accept in order to give your child the best possible education. Once you're clear on this, it is then a matter of finding creative and practical ways of earning a living, preferably from home and in ways that your children can be involved as a meaningful part of their education.

☞ *see home businesses p.114*

Older siblings helping the younger

If you have several children, the older child needs to be your reliable assistant in helping with the younger. It is important that special attention be given to the training of the first child so that she can take on this role. She will need to understand that in the absence of a second parent, she needs to be your helper with the younger ones. If done properly and reasonably, many older children will rise to this challenge. It does not need to be an overwhelming burden on them.

Meeting up with other families

Home schooling itself can be quite an isolated experience, especially as a single parent family. Meeting up with other home schoolers can be a great support and encouragement. You can share your resources and workload as your children engage in activities together. This might even allow you to work part-time out of the home, if necessary.

Regular input of family members

As a single parent, it would be useful for you to involve a suitable family member, of the opposite sex, as a role model. This will help your children to be more balanced in their own development and understanding of male and female roles. In the absence of a suitable family member you may want to carefully consider a suitable person in the church.

Start the day early

The long contact hours with your children, make it is important that you get some quality time by yourself, especially at the start and end of the day. This will mean having to get up very early for your own devotion time and to get things done that you cannot easily do with the children around. Two hours to yourself in the morning before your children get up and an hour after they've gone to bed could make all the difference to your day.

Regularity and order

Along with early rising, the more regularity and order you have in your schedule, the easier your work will be. Your children also need to learn and practice these principles. This will make your work more efficient, manageable and less stressful. Without a spouse, on hand to cover for you, you will have to fill the gaps by yourself. Once things are in place, however, they can work like clockwork without constantly engaging your time and attention.

Support team of key people

Knowing your strengths and weaknesses, it will be important to have a team of people that you can call on for help with specific things. If you can get regular assistance, be it large or small, as and when you need help, this will make a real difference.

10

What if my child has special educational needs?

God has made every child special and unique, different to any other child that has ever existed or ever will exist.

*Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator, —**individuality**, power to think and to do. — EDUCATION 17.*

While He has ordained certain laws for the growth and development of body, mind and spirit, these laws do not apply in exactly the same way with each child. One child's development in these areas will be somewhat different to that of any other child. In order for a child to achieve his full potential, therefore, his education must be tailored to his unique style of learning and development.

The thinking behind what's called special educational needs today, may have more to do with a failure to recognise this God-given uniqueness of each individual child, than with any intrinsic cognitive problem. If your child has been diagnosed as having special educational needs, you can still educate him at home. Indeed, in view of these needs, home, more than likely, will provide a better setting for his all-round educational needs.







The terms special educational needs and learning difficulties are defined in the Education Act 1996. Part IV, s 312 (1) of this Act states that:

A child has “special educational needs”... if he has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him. A child has a “learning difficulty” if:

- a) he has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his age,*
- b) he has a disability which either prevents or hinders him from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of his age in schools within the area of the local education authority*

c) he is under the age of five years and is, or would be if special educational provision were not made for him, likely to fall within paragraph (a) or (b) when of or over the age (s 312 (2)).

Learning difficulties may be caused by:

-  a physical disability
-  a problem with sight, hearing or speech
-  a mental disability
-  emotional or behavioural problems
-  a medical or health problem
-  difficulties with reading, writing, speaking or mathematics work.

Each of these categories and causes of learning difficulties can be addressed more effectively in a loving and supportive home education context. If a child has difficulties in learning, this may simply be because his preferred style of learning has not been recognised and therefore is not being catered for in the conventional school setting.

Different learning styles

Evidence shows that there are over 30 differences in individual learning styles. E.g. some children learn better through real life experiences than through books and artificial media. Therefore, any uniform approach to learning will automatically exclude many learners. A situation in which one teacher confronts 30 children in a classroom and is required to deliver the same material, within a set amount of time, to all of them, leads inevitably to drastic reductions in the quality and efficiency of the educational exchange and significant loss of potential learning.

Children whose learning styles are not understood or accommodated may then be labelled as having special educational needs. The reality is that they naturally have a special need to learn in their own way, that school often has little understanding, time, resources or flexibility to provide for.

Children come to dislike, or see themselves as failures, in maths, English and other subjects, not because of an innate lack of interest or ability, but because their style of enjoying and benefiting from these areas of learning are not catered for. A negative attitude can stay with them for life, when in reality, they were never given the opportunity to know how well they could have done.

Measuring learning

The measurement of a child's learning ability by comparison with the majority of children of his age is based on two unfounded assumptions. Firstly, that a child's cognitive development corresponds directly to his chronological age. Secondly, the learning of the majority of children of a particular age in school is a true representation of where any child of that age should be.

It is evident that the conventional school system itself creates and then aggravates many of these so-called learning difficulties. Because children are so rigidly segregated according to age, and schools are following a standardised curriculum in which progression is based mainly on chronological age, it is easy to have false expectations of where a child should be at certain stages in their education. For example, there is a danger of expecting all children of a certain age to have attained to the somewhat artificial level range of the National Curriculum. While this level range might have some general relevance to where children are expected to have reached, when following a set curriculum, it almost totally overlooks the unique learning styles, varied interests and speed of development in key learning areas, from one child to another.

We do not expect children to attain to the same physical stature by certain ages, so why this expectation with intellectual attainment? Mental development is no more uniform. To compound matters, the school environment itself is oppressive and offensive to some children, which can trigger emotional, behavioural and learning problems. So-called learning difficulties, could in reality be the symptoms of a misfit between the education programme and the style of the individual learner. Sadly, in mass school education, the learner is seen to be at fault, needing special help to achieve an acceptable fit with an unyielding set curriculum.

The belief that boys can and should achieve, academically, the same as girls of a corresponding age, is a false one. Nature clearly shows that boys mature more slowly than girls. The current emphasis on getting boys up to the same attainment level of girls is therefore misplaced. It is creating a situation in which there are a disproportionate number of boys in special education. Acceptance of this simple fact of nature would dissolve the special needs problem for many boys, almost immediately.

For many children diagnosed as having special educational needs, the individualised approach of home schooling would be an effective antidote.

☞ *see chapter 6 on Moore's research*

Children with disabilities

For children with mental or physical disabilities, again the individualised approach would be most advantageous. Even if a conventional school is adapted to accommodate such children, this is a distant second best to a positive home environment with patient, caring and reassuring parents.

Children with disabilities like visual impairments can be accommodated in conventional schools with specially adapted facilities. This arrangement may have benefits for the other children in understanding how to treat the disabled with respect and care. However, there is no guarantee that this will always happen. Disabled children can be easy targets of both physical and psychological bullying. Also, in trying to ensure that these children are able to access the National Curriculum, schools may be unwittingly overtaxing their disabled faculties like hearing or sight which could do longer term damage.

The National Curriculum may be entirely inappropriate for the needs and circumstances of these children. Their inability to keep up and achieve the same as 'able' children could frustrate them and brand them as failures. Some may even come to see their disability as the reason for all their ills, and paradoxically, it becomes the excuse for not achieving what they might well have been able to achieve under more favourable circumstances. Again, home schooling could be a powerful antidote to this potential downward spiral of decline, largely eliminating detrimental school factors and replacing them with positive stimuli and reinforcements for real development. If any necessary aids to learning can be provided for in the home, disabled children will benefit from home schooling in the same ways as able children.

Even special schools, resourced with specialist staff, furnishings and equipment are a second best to a warm responsive home environment. For Adventist parents with a disabled child, there are also opportunities for the development of Christian qualities, under challenging circumstances—qualities that might otherwise lie dormant. This, in turn, will rebound positively on the child's self-concept, aspirations and achievement.

A child with special educational needs may be given a statutory assessment leading to a statement of special educational needs. Under the Education Act of 1981, LEAs have to make provision for the child, which is set out in the statement, "unless the child's parent has made suitable arrangements" (Education Act 1996, s 324 [5]). Such arrangements may include home education.

In fact, the Education Act 1944 (amended by section 36 of 1981 Education Act) makes clear reference to a child's special educational needs coming under the duty of parents:

*It shall be the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, **ability and aptitude**, and to any **special educational needs** he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.*

Special educational needs in Scotland



As in England and Wales, the law in Scotland enables parents to educate children at home regardless of whether or not they have special educational needs. However, there are some procedures in Scotland to consider. An education authority may decide to assess a child, before he reaches school age, to determine whether he has special educational needs. Once school age is reached, the education authority has a legal duty to assess the child and open a Record of Needs, if the difficulties are serious.






The authority is bound to notify the parents in writing when the assessment is to be carried out and all that it will entail. At this point, the parents may state in writing that they have made the decision to educate the child at home. Since the authority is obliged to consider the views of the parents, this information may influence the final decision whether or not to open a Record of Needs.

If a record of needs is opened, parents can appeal against this decision. Whatever the outcome, this does not prevent the home schooling option. However, when the child is nearing the school leaving age, the education authority must make a "future needs assessment", which looks at future possibilities for the education and training of the young person. By this time, hopefully, the benefits of a good education at home will have had a significant impact, effectively addressing any learning problems.

Elements of success

If your child does have acute learning or disability problems, it may be necessary to get some additional advice and support to enhance or complement what you're doing at home. This will ensure that you can give your child the best chance to progress. The positive home schooling environment will do much to stimulate your child in overcoming or effectively managing their learning or disability problems as education becomes more enjoyable, individualised and relevant. You may be able to identify solutions that can counteract the factors triggering or aggravating your child's problem. These may include:

-  an environment free from pressure
-  a more natural and simple diet

-  the stimulation of the Word of God
-  interest-led learning
-  plenty of outdoor contact with nature
-  loving one-to-one assistance
-  a relaxed pace of learning.

In most cases home schooling itself can solve or dissolve the special educational needs problem.







EXAMPLE: Hyperactivity (Attention Deficit Disorder)

Hyperactivity is a major problem with many children in Britain today. It can be mild or severe and can create many difficulties including difficulties with learning.

Symptoms

Constant squirming and fidgeting; inability to remain seated for any period of time; tends to run instead of walking; constantly goes from one thing to another; grabbing, touching, poking everything about them; constant, often loud, talk; making sounds including whistles and clicks; short attention span, difficulty concentrating; impulsive, acting before thinking; distracted by noises, people and lights; forgetfulness; start many projects which are never completed; unable to follow instructions; low frustration level; moody, irritated, easily upset; failure to understand why their parents are upset with their behaviour; an attitude of indifference when disciplined; difficulty in eating and sleeping; getting up at night and getting into things; clumsy; difficult to stop them when they decide to do something; opposite reactions to calming medication; learning disabilities.

Causes

-  a developmental deviation or lag: control centre in brain does not develop as rapidly as does the motor division of the body
-  controls only catch up with motor activity at puberty when the level of activity decreases
-  emotional problems
-  intelligence levels
-  inadequate, ineffective, inappropriate or inconsistent discipline at home
-  junk food with poor nutrition.

Solutions

- 🏠 cutting down on overstimulations like television and competitive games
- 🏠 guided exercise programme directed toward large muscles of the body can be calming
- 🏠 gardening and other outdoor work
- 🏠 avoiding smoking during pregnancy
- 🏠 a structured predictable environment with consistency
- 🏠 parents saying what they mean, meaning what they say and following through
- 🏠 eliminating from diet foods causing hyperactivity: dairy products, wheat, corn, citrus, peanuts and chocolate, foods with artificial colours and flavours, sugar-rich breakfasts.

Home schooling as a solution

Looking at the symptoms, causes and solutions to hyperactivity, it becomes clear that a loving, favourable home environment would be far more conducive to overcoming this condition than conventional schooling. In many ways, school would simply aggravate the problem. A teacher with 30 children to deal with, several of which may have varying levels of hyperactivity, cannot begin to approach the effectiveness of a parent in addressing the child's needs. Even a special school with fewer children in a class cannot compare. The busyness and stimulation of school will in many cases fuel the child's difficulties. At home, a parent working with a hyperactive child on a one-to-one would be better placed to regulate the child's environment so as to offset the symptoms, counter the causes, and solve the problem.

*Learning difficulties are often observed in hyperactive children. These learning disabilities are also due to developmental lags and may be outgrown with time. This type may be able to repair his own bike or assemble complicated models, but be unable to learn to read. **Many educators are now suggesting that children not be sent to school until they are eight to ten years of age**, to allow time for fine muscle coordination to develop and for the brain centers to mature sufficiently to enable the child to cooperate with proper discipline....*

*Any child with a developmental lag, a learning disability, or hyperactivity **should have out of home schooling delayed** until these clear properly, or the child may acquire a personality defect which may last a lifetime—inferiority, goody good, defeatism, delinquency, etc. — NATURAL HEALTHCARE FOR YOUR CHILD 119.*

HOME SCHOOLING A SPECIAL NEEDS CHILD

'A Recipe for Success'

1. Prepare the right learning environment, quiet, cheerful with few distractions.
2. Pour in the following ingredients:
 - ☪ *much prayer*
 - ☪ *a loving parent*
 - ☪ *steadfast commitment*
 - ☪ *your special needs child*
 - ☪ *much one-to-one instruction*
 - ☪ *realistic and attainable goals*
 - ☪ *learning at your child's own pace*
 - ☪ *the ability to be flexible or firm as needed*
 - ☪ *freedom for your child to develop emerging skills*
 - ☪ *appropriate strategies for learning, enabling your child to use his or her strengths and abilities to their maximum potential.*
1. Sift teaching and learning materials carefully; select those which will enhance your child's ability to learn in an uncluttered manner.
2. Mix in your child's natural interests and curiosities to make the whole programme tasty.
3. Sprinkle lavishly with teaching aids to make learning interesting and exciting; enrich learning experience with visual aids and suitable learning games etc.
4. Place in a structured, but flexible, routine setting, complete with a well-thought through discipline programme having realistic consequences.
5. Add liberally ample portions of consistency, patience, perseverance, encouragement and praise.
6. Blend in whole measures of the fruit of the spirit.
7. Saturate with a large ladle of immeasurable love, understanding and kindness.
8. Heat well with your warm positive sunny temperament each day.
9. Allow the sweet aroma of prayer, time and space to ascend continually.
10. Stir very carefully and then allow enough time to rise naturally.






You will have created an appetising learning dish which will provide good wholesome educational nutrition for your special needs child—and yourself.

(adapted from Home Schooling Manuel p387)

11

How can home schooling prepare young people for careers?

If you home school your child, you will have to make important decisions along the way as he gets older. These include:

-  how long do you continue?
-  what happens as your child gets older?
-  what outside input will you need?
-  what is God's plan for your child's life?
-  how will your child get any necessary qualifications or training for a career?

It is important to remember that, God has a special plan for the life your child. In fact, even before conception, this plan is already in place. God said to Jeremiah:

Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee: and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

— JEREMIAH 1:5.

In considering Solomon's admonition to—"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (PROVERBS 22:6)—it needs to be understood that the way a child should go not only includes his general Christian character development, but also the specific area of work that God has planned for him to do in life, based on his talents and abilities.

It is vital that you as a parent recognise this fact and co-operate with God in its fulfilment. Otherwise, your child may miss out on the very purpose for which they were born. With this in mind, it is important to be seeking God and watching for evidences of what His purpose might be for your child's life. As this purpose becomes clearer, in the teen years, God will also reveal the practical steps that your child needs to take in order to be properly equipped to experience his life calling.

The personalised and tailor-made approach of home schooling is ideal for bringing about this purpose. Your child can see himself as a unique individual with a unique purpose in life rather than just being another unit coming off the education production line—the next number in the country's workforce.

Adventist mission

When we realise who we are as Adventists, God's remnant people, living at the close of earth's history, with a specific life to live and a unique message to give, we will come to understand that there are certain select vocations and areas of work that are vital for the accomplishing of this mission. The mission of Adventists to give the everlasting gospel to the world in the context of the Three Angels' Messages should help give direction to what our children do with their lives in terms of what might be appropriate or inappropriate.

*"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15), is Christ's command to His followers. Not that all are called to be ministers or missionaries in the ordinary sense of the term; but **all may be workers with Him in giving the "glad tidings" to their fellow men.** To all, great or small, learned or ignorant, old or young, the command is given.*

In view of this command, can we educate our sons and daughters for a life of respectable conventionality, a life professedly Christian, but lacking His self-sacrifice, a life on which the verdict of Him who is truth must be, "I know you not"?

Thousands are doing this. They think to secure for their children the benefits of the gospel while they deny its spirit. But this cannot be. Those who reject the privilege of fellowship with Christ in service, reject the only training that imparts a fitness for participation with Him in His glory. — EDUCATION 264.

Preparation for service

*It (true education) **prepares the student for the joy of service** in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come. — IBID.13.*

Every parent should know the difference between preparing their children for self-service (selfishness) and service to others (selflessness). Many Adventist young people pursue careers with no one but themselves in mind—fulfilling their own ambitions for what they

will get out of it. Sometimes, in the church, we're just so glad to know that our young people are studying, advancing to 'higher' levels and keeping out of trouble, that we miss the real higher calling that God has for their lives. We also allow them to believe that all career options and professions are open to them.

Job tasters

An important part of a home schooling programme is giving children the opportunity to develop practical skills in different lines of work. They can also visit the real life world of work and experience a range of different vocations, first hand. Through this the Holy Spirit can create a desire in a young person's heart to carry out their God-given purpose in life. The natural interests and abilities of the child will also give direction to what they might do with their lives.

Suitable careers

In considering suitable careers for our young people we must decide whether, all possibilities should be available to them as they are to the non Christian young people, or are some things excluded not because they are all bad, in and of themselves, but because of their irrelevance to our purpose in this world as Adventists? Consider which of the following careers would be suitable for an Adventist young person?

Accountant, Actor, Architect, Bible Worker, Builder, Chef, Colporteur, Computer analyst, Doctor, Engineer, Footballer, Health promoter, Judge, Lawyer, Mechanic, Minister, Missionary, Nurse, Police officer, Politician, Printing & Publishing, Secretary, Social worker, Teacher, Undertaker, Vet, Writer, Zoologist

Some may argue that it's possible to serve God and be a witness in all these careers, and that Christian witnesses are needed in all these arenas. Clearly, however, some are more directly related to the mission of Adventism than others.

There are important questions to consider in the selection:

1. Is the cause of the gospel the first purpose in our children's lives?
2. What talents and gifts has God given to them?
3. What is the purpose of these talents and gifts?
4. What natural interests do they have?
5. What is the right balance between working to meet our temporal needs and fulfilling God's specific purpose for our lives?

6. Which vocations can most directly advance the cause of God?
7. What opportunities are there in the church to pursue these vocations?
8. Were there other ways of young people supporting themselves in working for God?
9. What preparation is needed to enter these vocations?
10. Where and how can this preparation best be acquired?
11. Can home schooled children get this preparation from their home?
12. What opportunities does the church provide for preparing young people for service?
13. Is it necessary or desirable to study in a secular institution to get the necessary preparation?

In considering these questions, it will become apparent that there are a limited range of meaningful careers that Adventist young person can pursue. We might put them into two categories:

1. Those which, in an Adventist context, have to do with the proclamation of the Gospel directly. These are all vocations that God has given us direct counsel on for advancing His work. E.g. Bible worker, Colporteur, Doctor, Health promoter, Minister, Missionary, Nurse, Teacher, Writer.
2. Those vocations that can play a supportive role in the cause of God. Many of these are practical vocations necessary to varying degrees in carrying out the mission of the church. E.g. Accountant, Administrator, Architect, Builder, Chef, Computer analyst, Lawyer, Mechanic, Pilot, Secretary.

Aside from these two categories, there are a whole host of vocations, which have little direct bearing on the cause of God. Some may be legitimate as a means of self-support, in order to spend the rest of one's time working for God. Paul carried out the trade of tent-making in order to support himself in his main line of work, itinerant evangelism.

It can be argued that one can be a witness and have a Christian influence in almost any line of work, but the question is, is this the most effective use of one's time and talents? Preparing our youth to be merely silent witnesses in secular employment can so stifle their spiritual aspirations that they are no witness at all.

We are to be in the world, but not of the world and we are to be salt and light in the world. Evidently, our young people need to be prepared to mingle with the people of the world in order to reach them. However, this is best done in a context where they have as much freedom as possible to be themselves, to live out and share their Christian convictions.

How to choose

What man is that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way he shall choose?

— PSALMS 25:12.

*We need to follow more closely God's plan of life. To do our best in the work that lies nearest, to commit our ways to God, and to watch for the indications of His providence—**these are rules that ensure safe guidance in the choice of an occupation.***

— EDUCATION

267.

God will speak to the hearts of consecrated young people, keen to know His will for their lives. He may speak through, His word, prayer, other people, providence or any other chosen method. It is important that time be given to specifically seeking the Lord to know His purpose for our lives.

The aim of seeking the Lord is not merely to find out His will for our own benefit, but to find out what will best pleases Him. The Bible admonishes us to always be trying to find out what best pleases the Lord and not to please ourselves (EPHESIANS 5:10, ROMANS 15:3). Paradoxically, it is in only in seeking to please God first that we can best please ourselves.

Parents' versus children's aspirations

Adventist parents who home school will inevitably believe that God has a particular purpose for their children's lives. In trying to discover this purpose, parents may mix their own aspirations for their children which may differ from God's ultimate plan or from what the children want to do. While parental guidance is crucial, the strong bonds developed in home schooling can make it difficult for parents to allow their children room to recognise, with certainty, God's will for their lives.

The older children become, the more they should be thrown on their own will and judgement. Young people in their later teen years who have committed their lives to Christ should be able to discern His will for their lives. Certainly, such young people will want to counsel with their God-fearing parents, but parents must allow their young people sufficient space to choose according to God's leading in their lives. If this differs from what the parents want, God's purpose should prevail. Of Christ, it is said that He was subject to His parents (LUKE 2:51), in accordance with the fifth commandment. Yet, it is also said:

At a very early age, Jesus had begun to act for Himself in the formation of His character, and not even respect and love for His parents could turn Him from obedience to God's word. "It is written" was His reason for every act that varied from the family customs. — DESIRE OF AGES 86.

While home schooling strengthens the natural ties between parents and children, and rightly so, children should be encouraged to discern the voice of God for themselves. By the time they reach the teen years, this should be a regular part of their experience.

Abilities without worldly ambitions to match

Home schooling parents may come to realise that their children have talents and abilities that could bring impressive results in a secular context. However, the child may not have any obvious ambitions to match these talents. E.g. a home schooled child may have the potential to do GCSE and A-Levels and get top grades relatively easily, opening the way for university entrance and a professional career. This could be a tempting path to pursue, but may not be God's plan for the child. Just as He directed the parents to give their child a special education at home, so He will have a special purpose for the child's life which a secular education is unlikely to equip them for.

It is here that the keenest discernment of God's will and the exercising of faith is vital for both parent and child. If secular education was unsuitable for their early education, why should it suddenly become acceptable for the later education? An important question to consider is, is God able to continue the education of the child beyond childhood along Christian lines and equip them for the specific work that He wants them to do? Paul assures us of God's ability to complete what He has started.

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: — PHILIPPIANS 1:6.

Qualifications and specialised training

God has a special purpose for the life of each young person. Therefore, He must also have a definite path for them to get to and fulfil this purpose. His promise is for every young person:

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.
— PSALMS 32:8.

Home schooling parents and their children need to constantly put the matter of their future life work before the Lord that He might be allowed to give Divine guidance in the path that each young person should take. Home education is a rich investment in your child's future which should not be squandered in the pursuit of the world's qualifications and recognition.

God's ideal would be that the Christian basis for education in the home continue for any later more specialised study and vocational training. This can be done by continuing home based education for as long as possible with external courses of study could be done.

Even in seeking a preparation for God's service, many are turned aside by wrong methods of education....In preparation for a life of service the youth are sent to school, to acquire knowledge by the study of books. Cut off from the responsibilities of everyday life, they become absorbed in study, and often lose sight of its purpose. The ardor of their early consecration dies out, and too many take up with some personal, selfish ambition. Upon their graduation, thousands find themselves out of touch with life. They have so long dealt with the abstract and theoretical that when the whole being must roused to meet the sharp contests of real life, they are unprepared. Instead of the noble work they had purposed, their energies are engrossed in a struggle for mere subsistence... **The world is robbed of the service it might have received; and God is robbed of the souls He longed to uplift, ennoble, and honor as representatives of Himself.**

— EDUCATION 265.

We live in an age when many people do things en mass because it seems to be necessary and, after all, everyone else is doing it. This is very much the case in education where we expect all children and young people to go through the conventional route of secular studies, exams and qualifications. Their lives almost become synonymous with their formal education. However, there are other routes into a life work and vocation apart from conventional examinations.

Young men and young women,.... do not wait until some human examination pronounces you competent to work, but go out into the highways and hedges, and begin to work for God. Use wisely the knowledge you have. Exercise your ability with faithfulness, generously imparting the light that God gives you....Constantly improve. Keep reaching higher and still higher....Seek the Lord most earnestly, that you may become more and more refined, more spiritually cultured. The you will have the very best diploma that anyone can have—the endorsement of God.






Possible routes from home schooling include:

- ††† home education personal portfolio
- ††† Adventist institutions
- ††† other Christian institutions
- ††† Christian or secular correspondence courses
- ††† on-the-job training
- ††† apprenticeships
- ††† secular institutions.

Personal Portfolio

Home schooling itself is a most important preparation for adult life and work. Its many and varied activities and experiences should be documented and used for later purposes. Throughout the duration of home schooling, both parents and children can keep a record of all that is happening. This personal portfolio can serve as a detailed assessment and comprehensive audit of educational experiences, character development and learning over the years. The following categories give some ideas for the things that could be included. They are not exhaustive, and can be added to or taken away from as you see best.













PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT / PRACTICAL SKILLS

-  General state of health
-  Practical skills acquired
-  In and out-of-the home practical activities
-  Practical applications of academic learning
-  Samples of things made





MENTAL / INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

- ††† Special courses attended
- ††† Academic learning experiences
- ††† Samples of work
- ††† Books read
- ††† Basic skills (reading, writing, arithmetic)
- ††† Communication skills
- ††† Areas of learning covered
- ††† Creative expression
- ††† Test and assessment results






SPIRITUAL / CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

-  Personal Christian experience
-  Manifestation of fruit of the spirit
-  Devotional life
-  Motivation
-  Spiritual gifts
-  Character traits (strengths and weaknesses)
-  Involvement in church life
-  Personal interests and achievements
-  Personality
-  Personal aspirations and goals in life
-  Sense of identity
-  Use of personal property and money

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

-  Family relationships
-  Social experiences and events attended (pictures and personal accounts)
-  Interpersonal skills
-  People met and interacted with

SERVICE TO OTHERS

-  Interest in needs of others
-  Community service
-  Personal evangelism
-  Positions of responsibility held
-  Jobs and work experience

Compiling the Personal Portfolio

The various categories in the portfolio should receive detailed input from different people to give a balanced objective and subjective view of the young person. Some of the following persons could be included:

The child / young person; parents; other family members; teachers / tutors; church minister / leaders; employers; friends; mentors

Use of the Personal Portfolio

All of the different aspects of the home schooling experience put together, can form an impressive and most realistic insight into who a young person is and what they can do.

A personal portfolio can reveal much more about them to an institution of learning or an employer than just the conventional exam subjects and grades. In fact, employers do sometimes speak of the limitations of what examination results actually tell them about a young person. At the end of the day, they are looking for someone who can do, well, the job that needs to be done. The portfolio can be used by itself or alongside other more conventional qualifications when applying for courses or jobs.

The portfolio needs to be well maintained and updated regularly, possibly weekly. It needs to be looked after as an official document. It would be useful to keep a back-up copy. Your child should be allowed free access to her portfolio. It could be the basis of assessing her education to-date and planning its future direction.

It is interesting to note that some people, even in secular education, are recognising the need for a broader recognition of young people's character and achievements than the narrow, conventional and mainly exam-based qualifications. Recently, Geoff Lucas, secretary of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference, wrote an article in the TES (Times Educational Supplement) entitled 'More to life than results' (Dec 2000) about the need to recognise all-round achievements and not just exam results:

. . . . national recognition of young people's personal and community achievements in a range of contexts (creative, artistic, . . . entrepreneurial, voluntary and so on) would add real value to a profile otherwise dominated by qualifications. . . . "education with character" (i.e. the development of well-rounded individuals who can do more than just read, write and use ICT) gives ground for optimism.

A properly worked out system of certificates which value, support and promote wider achievements, beyond qualifications, must have an important place in any national system of education and training which is to be both inclusive and humane.

We live in an era of what Professor Alison Wolf, of the London University Institute of Education, has called "credentialling" — the obsessive pursuit of qualifications.

Out-of-home education options

Once other sources of education, outside of the home, are being considered, it is important to screen them carefully to determine how compatible or incompatible they are with the principles of Christian education. You also need to consider how necessary and useful they actually are? This would involve examining things like the content of courses and materials; the institutional environment and the character of teachers.

Adventist institutions

Ideally, local Adventist schools and colleges would provide the necessary follow-on from a good Adventist home schooling.

....all our youth should be permitted to have the blessings and privileges of an education at our schools, that they might be inspired to become laborers together with God. They all need an education, that they will be fitted for usefulness, qualified for places of responsibility in both private and public life.

— COUNSELS TO PARENTS, TEACHERS & STUDENTS 44.

However, because Adventist institutions are not always available or may not offer exactly what's needed, other routes may have to be considered. This may include going to an Adventist institution abroad. There is much to be done in Britain to make Adventist education more available at all levels.

Other Christian routes

There are other Christians in Britain offering Christian based education programmes for pre and post 16 education. These are both vocational and academic. Some can be done from home. Anyone considering these routes would need to examine these programmes carefully and be satisfied that they are appropriate. Though being Christian, they might still be limited in what they can offer and possibly have conflicting elements with our faith.

Secular routes

These include vocational and academic courses, by correspondence or attendance at an institution. Some home educators have largely bypassed secular qualifications like GCSEs and A-Levels, because they're not in harmony with the way their children have been educated. These children have gone on to do well in higher education and courses at Adventist colleges. Others have done secular courses by correspondence, from home, so as to avoid the environment of a secular institution. If secular qualifications are absolutely necessary, they can be done with the least amount of exposure to worldly teachers and institutions.

DANGERS

There is the danger that study in secular institutions of higher education could actually derail

a young person from fulfilling God's purpose for their life. The course content, teaching and learning methods and institutional environment could be very difficult for a Christian young person, even if they've had a good Christian education previously. Ideally, Christian-based education needs to be continued until God's purpose for the young person's life is fully realised.

DIFFICULT TO GET PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL BALANCE

The programme of education and student lifestyle in secular institutions makes it very difficult to maintain the right balance mentally, physically and spiritually. A committed Christian young person might never consciously choose to compromise her Christian experience, but an all-pervasive secular education can make it next to impossible to maintain a balanced Christian life.

DEVELOPING A CHRISTIAN FRAMEWORK

If the providence of God directs a young person to engage in secular studies, then it is essential for that young person to have a clear sense of purpose in doing this. They should also have a biblical framework for evaluating what they are being taught. E.g. if a young person believes that God has called her to be a doctor—an important vocation in the Lord's work—it would be essential for them to study out what God has to say about the work of a doctor. Books like 'The Ministry of Healing', Medical Ministry and Counsels on Health would be essential reading. This would provide a proper context for evaluating all that they are learning, helping them to know what to accept and what to reject.

Specialist tuition

Bringing suitable tutors into the home is another way of retaining the home education approach. Parents can be assisted in providing more specialised input into their children's education as a preparation for their future careers.

Work experience and on-the-job training

Over the age of 13, children may work part-time in paid employment, but not during school hours. According to the 1973 Education (Work Experience) Act, there is scope for work experience during school hours for young people in their last year of compulsory schooling. Work experience may be done with friends, relatives, neighbours, church members. Letters can be written to firms or companies after an initial phone call to find out the key contact person. The interests and natural abilities of the young person should be a key factors in selecting possible work experiences. A portfolio of such work experience can be built up and included as a part of the more general home education portfolio mentioned earlier.

Ultimate aim

Whichever career route God opens for a young person, it is important to keep a clear focus on its ultimate aim—indeed, the highest goal that can appeal to any committed Adventist young person.

*Success in any line demands a definite aim. He who would achieve true success in life must keep steadily in view the aim worthy of his endeavor. Such an aim is set before the youth of today. **The heaven-appointed purpose of giving the gospel to the world in this generation** is the noblest that can appeal to any human being. It opens a field of effort to everyone whose heart Christ has touched.*

— EDUCATION 262.

God has offered us great possibilities in our youth. Training them in the right way may well do more than anything else to bring the great controversy to an end and hasten the return of Christ.

*With such an army of workers as **our youth, rightly trained**, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world! **How soon might the end come**--the end of suffering and sorrow and sin! How soon, in place of a possession here, with its blight of sin and pain, our children might receive their inheritance where "the righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever;" where "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick," and "the voice of weeping shall be no more heard." Psalm 37:29; Isaiah 33:24; 65:19.*

— EDUCATION 271.

12

What are the challenges of home schooling?

Along with all the good reasons for home schooling and the positive benefits, there are some important challenges to consider. Some of the challenges like socialisation, finance, single parents and special educational needs have been covered elsewhere in this handbook as separate sections. The presence and impact of these challenges will very much depend on the reasons and circumstances surrounding the start of home schooling as well as later eventualities. Generally, the earlier home schooling commences, the less serious these challenges will be, especially if your child has never been to school.

There is a need to balance the clear counsel of God on the duty of parents in the education of their children with the feelings and responses of the children on the receiving end. How is the whole thing coming across and effecting them? Parents must be careful not to give their children more than they can cope with. In the words of Paul:

Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

— COLOSSIANS 3:21.

Important challenges to consider include the following:

Remembering why you're doing it

Ideally, planning for home schooling should start long before children are born. This would enable parents to be as prepared as possible for many of the challenges peculiar to home schooling. For Adventists families, home schooling may be born out of a combination of circumstances, like problematic school issues and a desire to do the best for their children as Christian parents. These are powerful motivations that can give significant momentum to the venture in the early stages.

After the initial excitement and relief, however, there will be a need to sustain conviction, freshness and ideas for both parents and children, especially if children have been withdrawn from school. When difficulties arise, there is always the danger of comparisons with school and feelings of dissatisfaction if things do not seem to be 'measuring up to' or

surpassing the experience of school. The early motivations which were so influential in starting the venture must be kept in mind and built into the ongoing programme, to give it constant meaning and direction.

Transition period

The transition from school to home can be a complex one. The longer a child has been in school, the harder it may be. E.g. there may need to be an adjustment to new ways of learning, more open and creative than school. Instead of being a passive recipient of knowledge, your child can become the architect of her own learning experience.

There are new roles for both you and your child to get used to. Your child will need to recognise and respect you in your capacity as full-time teacher—in deed, the best possible teacher she could have. It may take time for her to get used to you in this role, so you'll need to be patient and understanding.

You'll need to be mindful that during the initial deschooling period, there may be a tendency, by your child, to compare you with "my teacher at school". You must establish yourself as teacher by your character and the quality of experiences and time spent with your child, not just by your words. As far as possible, you need to prepare your child ahead of time for the transition from school to home. Talk with her about home schooling and its purpose. Let her understand what it will involve practically so that she can become an intelligent and willing participant. Answer her questions and address her concerns as openly and frankly as possible. Above all, your child needs to know that you love her dearly and desire the very best for her. Let her know that this is God's plan for her, the very best education she could ever have.

Gently redirect her mind from a tendency to compare with school, especially when problems arise, but do note her concerns. Make sure there are adequate provisions for her social interaction, especially if she has been used to being around a lot of other children at school. Above all you need to become your child's special friend and confidante.

In this transition period, you may be tempted to reconsider, especially when problems arise. But as with so many other things in the Christian life, once you're convinced in your heart and mind, God must be your wisdom, your strength and your peace.

Pressure to perform

Depending on the circumstances surrounding your start, your family may feel somewhat centre stage, in the spotlight of a host of scrutinisers, some cautious well-wishers, others

committed sceptics. Whoever is looking on, you need not feel that you have to please and convince them all. Protect your child from this undue pressure. When people ask how your child is doing, they will have in mind their own ideas of what education is and how success is measured.

Your child may also face similar pressure from other children. Remember that educational success through home schooling is so much broader than the narrow criteria for success in conventional schooling. You can talk about your child's progress in a much wider context, than mere academic performance and exam results. There is spiritual and emotional character development taking place, together with the learning of practical skills through a variety of interesting hands-on learning experiences. Above all, pleasing God should be your priority. From Him, will come no pressure to perform, but rather sympathy, encouragement and help.

Time consumption

Home schooling is time consuming. After all, it is about giving yourself to your child and enjoying your child, rather than letting someone else have the privilege. What you need to consider is not so much minimising the time, but making the most effective use of it. This will depend on things like your natural abilities, organisational skills, the needs of your child and the outside assistance you get.

Generally, younger children can take more time because they depend more on you to create their learning experiences. As your child gets older, she will become more responsible and self-motivated and can work more independently. However she will still need teaching, support and encouragement.

Poor home environment

The home environment needs to be conducive to home schooling. If it isn't, children could be at risk. Parents in such homes are the least likely to admit their own weaknesses. A question to ask is how is my child being influenced by the attitudes or habits of other members of the household? If home influences are worse than school, then it needs to be considered whether home schooling is going to be a positive experience. Of course, home is what you make it, so you can make changes where necessary so that the home environment is as conducive to home schooling as possible.

Consistent discipline

The flexibility of home schooling in no way takes away from the need for firm clear discipline. All children need to know their parameters. If you are not a disciplinarian by nature, you can deliberately cultivate a consistent approach that your child will conform to. Once you have a good discipline plan in place, you can then almost forget about it as the interest and motivation to learn occupies you and your child's full attention.

☞ see *EDUCATION pp287-297 on Discipline*

Commitment

Your commitment must be unflinching. The initial excitement at the start of home schooling may wane, but your thought-through reasons and convictions will keep you committed even in difficult times. As with all worthwhile endeavours in life, don't let the feelings of a moment swerve you from your course. You may have given up a job or a career to home school your child, choosing to have less material things. When difficulties arise, you may be tempted to feel resentful toward your child, especially if he is the source of the difficulties. You've given up so much for him, why is he not appreciative? You must here mix your knowledge and convictions of what's right with unconditional love for your child. This will keep you committed and help your child overcome his difficulties like nothing else will.

Organisation

Ongoing home schooling may seem, at first, to be a mammoth organisational enterprise, quite daunting to the average parent. However, you can be as free, flexible and spontaneous as you need to be. This is part of the essence of home schooling. Each day can set its own agenda. However, order should still be a foundation in all that you do. Flexibility does not do away with order. The better organised you are in your basic approach, the more you can afford to experiment and be creative. Order is also a vital lesson that your child needs to learn. In fact, your whole home life needs to be well organised to provide the right environment for consistent and effective learning.

Willingness to learn constantly

As a parent, you may think that you don't know enough to teach their own child. However, you need to be a constant learner with your child. Remember you are not teaching your child because you have all the answers. If you cannot answer all your child's questions, you can find out the answers together. You need to be constantly reading and exploring

new ideas and approaches. This will help keep both you and your child well-motivated and ensure that home schooling is a fresh and exciting experience.

Opposition of friends and relatives

There may always be those who will misunderstand and even oppose what you are doing. They may be close relatives and friends. But, once you are clear and decided, you can give an appropriate answer to their queries and concerns. Be positive rather than defensive. You can tell them of your child's progress, if they ask, and share some of the interesting experiences you are having. Let them visit and see what you're doing if they wish. However, don't feel pressured to have to constantly prove yourself, or to show that your child is doing the same as what their children may be doing at school.

When faced with these and other challenges, remember that you have a friend in Jesus, and all heaven on your side. He believes fully in what you're doing, understands what you're going through and can give you all the help you need. After all, the idea of home schooling originated from the mind of God.

Possible conflict with education authorities

For many people, there is often misunderstanding about the role of education authorities. It can cause fear for potential home schoolers. In reality, only a few home schoolers face problems with education authorities, and some might not have if they had taken more care to consider the legal aspects and dealt wisely with education authorities.

One of the root causes of conflict is the fact that many teachers and education authorities find it hard to believe that parents can do at least as well, and in most cases far better than themselves in educating children. Teachers, through their unions, may also want to protect their job security. Education authorities and schools may also fear reduced budgets if they lose children to home schooling. However, there is nothing that education authorities can do to stop you educating your child at home.

☞ *see chapter 5 on the law*

Parents' roles and relationships

Home schooling has important implications for the role and relationship of mother and father in the home, which should be thought through, discussed and planned for. If mother, as in most cases, is the full-time teacher in the home, she is likely to develop stronger bonds with the children than the father, especially with girl children.

The home schooling mother, by definition, is a committed teacher, dedicated to the good of her children. This can unwittingly create division or even resentment between parents and thus strain the home environment with harmful effects on the children. Mother may question

father's commitment, when she's giving so much. Father may feel squeezed out, on the periphery, unable or even unwelcome, at times, to get in on the action.

There is clearly a need for both parents and children to recognise, respect and value the roles of mother and father in the home schooling enterprise. It needs to be a family venture with each having a vital role in its success. The Adventist father, as priest of the home, should be a teacher of his children by precept and example, in his own right. The programme should be scheduled so that both parents can give their unique input into their children's education, according to their particular strengths and abilities.

If father is absent at work for the larger part of the day, his role as the breadwinner needs to be highlighted. He may want to let his children visit his workplace from time to time to understand what he's doing while away from home. Special time should be arranged around his work schedule, for him to be involved in his children's education.

Both parents should resist the temptation to court their children's affections to the detriment of their spouse, especially if they are experiencing any sort of differences. They must for the sake of their children present a united front before them, at all times, sorting out their differences in private.

At the same time, any attempt by children to play parents off against each other should be quickly recognised and addressed. One parent may enjoy stronger ties with one of their children at certain times, and this is to be expected, but overall, both parents should cultivate an equal place and role in their children's lives, as far as possible. The success of home schooling depends on both parents uniting their efforts to give all their children the very best they can give.

Finally, remember parents that none of these challenges are too great for God and He has not asked you to do anything that He has not already made full provision for. This includes love, wisdom, patience, all necessary temporal things and whatever else you may need.

But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.
— PHILIPPIANS
4:19.

Against the grain of the modern woman

The Western world, by and large, has come to view the full-time housewife and mother in the home as a thing of the past. It offers instead the liberated woman freed from the shackles of the kitchen sink and ever-demanding children. She is upwardly mobile and often career-driven. She still wants to be a mother but, in reality, she has delegated many of her responsibilities to those who have the time.

It is true that this may, in part, be a result of the failure of fathers to play their proper role as head of the household. Many husbands and fathers simply fit in with the modern woman idea, unwittingly or intentionally. They do not know or expect anything different since this is the prevailing practice in society.

Many parents admire the ideal of home schooling, from a distance, but the thought of actually doing it may be difficult to accept, and pose a serious threat to their independence and career plans.

For those who decide to home school, this challenge may often loom in the background, especially when dealing with onlookers who do not understand the decision and commitment they've made. It is therefore important for mothers to be clear on their God-designed role, apart from which there is none higher to aspire to.

Women should fill the position which God originally designed for her, as her husband's equal. The world needs mothers not merely in name but in every sense of the word. We may safely say that the distinctive duties of woman are more sacred, more holy, than those of man. Let woman realize the sacredness of her work and in the strength and fear of God take up her life mission. Let her educate her children for usefulness in this world and for a home in the better world....

The king upon his throne has no higher work than has the mother. The mother is queen of her household. She has in her power the molding of her children's character, that they may be fitted for the higher, immortal life. An angel could not ask for a higher mission; for in doing this work she is doing service for God. Let her realize the high character of her task, and it will inspire her with courage. Let her realize the worth of her work and put on the whole armour of God, that she may resist the temptation to conform to the world's standard. Her work is for time and eternity.











— ADVENTIST HOME

231-232.

Linking up with other home schoolers

Home schooling a lone may seem like a daunting prospect to your family, especially if you're taking your children out of school to do it for the first time. Coming together with other families in a joint programme is an attractive proposition. However, there are important issues that can surface when families come together that should be considered before hand.

It is in the nature of home schooling that those who choose this alternative will be quite individualistic and idealistic in what they want for their children. The goals that parents have for their children may differ considerably from one family to another. Parents can be extremely protective and jealous over their children which can be interpreted by other parents as a judgement or dislike of what they are doing. Families coming together may be very united initially on the common interest of home schooling but then find big differences in what they want out of it and their expectations of their children. Possible points of disagreement include:

-  teaching and learning styles
-  daily and weekly programmes
-  expected behaviour of children
-  the amount of peer interaction
-  diet and health
-  suitable recreation
-  spiritual outlook
-  who should be allowed to teach their children
-  mutual trust and confidence with each others children
-  financial matters in joint activities.

In the atmosphere of conviction, excitement and expectation that can attend the start of the home schooling venture it is easy to overlook these possibilities. But if not addressed, these issues can lead to misunderstandings and even bad feelings between families who were previously excited to share in this great venture together. To avoid this, it is important that these possible points of disagreement be addressed as openly and honestly as possible before hand.

Parents should spend regular time studying and praying together before and after coming together in joint-home schooling. They should seek to understand God's plan for their children's education more and more and be united on the fundamental principles.

There could also be agreed times and procedures for dealing with differences so as to ensure as much harmony as possible.

Teaching children of different ages and abilities

It might at first seem a lot more straight forward teaching just one child at a time with everything geared toward his particular learning style, ability and interest. But what if you have several children that differ in all these things? You can only give your full attention to one child at a time. So what do you do?

Firstly, instead of seeing the number of your children making the work harder, you can turn things around and see them as making the work easier. Having two or more children can bring a number of advantages:

- ✿ the older children can help you with the younger, thus developing responsibility and a spirit of service
- ✿ the stronger can help the weaker, reinforcing their own learning
- ✿ it provides for positive peer interaction within the family setting
- ✿ each child can bring a fresh dimension to each learning activity
- ✿ some learning activities are better and more dynamic with interaction
- ✿ the unit study method makes it easier for children to learn in the same area but at their own level and pace
- ✿ your children can better develop patience and selflessness by having to share you with a siblings
- ✿ working with each child's differences can make your work more varied and interesting
- ✿ the materials used by the older or stronger ones can be used later with the younger or weaker
- ✿ the older can be role models to the younger
- ✿ a lot of your children's learning will be self-governed, especially as you have to share your time amongst them.

If your children have been in school with each following a set programme for their age, do not feel that this has to be. After all, there are many things that your children do together outside of school, without any consideration of age differences. Once your programme is up and running, most of your initial concerns about teaching different age groups will iron themselves out.

Turning failure into learning opportunities

As with any other worthwhile endeavour in life, you may not always succeed first time in everything new that you attempt. Some things may seem to go badly wrong or be beyond recovery. Satan will ever be on hand—sometimes through sceptical onlookers—

to convince you of your inadequacy and folly in attempting to go this strange way. Here you need to cling to God's promises:

...all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. — ROMANS 8:28.

'Apparent failure' is simply:

*step toward success,
success, not fully attained,
success turned inside out,
a learning block upon which success is built.*

As long as you love God and remember His call to this purpose, He guarantees that nothing that happens will be beyond His ability to work something good from it.

SECTION THREE
MAKING A START








13

How do I set up a home schooling programme?





This section is not intended to be a fixed or prescriptive guide in any way. It is just to give some ideas especially to those of you who might be considering home schooling for the first time and not knowing how or where to start. It is in the very nature of home schooling that no one set approach will work for all children. Each family must find out which approach works best for their unique children and circumstances. Here are some things for all prospectus home schoolers to consider:

1. know what God has to say about your child's education and your role as a parent
2. know that you really love your child and that your child really loves you
3. be clear that He is calling you to home schooling at this time
4. think through carefully your reasons for wanting to home school. These should be more positive than negative
5. consider carefully the challenges of home schooling
6. as far as possible, both parents should be fully agreed and united on these reasons
7. depending on the age of the children and whether or not they are currently in school, they should be consulted and their views considered
8. know when and how to reveal your plans to others, and even who not to share your plans with. Avoid unnecessary deliberations with those who do not want to understand, or even oppose
9. visit and talk with those who have first hand experience of home schooling to observe and learn from their experiences
10. plan ahead as much as possible and give yourself realistic targets to work toward
11. you can plan individual lessons, weekly or monthly, but keep it flexible. Don't be afraid to change your plan if an unscheduled learning opportunity arises, e.g. a change in the weather, allowing for certain outdoor activities
12. set clear, yet flexible, learning objectives and goals







13. decide on the best timing of your programme to suit your lifestyle and commitments (there is no statutory definition of “full-time” education)
14. decide whether or not, or to what extent, you want your child to follow the National Curriculum and take national tests and examinations
15. contact information sources and gather necessary educational materials
16. screen secular books and learning material for any objectionable content
17. contact key resource people who can offer their skills at certain times
18. make a flexible plan for your programme, easy to change as and when necessary
19. remember the following principles about learning (they may challenge your own conventional school education):

-  *learning does not have to be sequenced as is done in school*
-  *desire to learn and ability do not correspond rigidly with chronological age*
-  *informal learning, which is so effective in a child’s early years, can be continued for a lot longer with good results*
-  *life is full of learning sources. We can learn simply by living*
-  *learning is most effective when geared to the learning style of the individual child*
-  *there is no set body of knowledge that a child has to learn each year*
-  *children learn best and are eager to learn when they are ready to learn*

20. consider carefully what style of programme you want to start with:

-  *standardised Christian-based programme*
-  *personalised programme for the individual child*
-  *ongoing emerging programme as you go along*
-  *combination of the above*

21. assess and decide on the best learning methods for your child. You could consider:

-  *project method/integrated curriculum (teaching and learning revolving around chosen topics)*
-  *investigation and exploratory learning*
-  *real life experiential learning (incidental & planned)*
-  *school type ‘book-based’ academic learning*
-  *practical hands-on learning*
-  *a combination of the above*

22. devise your own record keeping system: e.g. a daily log, with your child, of everything that you do

23. plan to evaluate and develop your programme regularly, e.g. reflecting on what you've done each day or a monthly review
24. consider which approach to home schooling best meets you and your child's needs

Approaches to home schooling

Full-time independent home schooling

A family choosing to home school all by themselves will appreciate that home schooling is really a 24 hour, seven day a week enterprise. It is not confined to the conventional school day hours. All activities and arenas of life can be used for education.

A parent and tutor teaching partnership

Parents may want employ a tutor to assist them in their home school programme. This can be a flexible arrangement with a tutor being used as and when needed for whatever activities he or she is needed for. A tutor doesn't have to be a formally trained teacher, but someone who can offer just what is needed in a suitable way.

Joint-home schooling with other families

This is similar to independent home schooling, except that two or more families come together as and when and for the purposes that best suit them. Its a mutual sharing of whatever would be of benefit to themselves.

Semi-schools / Parent co-operative schools

Joint-home schooling families may want to go further in setting up a semi-school, combining their own independent home schooling with more formal group-based education. The proportion of time spent in each would depend on the preferences of individual families. Parents could do all the teaching or use other teachers in a co-operative arrangement. Other premises like a church hall could be used as a meeting place. Local churches could sponsor and help finance semi-school programmes.

Styles of programme

Standardised Christian-based programme

There are ready-made home schooling programmes that can be purchased. These take children through a step by step learning programme with textbooks and workbooks. These programmes make home schooling more predictable and like a conventional school programme for those who are less inclined to be creative and spontaneous. While conveying good Christian values they can take away from the essence of home schooling as tailor-made education.

Personalised programme for the individual child

Ideally, a home schooling programme should be designed for the needs of each individual child. This means the starting point of the programme is the child's learning style, interests, past experiences and other specific needs. Depending on the age of the child, they can be involved in formulating the programme as much as possible.

Ongoing emerging programme

This is similar to the personalised programme, except that it has more flexibility and room for spontaneity. Instead of being a planned programme weeks, or even days, ahead, it emerges from day to day, according to what seems best on the day. This does not rule out planning and a basic structure, but sees these as servants to the needs of the child and not uncompromising masters. E.g. if there is a freak change in the weather, it may be best to go out and explore what is happening out there.

Combination of the above

The pick and choose nature of home schooling allows parents to decide from any of the above options or indeed any other approach that works for their children.

What makes a successful home schooling programme?

By its very nature, home schooling is a flexible non prescriptive approach to education. It would therefore not be appropriate to prescribe in any sort of detail set programmes materials or approaches. However, from experiences, there are some elements that might be useful to consider in any successful home school programme. These include the following:

- # a good devotional at the start of the day
- # daily Bible study
- # regular time out in nature
- # planting a garden for growing fruits and vegetables
- # other useful work, e.g. crafts, bread-making, other practical projects
- # using experiences for learning
- # service and witnessing
- # visits to libraries and museums
- # involvement in appropriate community projects, e.g. nature conservation
- # visits to different places of work to observe and experience
- # regular time for basic skills like reading, writing and number work

- ☞ flexibility and creativity, allowing your child's interests, arising circumstances and unplanned opportunities dictate the direction rather than set programme
- ☞ divide day between more academic work in morning and practical work in afternoon, or blend the two
- ☞ bringing in resource people
- ☞ using projects, e.g. centring learning around child's interests
- ☞ covering all main of learning necessary for life, through real life experiences, e.g. learning letter writing through pen pals
- ☞ relating more academic areas to dimensions of life
- ☞ informal and formal assessments as and when necessary
- ☞ negotiating with child in shaping programme
- ☞ placing a greater emphasis on learning rather than teaching.

LIVING IN A RURAL ENVIRONMENT

A home schooling programme can be set up wherever a family lives. However, a rural location has some important advantages.

In choosing a home, God would have us consider, first of all, the moral and religious influences that will surround us and our families...

There is not one family in a hundred who will be improved physically, mentally, or spiritually by residing in the city. Faith, hope, love, happiness, can far better be gained in retired places, where there are fields and hills and trees. Take your children away from the sights and sounds of the city.... — ADVENTIST HOME 131,137.

So long as God gives me power to speak to our people, I shall continue to call upon parents to leave the cities and get homes in the country, where they can cultivate the soil and learn from the book of nature the lessons of purity and simplicity....

If possible, the home should be out of the city, where the children can have ground to cultivate. Let them have a piece of ground of their own; and as you teach them to make a garden, how to prepare the soil for seed, and the importance of keeping all the weeds pulled out, teach them also how important it is to keep unsightly, injurious practices out of the life.
— IBID.146-147.

It would be a good idea if groups of Adventist home schooling families were to locate themselves in rural environments, close to each other, for mutual support.

SETTING UP YOUR OWN EDUCATION PROGRAMME

How do you now turn these ideas into an education programme for your child? There are many different approaches that can be used. The following is a step-by-step process with practical examples that you could use adapt to suit your needs. The term 'areas of learning' is used in a broad sense for areas of life rather than the traditional narrow subject divisions in conventional school education.

You might think of this process as planning and taking a journey to a desired destination:

- STEP 1. knowing where you want to get to
- STEP 2. using the best vehicle
- STEP 3. working out the most direct roads to take
- STEP 4. recognising the places you must pass through to get to your destination.

STEP 1: Knowing the way to go

(JOURNEY OF LIFE: Knowing where you want to get to)

It is important for you to understand from the outset that an education programme is a means to an end. The end being to meet the needs of your child so that he can go the right way in life.

*Children may be trained for the service of sin or for the service of righteousness. Solomon says, "Train up a child in **the way he should go**: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6. This language is positive. The training that Solomon enjoins is to direct, educate, develop. But in order for parents to do this work, they must themselves understand the "way" the child should go.*

— COUNSELS TO PARENTS, TEACHERS & STUDENTS 108.

Evidently, there is a way that your child should go. You must know this way to ensure your child goes this way, having his needs met in the process. Now what is the way that your child should go.


It (true education) is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come.

—
EDUCATION 13.


Salvation for your child and for others through your child's life is the ultimate goal. This pursuit will lead to health, holiness and happiness—the best things that this life has to offer.


Practical

 help your child to understand what the purpose of his education is

 decide with him what he needs to learn in order to bring this purpose

 if he needs to learn **language and communication skills**, for example,

 work out how this relates to the overall purpose of his education

 help him to understand the connection as much as possible

 **reading and writing** can help with the following:

- reading instructions for carrying out physical tasks properly
- developing mental faculties like intellect and imagination
- reading and writing about the Bible for spiritual growth
- serving others by writing letters of encouragement or advice

 you can repeat this process for other areas of learning in your programme

STEP 2: Awakening your child's interest

(JOURNEY OF LIFE: Using the best vehicle)

If harmonious development and preparation for service is the way your child should go, you must understand how best to bring this about for your child. Not only must you be interested in your child going this way, but you must also awaken your child's interest in going this way. As far as possible, your child's interests can be used as starting point for this broad education.

*True education is not the forcing of instruction on an unready and unreceptive mind. **The mental powers must be awakened, the interest aroused.** —
EDUCATION 41.*

Using interests to meet needs

Instead of an imposed standardised programme, your child's interests can be used as a starting point in determining taught and learned. Of course, a child's interests may not

always be in line with what he actually needs. You need to recognise this and use the interest, as far as possible, to reach your child's broader learning needs.

*The youth should be taught to aim at the development of all their faculties, the weaker as well as the stronger. With many there is a disposition to restrict their study to certain lines, for which they have a natural liking. This error should be guarded against. **The natural aptitudes indicate the direction of the lifework, and, when legitimate, should be carefully cultivated.** At the same time it must be kept in mind that a well-balanced character and efficient work in any line depend, to a great degree, on that symmetrical development which is the result of thorough, all-round training.*
— *IBID.*232,233.

The all-round development of your child can come from—or ride on the back of—his natural interests and aptitudes to ensure his willing participation in all his education.

Preferred learning styles

Recognising your child's preferred learning style is an important element in engaging his interest once it has been identified. Three basic learning styles are:

- 🏠 visual (learning by seeing)
- 🏠 auditory (learning by hearing)
- 🏠 kinesthetic (learning by physical activity).

Going a step further, learning styles can be further categorised as:

- 🏠 actual-spontaneous
- 🏠 actual-routine
- 🏠 conceptual-specific
- 🏠 conceptual-global.

(from 'Learning patterns and Temperament Styles', by Keith Golay)

Those with actual styles are doers, while those with conceptual styles are thinkers. The doers are then categorised as spontaneous or routine and the thinkers are divided between specific (problem solvers) and global (social).

It is probably best not to try to pigeon-hole your child too tightly into one of these categories. People are more complex than this. In reality, your child may combine elements

of all these learning styles according to what, when and the circumstances in which, he is learning.

Practical

You need to teach your child **arithmetic** with the broader purpose of education in mind—not

just because every child is supposed to learn about numbers. If your child shows a natural curiosity or interest in numbers, you already have a starting point to work from. If not, you will need to awaken his interest. You should know, by observing and talking with him, the things that generally interest him. E.g. If he has an interest in cars, you could do the following:

- ☞ develop some number work around observing cars
- ☞ go out with him, observe and write down numbers of different makes,
 - ☞ years, colours and sizes of cars
- ☞ make up sums with these numbers to do mentally, or in writing, while you're out or when you return, e.g. how many more red cars were there than green ones?
- ☞ also, engage his thinking and reasoning powers by asking him to work out
 - ☞ the reasons for the numerical differences
- ☞ where his interest is a legitimate one, you can feed it as you use it. E.g. you can talk to him about the cars you are looking at and which ones he likes in particular. This will help attach the number work more securely to his interest in cars
- ☞ if his interest is out of line with the Christian values you want for him (e.g. he is fascinated with fast expensive sports cars), you may need to massage his interest into a more Christian one while explaining to him the reasons why.

STEP 3: Sources of learning

(JOURNEY OF LIFE: Working out the most direct roads to take)

Understanding the way that your child should go and his natural interests, it is important to consider where you can go and what you can do to acquire the learning that your child needs. What sources of learning has God made available?

*Jesus followed the divine plan of education. The schools of His time, with their magnifying of things small and their belittling of things great, He did not seek. His education was gained directly from **the Heaven-appointed sources; from useful***

work, from the study of the Scriptures and of nature, and from the experiences of life—God's lesson books, full of instruction to all who bring to them the willing hand, the seeing eye, and the understanding heart. — EDUCATION 77.

These four sources of learning helped to develop a perfect character in the life of Jesus and as a result He was the wisest and most influential man that ever walked this earth. As you seek to develop the character of Christ in your child, you need to give attention to these sources learning in His education. They provide comprehensive learning, the acquisition of skills and character development, which can best be exemplified by the 'Fruit of the spirit' (GALATIANS 5:22,23).

These heaven-appointed sources of learning are the roads your child must travel to get to the destination of her education. From them, you can develop an education programme covering all areas of your child's life.




Useful work

This is a vital source of learning for your child. You can have this as a part of her education programme each day. You might include: housework; shopping; doing tasks for people in need; gardening and a whole range of practical trades like carpentry, sewing, painting and decorating.

In doing this work, not only will your child learn how to perform set tasks, but the work itself will generate learning. Hence you have an upward spiral of development:

work → learning → better work → better learning...and so on.

To get learning out of work, you can talk with your child about what she is doing and find out what she is learning in the process. She may be learning:

-  how to do the work better
-  character-building lessons like perseverance, honesty or good planning
-  practical skills to be used in other work.

...the work itself is a means of development. In cultivating carefulness, patience, attention to detail, obedience to law, it imparts a most essential training.

— EDUCATION 112.

Practical

Your child needs to learn how to cook good nutritious meals. You awaken his interest by asking if he would to help make his favourite meal today. In helping to cook this meal, he could learn:

☞ how to plan

☞ the ingredients of nutritious food

☞ where different types of foods come from

☞ order in carrying out a task

☞ patience and perseverance if things don't go exactly as they should

☞ why certain foods taste the way they do and how to vary the taste

☞ humility in success

☞ cause and effect relationships

☞ how to make tasty healthy meals that could be a blessing to others.

Possible areas of useful work

Accounts, Agriculture (Gardening), Artistic Expression, Business, Carpentry, Computers, Cooking, Crafts & Design, Domestic management, Manual Trades, (Building, Dress-making etc.), Music, Witnessing

Character traits developed

Confidence, Contentment, Courage, Decisiveness, Determination, Enthusiasm, Firmness, Goodness, Happiness, Integrity, Love, Modesty, Patience, Perseverance, Refinement, Self-control, Trust, Wisdom

Skills developed

Business, Communication, Creative expression, Mathematical, Physical co-ordination, Time management

Study of the Scriptures

The Word of God is a vital source of learning and power for Christian character development and spiritual growth. It has principles for every activity of life and is essential for the highest development of body, mind and spirit.

When learning from the Bible is applied to life, it brings an experience which itself generates learning. This can lead the learner back to the Bible for deeper truths to explain his experiences and apply to his life. Once again, there is an upward spiral of learning and development from this source of learning.

☞ see chapter 1 on the Bible in education

The study of the scriptures is a source of learning in many ways including the following:

1. reveals God and His love for humanity
2. shows the purpose of life and the plan of salvation
3. source of character-building and spiritual growth
4. answers fundamental questions of life
5. contains principles for Christian character development
6. provides power to live the Christian life
7. points out principles for every activity of life
8. unfolds human history
9. promotes the highest development of mind
10. good for memorising key passages
11. links the human to the Divine mind
12. contains a variety of literary types and styles
13. adventure stories to arouse the interest.

Engaging the interest of your child in the Bible is an important starting point for study:









In order to interest our children in the Bible, we ourselves must be interested in it. To awaken in them a love for its study, we must love it. Our instruction to them will have only the weight of influence given it by our own example and spirit....

But in order to do effective study, the interest of the pupil must be enlisted....In teaching children the Bible, we may gain much by observing the bent of their minds, the things in which they are interested, and arousing their interest to see what the Bible says about these things.

—
EDUCATION 187,188.

Practical

Your child has an interest in friends. You could do the following:

-  let her know that the Bible has a lot to say about friends
-  use a concordance to show what the Bible has to say
-  tell her some of the interesting stories in the Bible about friends,
like David and Jonathon
-  use suitable pictures to bring stories alive
-  discuss and apply lessons from these stories
-  look up and discuss key principles on friendship, e.g. in Proverbs
-  use friendship in your life and your child's life to explain
and illustrate the principles
-  let your child keep a record of friendships in her own life and how the Bible principles
on friendship can make these better

☞ see EDUCATION pp.185-192 'Bible Teaching and Study'

Areas of learning from the Scriptures

The Bible contains principles for every possible area of learning and direct content material for many.

Character traits developed

...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance:
5:22,23. — GALATIANS

Other traits

Confidence, Contentment, Courage, Decisiveness, Determination, Enthusiasm, Firmness, Integrity, Perseverance, Refinement, Self-control, Trust, Wisdom etc.

Skills developed

Language, Communication, Thinking, Research

Nature

As a route along the way to life's destination, nature provides many and various opportunities for learning:

- ☞ going out into nature to observe and learn directly
- ☞ planting a garden for growing fruit and vegetables
- ☞ discovering about God's thoughts and character through nature
- ☞ recognising evidences for the creation, fall and plan of redemption
- ☞ finding out what the Bible has to say about nature
- ☞ nature helping to explain Bible principles
- ☞ recreation in nature to exercise the body and refresh the mind
- ☞ studying books and other information sources on nature and science.

Practical

If your child has an interest in the stars, you could do the following learning *activities*:

- ☞ *go out at night to observe and talk about the stars*
- ☞ *ask him questions to stimulate his interest and curiosity*
- ☞ *study what the Bible has to say about stars, their origin and purpose etc.*
- ☞ *discuss what stars reveal about the power and love of God*
- ☞ *research into stars to discover interesting facts about them*
- ☞ *get a telescope and go out into remote places in nature, away from the city, to observe from time to time*
- ☞ *write accounts of these experiences or poems and songs*
- ☞ *make a map of the stars.*

Areas of learning from nature

Agriculture, Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Geography, Geology, Health, Maths, Physics, Science, Zoology.

Character traits developed

Confidence, Contentment, Courage, Decisiveness, Determination, Enthusiasm, Firmness, Goodness, Happiness, Integrity, Love, Modesty, Patience, Peacefulness, Perseverance, Refinement, Self-control, Trust, Wisdom.

Skills developed

Communication, Creative expression, Language, Mathematical, Observation, Reflection, Thinking.

☞ *see chapter 1 on the importance of nature in education*

Experiences of life

Life's experiences are another dynamic source of learning for your child with almost limitless possibilities. All of life's experiences provide opportunity for learning and development when it is recognised that:

...all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.
— ROMANS
8:28.

Everything that happens to you, your child and others with whom you're closely associated is a potential source of learning. Life's experiences can include more or less anything that can be perceived through the senses. You should allow your child to have as many appropriate experiences as possible, many of which will come through life's unavoidable everyday experiences. All will provide opportunities for conscious and subconscious learning. They may include:

- # # encounters with other people
- # # visiting places
- # # planning for something
- # # special events
- # # mistakes
- # # happiness
- # # sadness
- # # disappointments
- # # successes
- # # accidents
- # # first encounters with something
- # # unexplainable happenings, etc.












The learning generated from life's experiences can be applied back into life for future experiences, which themselves will generate further learning. Once again you can have an upward spiral of development:

experiences → learning → better experiences → better learning... and so on.

Explain to your child the value of experience for learning so that whatever happens to her, good or bad, can generate something positive for her life. You can set aside time each day to recall, reflect and extract learning from the experiences of the past day. Alternatively, you could do this more informally as experiences unfold before you. Again, you could use your child's interest as a guide as to which experiences to look at first. Ideally, you will want to look at a good range of experiences, both good and bad.

Practical

Your child may not initially be interested in looking at a bad experience, but it may be essential that she does at some point, to avoid it in the future. E.g. if she loses some money that she has been given for a particular purpose, through carelessness. You could extract from this the following learning:

-  *assurance that God still loves and forgives her*
-  *courage and honesty in acknowledging and*
-  *accepting responsibility for mistakes*
-  *recalling from the memory precise details of past events*
-  *understanding the result of certain actions*
-  *accepting loss as a consequence of sin and as a part of life*
-  *avoiding blaming others or making excuses*
-  *recognising, admitting and avoiding carelessness*
-  *working out ways of generating or replacing the money that has been lost*
-  *learning how to do without*
-  *sharing stories of the Bible about loss.*

Possible areas of learning from experience

Experiences of life are very broad. They can relate to and generate learning in almost any area.

Character traits developed

Confidence, Contentment, Courage, Decisiveness, Determination, Enthusiasm, Firmness, Goodness, Happiness, Integrity, Love, Modesty, Patience, Peacefulness, Perseverance, Refinement, Self-control, Trust, Wisdom

Skills developed

Experiences of life are extremely varied. They can help develop skills for almost any area of life.

Learning from God's lesson books

Having looked at the potential for learning from these four sources, it is important to remember that they are:

God's lesson books, full of instruction to all who bring to them the willing hand, the seeing eye, and the understanding heart.
— EDUCATION
78.

I.e. to get the highest learning from these four sources, you must cultivate in your child the willing hand, the seeing eye, and the understanding heart. This also implies cultivating learning different learning styles which engage the hand, the eye and the heart. Clearly, the stimulation of your child's interest is an important starting point.

STEP 4: Learning in life's main arenas

(JOURNEY OF LIFE: Recognising the places you must pass through)

Having identified these four heaven-appointed sources of learning, we must now consider the arenas of life in which we encounter these four sources. The life of the home-schooled child takes place in basically three arenas, home, church and community. In each of these three arenas, there are activities, people, places and physical things from which learning can be derived. The heaven-appointed sources can operate in all three arenas of life.

In developing a home education programme for your child, you can use the sources of learning in these three arenas.

The home arena

The home is a dynamic learning environment. Its many activities provide a wide range of learning experiences. Of particular importance is the fact that learning in the home is well integrated, i.e. you have different areas of learning naturally, blending together rather than artificially separated as in conventional schooling. The following are examples of things that take place in the home:

Domestic finances

Budgeting, economising, income & expenditure, running a home business, saving, tithing

E.g. teaching your child how to run the family finances and giving her the chance to play a part. Let him use her use her own ideas for cutting down expenditure.

Areas of learning

Accounts, business, economics, language and communication, management, maths.

Domestic work

Cooking, baking, cleaning, washing, changing and arranging, organising, decorating, gardening, ironing, personal hygiene etc.

E.g. teaching your child how to clean all areas of the home thoroughly and efficiently. Let him understand the reasons for doing this and devise strategies for improving his work.

Areas of learning

Health, design, technology, hygiene, management, science

Domestic organisation

Recognition & use of talents, family organisation, roles, relationships, (mother and father, parents and children, brothers & sisters, older and younger, extended family), responsibilities, management

E.g. delegating to your oldest child some responsibility and authority over younger siblings and having family meetings to discuss her role as your assistant and helping her to improve.

Areas of learning

Character-building, language & communication, inter-personal skills, leadership, management.

Social activities & recreation

Meal time, discussions, playing games, inviting guests, music, family outings

E.g. regular times for all the family to engage in some social activity together. Let your child help to choose and plan the activities

Areas of learning

Planning, language and communication, music

Service

Helping family, friends, strangers, giving Bible studies

E.g. inviting home an elderly person, living by herself, and having your child plan what to do for the person.

Areas of learning

Character-building, planning, language and communication, witnessing

Spiritual haven

Personal devotions, family worship, Sabbath, Bible study

E.g. giving your children turns to plan and lead out in family worship, together or individually

Areas of learning

Bible, character-building, language & communication, inter-personal skills, leadership, organisation

The church arena

The church is also a rich arena of learning. It has many activities which provide opportunities for learning. The following are examples:

Sabbath school, Sermons, Pathfinders, JAYS & AYS, Campmeetings, Business meetings, Fellowship lunches, Departmental programmes & seminars, Fellowship, Missions, Retreats, Ingathering, Social events.












All of these church activities provide learning opportunities. To get the best learning out of them, for your child, you could do the following:

- ✚ get your child to help you to work out all that can take place in these activities
- ✚ note the ones of particular interest to your child
- ✚ work out the areas of learning and skills associated with each activity
- ✚ devise a plan for your child to keep a simple record of what is being done in these activities.
- ✚ use these records for discussing with your child what has been learned from what they've done, observed or heard in these activities
- ✚ use as many of these learning experiences for developing further learning and practical activities.

Practical

Using Missions for studying about the world

The mission report each quarter is coming from a particular division of the General Conference and world church. You can use the mission reports and the information given about the division as a basis of studying about different parts of the world and using your learning in practical ways. For each part of the world covered, you can find out about:

-  *the location of places on the globe*
-  *their natural environments*
-  *the history of the countries and their people*
-  *the culture and way of life of the people*
-  *the work of the church*
-  *the problems and needs of the people*
-  *practical ideas for helping the people, e.g. mission sacrifice offerings*
-  *visiting the places in the region if possible*
-  *getting a pen pal in the area*
-  *how your child could become a student missionary for the church to help in a particular area of the world, in the future*
-  *learning the language of the people for mission work.*

Clearly, while much of this learning will encompass the traditional subject area of geography, much more is actually covered including: maths, research, English and foreign languages, witnessing, vocational training etc.

The community arena

Shopping, Libraries, Museums, Places of work, Environment, People, Services, Nature.

These places, activities and people are all sources of learning in their own right. They can help your child understand how society functions. As with the church arena, you can plan simple activities, deliberately designed to get from them the things your child needs to learn.

Practical

Using places of work for learning

On a regular basis, you can take your child to visit places of work in the local community and further afield. You can use your child's interest for choosing where to go. You might visit: a building site, car factory, food factory, farm, fire station, lawyers, police, post office, printers etc.

For the places of work you visit, your child could do the following:

- ☺ have a hands-on experience doing the work, if appropriate*
- ☺ observe and ask questions*
- ☺ take pictures or draw sketches*
- ☺ decide what is good or bad about what they see taking place*
- ☺ find out the place and importance of this work for society*
- ☺ find out how a business organisation functions*
- ☺ find out what skills and preparation the workers need*
- ☺ work out which areas of learning are important for doing the different jobs*
- ☺ think of why he might or might not want to do the type of work.*

Creation, Fall & Redemption theme

Having put together the basic structure for your child's education programme with a wide range of learning activities, you now need to consider an important principle for getting the true understanding of whatever she is going to learn about:

*In order to understand what is comprehended in the work of education, we need to consider both the **nature of man** and the **purpose of God in creating him**. We need to consider also the **change in man's condition** through the coming in of a knowledge of evil, and **God's plan for still fulfilling His glorious purpose** in the education of the human race.*

— EDUCATION









14, 15.

There are four principles which provide the highest context for all learning:

1. the nature of man
2. the purpose of God in creating him
3. the change in man's condition through the coming in of a knowledge of evil
4. God's plan for still fulfilling His glorious purpose in the education of the human race.

Practical

If you are studying about trees, in the context of the creation, fall and redemption, you could do the following:

-  *Start by observing trees directly.*
-  *Consider the nature of man—physical, mental, spiritual and social—and how trees relate to this, e.g. providing oxygen for his physical needs.*
-  *Consider the purpose of man's creation and how trees would have contributed to this originally, e.g. they reveal the creative power and glory of God, thus drawing man close to God. Also a part of man's purpose was to look after nature including the trees.*
-  *Look at how the coming in of sin effected man's condition and his environment, including trees. E.g. both the curse on the ground and the flood would have had a harmful effect on trees. This in turn would have worsened man's condition, because trees would have lost some of their original capacity to meet man's needs.*
-  *On the other hand, trees have taken on new roles in meeting new human needs. E.g. providing fuel, building materials, protection against bad weather conditions; spiritual object lessons; tokens of the full restoration of nature to come through redemption.*
-  *However, man has gone to extremes and is now abusing the blessing of trees. Today, he is destroying the trees mercilessly, largely for material gain, with serious consequences for the balance of gases in the atmosphere and the existence of life.*
-  *How does God's plan for the restoration of man and eventually nature effect the way we treat trees today. Should we be stewards of the trees and nature as god intended originally? Will there be trees restored to their Edenic splendour in the earth made new?*
-  *In this way, each area of learning can be understood in this broader, creation, fall, redemption context. Everything studied can be a step toward fulfilling the redemption purpose for your child.*

In fact, there is no true learning outside this context. Without understanding the true nature of man, his place, purpose and destiny in this world and beyond, it is very difficult to get a proper understanding of anything, whether, natural or man made.

Secular education can never provide the most complete understanding of anything. Based on evolution, it does not have a correct understanding of human nature; it does not accept the existence of a loving creator who created humans with a definite purpose; it presents man in his natural state as improving rather than experiencing a fall; and it has no need or understanding of redemption. Hence, secular education is a false context for learning. indeed, it can never promote true education.

STEP 5: Planning a weekly programme

Now we need to bring together the ideas from the previous four steps and turn them into a weekly programme that you can follow with your child.

There are several important questions to consider at this stage in this process:

- ☞ do I need to have a set weekly programme?
- ☞ what does my child need to cover in a typical week?
- ☞ which areas of learning do I need to focus on most?
- ☞ how much time should be spent on each area?
- ☞ can the different areas of learning be linked?
- ☞ what's the best way to divide the time between practical / vocational activities, skills learning and academic knowledge-based learning?
- ☞ at what speed should my child be learning?
- ☞ what are the best resources to use and where can I get them from?
- ☞ do I need to follow set text books?
- ☞ how can I assess what my child is learning?
- ☞ how much direct teaching should I do as opposed to my child learning by herself?
- ☞ do I need a separate programme for each child?

The Unit Study Method

Perhaps the best way to address these questions is the unit study method of learning. This is simply the natural linking of areas of learning through real life circumstances. It is a natural method of learning from real life motivational situations and opportunities in which learning areas are already integrated. It has several key features:

- 🏠 based on learning through hands-on experience
- 🏠 learning by doing which sticks with people longer
- 🏠 textbooks do not have to be slavishly followed, but used more for reference purposes
- 🏠 it turns real life circumstances or opportune moments into educational experiences

- 🏠 it is the co-ordination and correlation of subject material or ideas that develop naturally by allowing flexibility into the educational experience and pushing out unnecessary structure
- 🏠 it is an effective way for a parent to meet the needs of one or several children at appropriate levels
- 🏠 it makes children want to learn and eager to learn, 'from' every academic and vocational discipline and skill related to the original idea (note: learning from the discipline rather than learning the discipline itself for the sake of it)
- 🏠 once begun, it multiplies itself, creating interests in other areas which themselves become the basis for more unit studies
- 🏠 helps parents to learn with their children and to see educational possibilities in every circumstance of life that God places in their path
- 🏠 it focuses parents on children rather than teaching subjects
- 🏠 it is easier and more interesting and effective than teaching subject by subject
- 🏠 it offers a three-dimensional learning experience.

Types of unit studies

1. Interrelationships between learning areas

E.g. in learning the Bible, you can't escape reading and history

2. Developing one learning area through another

E.g. teaching mathematical principles through physics

3. Learning from real life situations

E.g. learning business skills from a home bread making business

4. Learning from real life observation

E.g. learning good speech practices and vocabulary while listening to public speakers

5. Fully integrated unit study

E.g. a highly motivational real life activity that involves all the key areas of learning. This might be planning and going on a trip, which would involve:

Maths: *calculating fares, other costs, times and distances*

English communication: *corresponding with travel companies and transportation services*

Geography: *the location, direction of the place and routes to take*

History: *visiting museums and talking to local people to learn about the history of the place*

Service: *witnessing to people you meet*

Business: *planning the trip as economically as possible*

Nature / Science: *visiting and observing the natural surroundings*

Health: *getting good rest, exercise and food while away*

The different types of unit studies can all be used, to varying degrees, in your daily and weekly programme, depending on how flexible and spontaneous you want to be. The timetable below represents a more formal systematic approach.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Worship	Worship	Worship	Worship	Worship	Worship
	← ----- BREAK FAST ----- →				
<i>Short walk</i>	<i>Short walk</i>	<i>Short walk</i>	<i>Short walk</i>	<i>Short walk</i>	<i>Short walk</i>
	Bible	Bible	Bible	Bible	Bible
Weekly	Language	Maths	Social Studies	Science	Health
Planning	<i>Personal time</i>	<i>Personal time</i>	<i>Personal time</i>	<i>Personal time</i>	<i>Personal time</i>
	← ----- LU NCH ----- →				
Family Time	Domestic	Manual	Community	Agriculture	Mission /
	Management	Trades	Visit	(Gardening)	Witnessing
	<i>Personal time</i>	<i>Personal time</i>	<i>Personal time</i>	<i>Personal time</i>	<i>Personal time</i>
Diary writing	Diary writing	Diary writing	Diary writing	Diary writing	Diary writing
Worship	Worship	Worship	Worship	Worship	Worship

Conventional weekly timetable

This is a more conventional looking timetable, but with room for flexibility, easy connections and flow between learning areas. While it would be good to have regular worship and meal times, there need not be rigid time slots for the other areas of learning. They can start and finish when they need to. Ideally, successive learning activities will merge smoothly into each other, without abrupt stopping and starting because of the clock. A timetable is to serve your needs not to enslave you. You can follow it as tightly or loosely as best suits you.

There can be thematic connections from one area of learning to another down through the day. Units of studies could be formed between areas of learning and different activities.

Practical

E.g. on Wednesday, there could be the following connections:

Worship could be based on the parable of the sower

Breakfast could include consideration of the variety of seeds, plants and soils that your food originates from and the importance of the seed falling on the good soil to provide our food

The short nature walk could include observation of the different types of surfaces where seeds land and grow

Bible could be a more in-depth study of how God prepares our hearts to be good soil for the seeds of truth from His word

Social studies could look at the seed sowing process in different parts of the world, how it has changed over time and the effects of this

Community visit in the afternoon could be to an organic arable farm to observe or discuss seed sowing, soils etc.

As well as vertical unit connections, throughout individual days, there could also be horizontal unit study connections from one day to the next.

This timetable could also be the basis of integrated unit studies. E.g. learning can centre around a chosen theme or activity, as much as possible, like transport. The learning areas in the timetable can still be followed but everything studied would be linked to the transport theme, as much as possible.

Alternatively, you can move to a more dynamic unit study approach with most of the learning coming out of a chosen unit study activity.

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

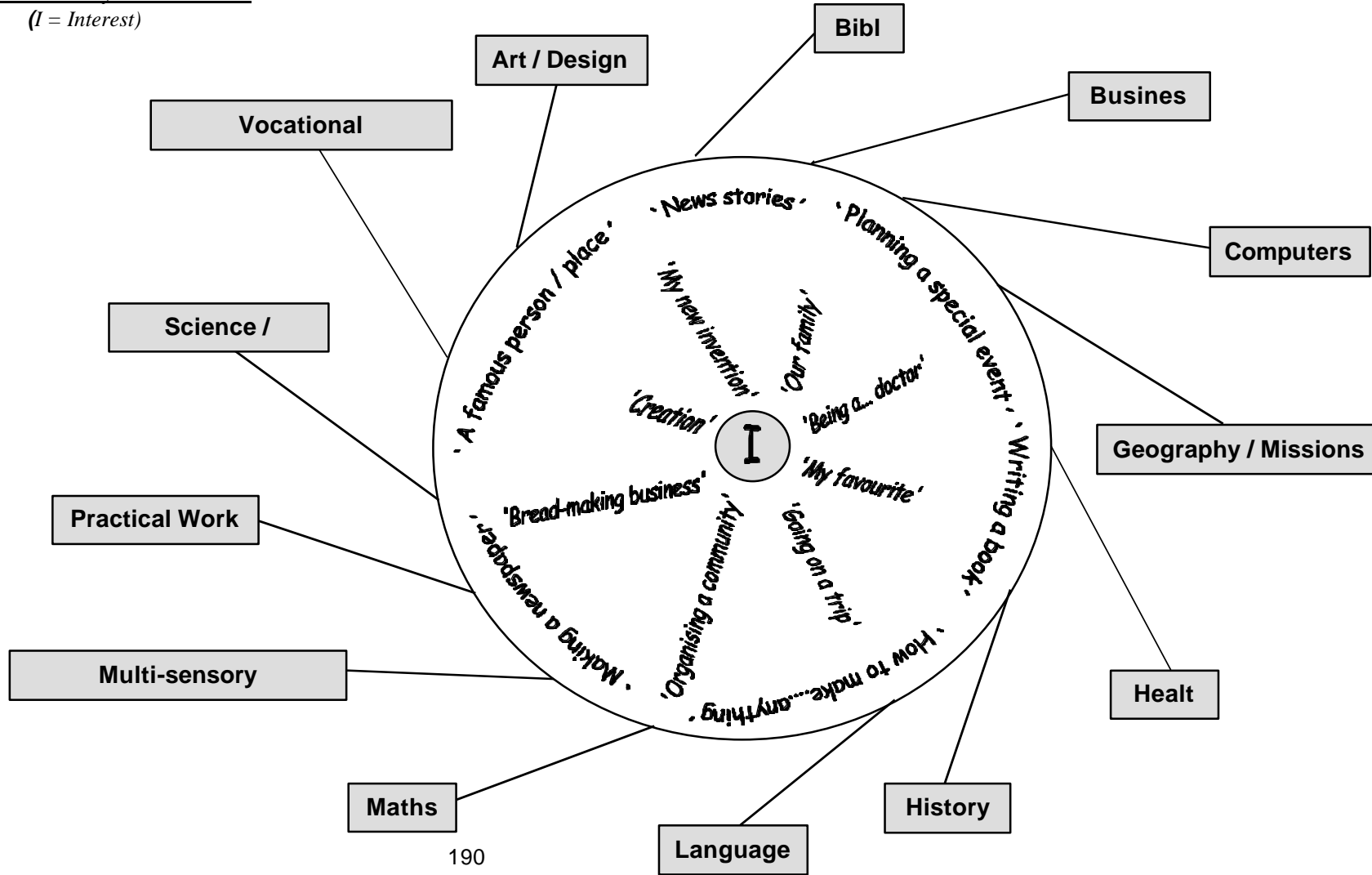
WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

Unit Study Wheel 1.

(I = Interest)



SUNDAY

MONDAY

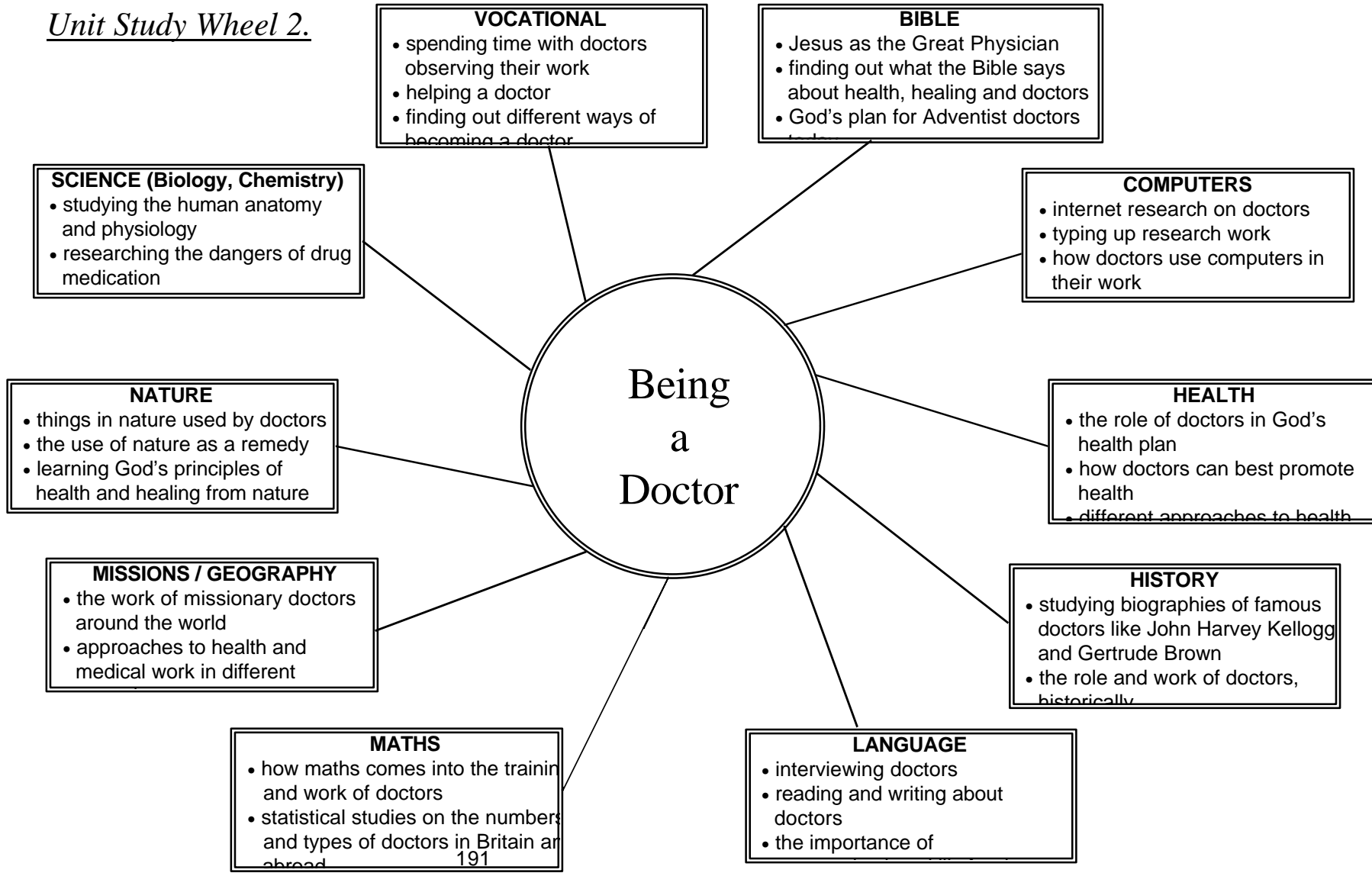
TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

Unit Study Wheel 2.



Fully integrated unit study

Once a topic or activity is chosen—possibly based on your child’s interest—it can drive the learning process (see unit study wheel 1) generating learning in many areas. E.g. if your child is interested in becoming a doctor, all the necessary learning can come out of a unit study on this topic (see unit study wheel 2).

Depending on the exact topic or activity, you can decide which aspects you want to cover each day. You don’t have to be rigid on this. As long as you are mindful of the different areas of learning your child needs to cover in the unit, you can make sure that sufficient emphasis is given to each in your planning. You can do this as smoothly as possible while focusing primarily on the topic or activity of the unit. The idea is that different areas of learning will emerge naturally as it does in life generally.

Assessing your child’s education

With the great goals you are seeking to achieve, through home schooling, it is important to have a plan for assessing your child’s education. Your unique knowledge and experience with your child from birth qualifies you to be an expert in assessing his learning and development. Just as you noticed, encouraged and announced your child’s first steps, so you can continue to assess your child’s learning in many other areas.

In a sense, you are not trying to prove to yourself or anyone else that he is learning. His learning may not be according to the arbitrary standards and expectations of conventional school education, but no one will be able to deny the fact that he is learning and is a keen learner. If you need your child to take standard tests to prove this you can if you wish, but this is not necessary. There’s scarcely anything harder to hide or hold back than a young hungry, well-motivated learner.



To assess and document your child’s learning, you can consider some of the following:

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT?









- ☛ Helps to reveal the current state of your child’s education
- ☛ Reveals whether things are going according to plan
- ☛ Shows whether your goals are being achieved
- ☛ Indicates what might need to be done next


WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ASSESS?

- ☛ Your child’s physical, mental and spiritual development
- ☛ The programme



-  Your teaching
-  Your child's learning

HOW DO YOU ASSESS?






-  Direct observation
-  Through prayer and reflection
-  Dialogue with your child
-  Testing
-  Incidental as you go along
-  Task-related
-  Written and mental
-  Recording assessment in a personal portfolio.

 see pp.134-137 on personal portfolio

HOW OFTEN DO YOU NEED TO ASSESS?

-  At regular intervals
-  As and when necessary

WHO SHOULD ASSESS?

-  Self-assessment by your child
-  Joint-assessment with your child
-  You assessing your child
-  Your child assessing you
-  Another person assessing you and your child

Answering your questions

Do I need to have a set weekly programme?

If you need a clear structure to work with, a weekly timetable can be helpful. However, as you go along and gain in experience and confidence, you will probably follow a looser more spontaneous programme. Your focus will be your child's learning rather than having to get through a timetable.

What does my child need to cover in a typical week?

There is no fixed amount that any child needs to learn in a week. It can be as much or as little as necessary, and can be determined largely by interest, circumstances and opportunities. Remember, your child is constantly learning and will learn in the course of everyday life, with or without a set programme of learning.

Which areas of learning do I need to focus on most?

Again there is no set answer here. As long as you have a broad view of your child's learning needs, strengths and weaknesses, you will know where your child might need more help and encouragement. There is no reason why maths and English should assume a central position in your programme. If there are sufficient learning opportunities in which they can be developed, in your programme generally, your child will learn all the maths and English he needs to learn.

How much time should be spent on each area?

The important thing here is not so much time spent on particular subject areas, Rather, it is making sure there is sufficient time for physical, mental, spiritual, social development and service (EDUCATION 13). Balanced, appropriate and creative development in these areas will provide all that your child needs.

Can the different areas of learning be linked?

Yes, as seen in the unit study method, this is really the best and most natural approach to learning, rather than rigidly dividing subject areas.

What's the best way to divide time between practical work and academic learning?

As a general guide, you could aim to split your time equally between the two. Ideally, you will want to have natural learning activities that will blend the practical and academic in a smooth continuous way. However, remember that if one should have priority, in terms of time, it should be the practical.

If the youth can have but a one-sided education, which is of greater consequence, a knowledge of the sciences, with all the disadvantages to health and life, or a knowledge of labor for practical life? We unhesitatingly answer, The latter. If one must be neglected, let it be the study of books.

— FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION 41.

One of the reasons for this is that practical activities, like agriculture, can provide for physical, mental and spiritual development all at the same time, whereas academic learning activities tends to focus on just the mental faculties.

E.g. your child could learn how to prune trees in one of two ways:

1. from a book with clear explanations and diagrams
2. from firsthand experience—being shown directly and having the opportunity to prune a tree himself.

Clearly the second method would be a richer, more interesting and effective method. Learning is acquired through doing, which itself promotes further interest and learning.

At what speed should my child be learning?

At his or her own speed. The pace of learning is not determined by chronological age. Interest and needs are much more realistic gauges of the pace of learning. I.e. if your child wants, or needs, to learn something at a particular time, she can do so as fast or slow as necessary. Different minds grasp things in different ways and at different speeds.

Without the pressure of a rigid time-based system of learning with set tests, the pace of learning can be a lot more natural, flexible and comfortable for the learner. If you are instilling, in her, good character traits like industriousness, commitment and faithfulness in the little things, she will not be lazy and reluctant in her work—trying to do as little as possible. Rather she will aspire to do her best in everything that she is convinced she needs to do for her own good and the good of others.

What are the best resources to use and where can I get them from?

There is no one set of resources for every child. Your child's unique qualities and learning style will largely determine, which resources you need. Adventist and other Christian-based resources is a good starting point. There will be suitable secular resources as well, but all resources should be screened before usage and measured against the principles of true education.

☞ *see chapter 14 on organisations and resources*

Do I need to follow set text books?

No. The flexible nature of home schooling offers an exciting array of real life and more artificial learning sources. Following set textbooks might seem straight forward and easier to manage, but home schooling offers your something much more dynamic and exciting than this. Life in the real world is your greatest textbook.

How much direct teaching should I do as opposed to my child learning by herself?

Remember, your child does not have to be taught in order to learn. Learning will go on without and sometimes in spite of teaching. Your role is really one of loving facilitation of a natural process that God has built into every child's mind. teach as much as you need and

want to do. Perhaps the best role for you to adopt is one of a fellow learner along side your child with God as teacher, life as the curriculum and the world as the classroom.

Do I need a separate programme for each child?

Not necessarily. The unit study approach offers the opportunity for children of different ages to engage in the same learning activity at their level. The varied interests of your children will obviously give scope for them to pursue their own learning in some things, but even in this they can be sharing their learning with mutual benefits all round. Generally, speaking, the wider the age gap, the more likely it will be that there will be some differentiation. However, you may prefer to take up the interesting challenge of designing learning activities in the same area that can be pitched at your children at different levels. Use the stronger ones to help the weaker, the older the younger. The different perspectives and turn of mind of each child on the same subject can be a stimulating learning experience for all.

Let the older assist the younger, the strong the weak; and, so far as possible, let each be called upon to do something in which he excels. This will encourage self-respect and a desire to be useful.

— EDUCATION

286.

14

What support organisations & resources are available?

There are a wide range of Adventist, other Christian and secular support organisations, resources and programmes available to home schoolers, from both Britain and America. Some will be more in harmony with Adventist teachings than others. Generally, the Christian-based organisations and materials are more acceptable. However, you will need to carefully sift through any materials you plan to use and assess them against God's principles of true education, as revealed in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, and outlined, to some extent, in this handbook.

CHRISTIAN

★ - *American*

★ Alpha Omega Publications

300 North Mckerny Avenue, Chandler, Arizona 85226-2618, USA
Tel 00-1-800 622 3070 Email: rebecca_smith@bmgaop.com

Website: www.homeschooling.com
Offering curriculum based on workbooks.

★ A Beka Book Home school

Pensacola, Florida 32523-9160, USA
Tel 001-904478 8933 Website: www.abeka.com/

A Christian publisher of Bible-based teaching and learning materials, offering: curriculum based on workbooks; textbook series for most curriculum subjects; Biblical principles woven in.

★ Bob Jones University Press

Greenville, South Carolina, 29614 0001, USA

Tel 001-864 242 5100 Ext 3300

Email: bjup@bju.edu Website: www.bju.edu/press/home.html

Christ-centred curriculum based upon textbooks, which aim to develop practical thinking skills using analytical methods rather than repetitive drill.

Christian Education Resources

Otterhill Farm, Rowtown, Addlestone, Surrey, KT 15 1HD

Tel/Fax 01932 855918 Email: otterhill@compuserve.com

Offers a service to Christian home education community importing and selling US materials.

★ Christian Liberty Academy

502 W Euclid Avenue, Arlington Heights, IL 60004, USA

Tel 001 800 348 0899 Website: www.Homeschool.org

Widely used curriculum based on Biblical world and life view. Includes handbook and lesson planner for each family.

★ Christian Light Education

PO Box 1212-N, Harrisonburg, VA 22801-1212, USA

Tel 001-540433 889 Email: homestudy@clp.org

A Mennonite organisation who produce a complete curriculum in workbook format. Can also be purchased in part.

★ Covenant Home Curriculum

N63 W23421 Main St, Sussex, Wisconsin 53089 3235, USA

Tel 001-262 246 4760 Email: educate@covenanthome.com

Website: www.covenanthome.com

Provides curriculum including Bible study, History, Science, Mathematics and a complete Language arts programme. Also daily scheduling and study guides.

Creation Resources Trust

Mead Farm, Downhead, West Camel, Yeovil, BA22 7RQ
Tel 01935 850569 Email: creationresources@compuserve.com
Website: www.c-r-t.co.uk/

Offers various books and videos (for hire)

★ The Elijah Company

1053 Eldridge Loop, Crossville, Tennessee 38558, USA
Tel 001-888 235 4524 Fax 001 932 456 6384
Email: elijaco@elijahco.com Website: www.elijahco.com

Produces a 200 page catalogue of teaching materials.

The Davies Family

13 Tudor Gardens, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes MK11 1HK
Tel 01908 266097

Offers advice on a variety of Christian educational materials from the USA and helpful leaflets written for home educators.

Family Resource Catalogue

Steve & Carol Sherwood, 123 Claremont Rd, Forest Gate, London E7 0PY
Tel 020 8472 6356

Produces leaflets for home educators, curriculum materials and guides for parents who want to consider the Biblical teaching on parenting.

Grace Educational Materials

Ferris & Pauline Linsay, 151 Halley Rd, Forest Gate, London, E7 8DX
Tel 020 8470 7125

God-centred project booklets for primary children written by and for home educators.

★ Greenleaf Press

3761 Highway 109N, Unit D, Lebanon, Tennessee, 37087, USA

Tel 001-800 311 1508 Website: www.greenleafpress.com

Publishers of Christian study guides and history packages, some stocked by Christian Educational Resources.

Home Life Ministries

Pastures Farm Cottage, Kimbolton Road, Hail Weston, Huntington, PE19 4LB Tel 01480 219 881 Email: mhull@characterlink.net

Distributing a wide range of American resources including character-building materials produced by IBLP/ATI, and audio tapes arguing the case for Christian home education.

Home School Services (SDA)

East Midlands Area Tel 01780 450016

Encouragement and respite for home schoolers:

Country living experiences; gardening; crafts; health education; natural science; music; worship based on biblical principles; 3Rs basic for primary years; visits welcome (references supplied).

The Home Service

The Hawthornes, 48 Heaton Moor Road, Heaton Moor, Stockport, SK4 4NX.




Tel 0161 432 3782 Website: www.alphainfo.co.uk/homeservice/




A national support organisation, specifically for Christians home educators giving advise and help. Offering the first national UK telephone support service and a mailing list of contacts.

★ Home Study International & Griggs University (SDA)

P.O. Box 4437, Silver Spring, Maryland 20914-4437, USA

Tel 001-301 680 6570 Fax 001-305 680 5157 Website: www.hsi.edu

-  *A distance learning education organisation set up and run by the SDA Church*
-  *Offering guided independent study programmes for all levels of education, elementary, high school and university, around the world*
-  *Offers home schoolers and their parents a Christian curriculum and national accreditation*

-  *Affiliations with other regionally-accredited institutions of higher learning to offer degree programmes*
-  *Systematic learning programmes with books and materials provided*
-  *Programmes and courses respond to learner needs in the context of a lifetime learning experience and are available to all who can benefit from them.*

★ Konos

PO Box 250 Anna, Texas 75409, USA

Tel 001-972 924 2712 Email: info@konos.com Website: www.konos.com

Offering project-based curriculum using 'the world around us as our classroom and laboratory'. Science, Humanities and Arts integrated into each unit which is wrapped round character trait of God. Flexible weekly lesson plans provided. Teaching manual includes activities for children of different ages.

London Outreach Centre - Home School Resource Library

32 Rotherhithe New Rd, Rotherhithe, London, SE16 2AD

Tel 020-77948285

Making available a wide range of Christian curriculum materials from USA, for borrowing.

Maranatha Foundation (Christian Education Europe)

PO Box 770 Highworth, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN67TU.

Tel/Fax 01793 783783 Email: christianeducationeurope@compuserve.com

Website: www.christian-education.org

A national Christian education umbrella organisation offering: help to start, support and supplies for Christian home schoolers and Christian schools. Also Christian-based curricula, parenting materials, regular Christian Education Conferences, training and seminars.

★ The Moore Foundation (SDA)

Box 1 Camas, Washington 98607, USA

Tel 00-1 360 835-2736 Fax 00 360 835-5392 Email: moorefdn@pacifier.com

Website: www.moorefoundation.com

Perhaps the leading authority on home schooling in America, working with Adventists, other Christians and non-Christians. Offering:

- ✠ *a Bible-based approach to education*
- ✠ *years of research evidence supporting home schooling*
- ✠ *Moore academy programme with informal approach to learning*
- ✠ *excellent well-researched home schooling books for parents*
- ✠ *educational resources for children.*

★ The National Home Educational Research Institute

Box 13939, Salem, Oregon 97309, USA

Tel 001-503-364-1490

Email: mail@nheri.org Website: www.nheri.org

A non-profit organisation headed by Dr Brian Ray, himself a Christian home educator. Publishes the Home School Researcher and material on the advantages of home education.

Northstar UK

37 Balmoral Crescent, Dronefield Woodhouse, Dronfield S18 8ZY

Tel/Fax 01246-410122 Email: ukinfo@northstar-academy.org

Website: www.northstar-academy.org

Christian online learning community aimed at providing complementary learning support for students aged 11-16. Full range of GCSE subjects offered.

Rainbow Books

5 Bankfield Terrace, off Modd Lane, Holmfirth, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, HD7 1JZ Tel 01484 689147 Email: hoylehome@ukonline.co.uk

Supplies a range of books for children of all ages to read, encouraging a lifetime of reading and nurturing their knowledge of God.

Rodd & Staff Publishers Inc.






Highway 172, Crockett, Kentucky 41413-0003, USA
Tel 001-606 522 4348

A Mennonite Christian publisher of Bible-based teaching and learning materials. Offers textbook series, workbooks and teacher's materials for different subjects with simple, traditional-styled presentation.

Seventh-day Adventist Home Schooling Association

British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Education Department, Stanborough Park, Watford, Herts. WD2 6JP Tel 01923 672251 Fax 01923 893212
Email: jjohnson@adventist.org.uk Website: www.adventist-education.org.uk

Operating under the BUC Education Department to provide support structures for Adventist home schooling families including:

-  *Practical assistance in setting up home schooling programmes*
-  *Training courses and workshops*
-  *SDA Home Schooling Handbook and other resources*
-  *Local support and contact opportunities for families*
-  *Annual events and guest speakers.*

★ Sonlight Curriculum

8121 South Grant Way, Littleton, Colorado, 80122 2710, USA
Tel 001-303 730 6292 Fax 001 303 795 8668 Email: catalogue@sonlight.com
Website: www.sonlight.com

Offering Christian curriculum materials.

Stapleford Centre

The Old Mill Lane Frederick Road, Stapleford, Nottingham NG9 8FN
Tel 0115 939 6270 Email: admin@stapleford-centre.org
Website: www.stapleford-centre.org

Produces a range of useful resources including the Charis materials for Mathematics, Modern Languages, Science and English up to GCSE.

Sutherland Education & Training Agency (SDA)

Old Fallings Hall, Old Fallings Lane, Wolverhampton WV10 8BL, Tel 01902
553000/654246

Email: sutherland@cableinet.co.uk

Providing a range of publications and services including:

- ✻ *Practical books for setting up home schooling*
- ✻ *A unique Bible-based home schooling programme*
- ✻ *Character classic story books*
- ✻ *Books by Adventist education pioneers*
- ✻ *Home schooling consultations..*

★ The Weaver Curriculum

2752 Scarborough, Riverside, California 92503 USA

Tel 00-1 909-688 3126 Website: theservantsheart.com/weaverunit.htm

Offering project-based curriculum

SECULAR

Choice in Education

PO Box 5, Belvedere D17 5ZU

Website: www.btinternet.com/~choiceineducation

Produce a monthly independent newsletter for home educators. Distributor of Elective Home Education - Legal Guidelines.

Education Otherwise

PO Box 7420, London N9 9SG

Tel 0870 730074 Website: www.education-otherwise.org

The first home education support organisation to be set up in Britain. Members are from many religious positions. Offers support and information for home educating families. Also provides leaflets, books, local contacts, support groups and national events.

★ Growing Without School

John Holt's Bookstore, 2380 Massachusetts Ave Suite 104, Cambridge,
MA02140-1226, USA Website: www.holtgws.com/

A bi-monthly publication for home schoolers containing: news about home schooling movement in America and around the world; pen-pal listings; a directory of home schooling families; reviews of useful materials; in-depth evaluation of relevant issues.

The Home Education Advisory Service

P.O. Box 98, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL8 6AN
Email: admin@heas.org.uk Website: www.heas.org.uk

*A registered charity supporting existing and prospective home educating families
Provides information through publications, including 'Home Education Handbook.'*

Parents' Information Network

PIN, PO Box 16394, London SE1 3ZP Website: www.pin-parents.com/

An independent organisation, set up to help parents become more informed, confident users of computers, software and the internet. Advises on how computers support the learning process, at school, in the home and in the wider community.

The real life experiences of home schooling families

It is in the nature of home schooling that those families who choose this option have a varied range of backgrounds and experiences. There is something to learn from all of them. A selection of Adventist home schoolers have been asked to share their unique experiences and perspectives for the benefit of others. They share both the joys and challenges of home schooling to give a balanced overall picture. Each family started home schooling from a different domestic situation, showing the variety of circumstances surrounding home schoolers. They collectively serve to show that home schooling is possible in a wide range of family circumstances—some clearly more favourable than others. The following families are represented:

1. Teacher and pastor's family
2. Single parent mother family
3. Single parent father (and resource developer) family
4. Professional mother's family
5. Single Adventist spouse family
6. Pioneer home schooling family
7. Late starting and group home schooling families
8. Overseas family in Britain
9. Home schooling researcher and authority (Raymond Moore)
10. Former home schooling family
11. Pastor's family

A series of questions, were put to each family and in most cases, one parent and one child responded. Some interviews were done verbally, recorded and then typed up, while others were written up by the interviewees, themselves. All interviews have been edited for the purpose of the handbook, but as far as possible the original words of the interviewees are used. All but one of the case studies are anonymous, so some of the wording has been altered to preserve anonymity. The answers to the questions are generally presented in order as a continuous flow, with bold type and subheadings added for emphasis and demarcation.

The viewpoints and perspectives presented are varied and very much based on the personal experience of the families. They do not always harmonise with each other. Nor are they always in agreement with the principles presented elsewhere in this handbook. However, they reveal valuable insights into the complexity of the issues that home schooling touches on when carried out in very different real life situations. With the help of the Holy Spirit, you will have to decide what to take from the case studies to build into your own programme.

HOME SCHOOLING CASE STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

Questions for parents

1. Number, ages and gender of children, when you started and now
2. What made you decide to home school?
3. How did you start?
4. What have been your experiences home schooling as a _____ family?
5. What were the reactions of relatives, friends, church members. How did you deal with this?
6. What dealings have you had with the education authorities?
7. What links do / did you have with other home schoolers?
8. How important is home schooling for Adventists today?
9. What have been the results in terms of all-round character development, spirituality, socialisation, academic work of your children?
10. What are / were the financial implications of home schooling for your family?
11. Would you recommend home schooling to others?

Questions for child

1. Why are / were you being home schooled?
2. Did your parents talk to you about it before starting? What did you think?
3. What is / was it like being home schooled?
4. What things do / did you like the most and least about being home schooled?
5. What do / did your friends think?
6. Do / did you spend enough time with other children?
7. How has home schooling effected you?
8. What would you like to do in life? How will home schooling help you?
9. Would you recommend home schooling to other children? What advice would you give them from your experience?
10. If you have children, do you think you will home school them? Why?

1. Teacher and pastor's family

This is a family with five children. Two girls aged 15 and 17, were home schooled for most of their primary school years. Their three younger brothers have not yet attended school. The mother is a teacher by profession.

Reasons

It was an exciting dream of ours—long before we had children. Our first child was born three years after we married. We chose to home school because we believed that this was God's design; and therefore the better choice, even though it was not society's norm, and would require some sacrifice. We came across the idea while reading 'Child Guidance'. Ellen White talks about Adventist education and its importance in shaping the characters of our children here on earth and as a preparation for the life to come. We wanted the influences on our children—if God were to bless us with any—to be as spiritual as possible; that was our number one priority. Our children belonged to God and were only entrusted to us. Not that we were perfect, but we wanted to follow what we saw as God's plan or design. We began praying for our children long before they were born, that we would have the courage to follow God's best design for them, and that they would be true representatives of God and His cause.

Joys

The good thing, as a minister's family, is that because we move around from address to address, quite frequently, home schooling provides some stability for our children. Their education need not be interrupted. They don't have to face the disruption of getting used to teachers or new schools every three or four years. We'd recommend home schooling to any minister's family, just for that reason alone.

Challenges

Is the focus on home education, or home schooling? The Spirit of Prophecy's advice suggesting that children up to the ages of eight or ten should be at home, "as free as lambs", seems to focus on education (parenting) that does not merely replicate formal schooling in the home. Scientific research indicating that children below these ages are not fully prepared physiologically for the rigors of the classroom and the typical schooling formalities, support this advice. Parental peer pressure (it does exist)—the dichotomy between what is expected of you by others and what you want to do—leads to the formalities of schooling leaking into the early home education experience. This is a big challenge.

Having a parent as a trained teacher led to including more formal school activities as the children passed U.K. "school ages"; but this was balanced with physical / manual

activity, chores, children's interests etc.—not necessarily in that order, though. Over the years (perhaps reflecting society's sedentary life-style) the physical / manual activities have suffered the most, but a less formal structure to our home schooling day has developed.

Presently, we encourage and meet, with a group of other families in our area once a week, so the children do have opportunity to do group activities.

The Spirit of Prophecy implies that by the time children reach ten plus they are more able to deal, still with parental support, with the rigorous world of school.

Reaction of others

Some twenty years ago, following this Adventist philosophy drew much negative comments and labels from others, unfortunately mostly from other U.K. SDA folk. There is wider appreciation of this philosophy among SDAs elsewhere.

Sometimes and especially in the early days, there were comments like, "They need friends. They need to get out and mix with other children." The tide of opinion can cause anxiety and concern on this point, to be honest. However, the more you understand and appreciate how children develop, that in the earlier years they are more like sponges, you realise that socialisation (mutual exchanges between individuals) is not best suited for this stage of development. When children are only or mostly around children, their character development and social growth is limited at best, and may be stymied altogether. Children need adults for development, guidance and supervision. In fact, children's social skills are best developed this way, with some limited, parented opportunities for practice and experimentation with other children. Church and Sabbath School provide an ideal opportunity for that parent guided meeting with other children. Our own parents were always very positive in their support of us.

Starting

Our motivation in this venture was always primarily a spiritual one, based on the responsibilities of being parents, rather than the professions we pursued. It was heartening though, to read and become aware of support for this philosophy from eminent educators such as Raymond Moore. They confirmed that home schooling (specially in the early years) is not principally about academic achievement. Rather the natural interactions, including play, between parents (especially mothers) and children in the home, heightened if not positively accelerated the learning skills, character development, and appreciation for life and Christian service in the children concerned.

Having a trained teacher as one of the parents, is neither an advantage nor a disadvantage. It isn't important to be formally trained as a teacher to teach your

own children. If anything, the focus on instruction in academic knowledge is better later than early. The first experiences of learning are best in a home environment of natural interaction, discovery, play and childish wonder. The first and best teachers of a child are his own parents, especially the mother, who starts with a real advantage over any other, having a strong, natural bond with her child.

A father's role

Home schooling must begin with the home, the location of it, as well as the atmosphere within it. It has always been our deliberate intention to choose a rural setting for our home, or as close to it as possible. Even, if it necessitated renting rather than purchasing; or even if it meant that one parent was no less than 90 minutes away from work sometimes.

Fathers in such situations need to play essential roles (though apparently less obvious ones) that may include both travel and the economics of supporting a family on a single salary. In addition, the mutual planning and support for the venture is likewise important, deciding / evaluating which support materials to use, such as Accelerated Christian Education (ACE); the areas of emphasis and places / opportunities for manual involvement and special projects. It also helps to have paternal input in specific areas, in our case, it included sciences, maths, computing and outdoor activities.

Each individual parent will have his or her own skills and interests to contribute. For us, the Father took a lesser "teacher-role" during those periods when formal, academic schooling became prominent.

Dealings with education authorities

Although not compulsory, we often took the initiative of informing the local authorities of our decision to home school our children. This was always positive. Local Education Authorities were generally helpful. One Authority employed someone to be of support to home schooling families. She would bring us suggestions for materials and resources with regards to formal schooling. Before they employed her, they seconded some local headmasters to do the same job. They were always very friendly and positive about it; even putting a stamp of approval on home-made materials, such as a reading-readiness programme, that we had put together.

BBC Education materials and media programmes were also useful. Nowadays, these are no longer central. We've learnt from experiences with our first child and applied them to the second child and so on—and the pressure to show that home schooling works has eased because of the benefits we have already seen.

Working with local friends, supporting each other has also helped. Joining Education Otherwise (EO), in the early days, built confidence, disclosed the legal implications, and

helped generally with answering people's questions. One EO family, Baptist Christians, began to meet with us from time to time, we'd do project work with our children together; and have kept in touch over the years.

Amazing Results

As our girls started formal schooling, it soon became apparent that we had made the right choice to home-school them (even though we may have performed it imperfectly). Their interaction with peers, involvement in school life and academic success can only be God-led.

The Trans-European Division granted an award to our eldest daughter, for the most outstanding contribution to school life, while she was in year 10. Her peers have also elected her sports' captain, and assistant shop manager; while teaching staff have appointed her a prefect and promotions' officer of the school bank. She was recipient of the local authorities 'Astra Science Award'; and gained nine As and a B in her GCSEs. Her truest desire is to study Medicine at Loma Linda; and while we work on the cost of that (without any scholarships for children of British workers) she has been asked to attend an interview at Trinity College, Cambridge to study Medicine.

Our second girl has likewise been actively involved in school. Having started formal schooling a little earlier than her sister, she spent the last year (year 9) at home recharging her batteries, and gaining an A* in I.T. and an A in English last summer. We take an involved and flexible approach to home schooling.

However, whatever the results, God's plans remain by far the best. He has chosen to show us at our earliest stage, so that our commitment and courage holds to His purposes for us.

Conclusions

Home schooling has its many challenges, like most things in life. There are no school fees, but books and materials may have to be purchased. Then if you consider that one or other of the parents are to give up a salary in order to be at home for the essential needs of their children, you will discover its true cost in financial terms. Bringing children into the world, however, surely necessitates that Christian parents prioritise their responsibilities to them above wealth or personal conveniences.

The advantages of home schooling our children far outweigh any possible disadvantages, however. People often comment on how different our children are from other children. Our children are not saints; and we certainly are not saints. We have our fair share of parental and spiritual blues. BUT.... Could it be that they were spared the experiences of spending most of their waking hours away from mum and dad in their early impressionable years?

Could it be that God knows best? Especially when it comes to the education and life-preparation of our children. We think so.

Remember: "TRUST IN THE LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your path." - Prov.3:5 That's wisdom!!

17 year old daughter

My parents, especially my dad, felt if I was home schooled, I would have a better environment around me—a better environment for learning. He started school when he was very young—three years old, I think—and he felt that his children should spend more time at home as a family unit before they left to go to school. He and my mum had been reading a lot of the Ellen White's writings, where she talks about children having time to play and being free to run as lambs. So they decided that we were going to be home schooled. We would have fewer negative influences, more time as a family and would lead freer lives if we were schooled in a home environment.

I never really had any negative feelings about being home schooled because I enjoyed it so much. Even though other children were always talking things about what they did at school, I was able to speak about things I did, being home schooled.

It made me feel, not so much different, but special. Other children would moan about having to go to school. I had nothing to complain about. Also, my parents put a lot of effort into my education and I was able to spend more time with my family as a whole.

As teachers, my parents were very good. For the first few years it wasn't pushed learning. I can't remember very much about it, but from what I can remember, we would just do things together in a group. Rather than having set times to do things, we would discuss issues and topics as they came up. When I learned to read, it wasn't just me and one parent but me with the whole family.

As I got older, about eight or nine, **our family joined with a few other families.** There were about five families and we all met together everyday in our house. That was a much more structured format. We had a little school uniform and a classroom. That was very definitely a very positive experience. I knew all the other children because they were from our church. Although it was more formal with our own tables and exercise books where we did our work, it wasn't as rigid as school. You could work at your own pace and your parents were still there with you. At school, you have to follow the set curriculum. But when I was being taught at home, and with this group, we could spend more time in a certain area if we needed to. We could go over something more quickly if we understood it

more. It was basically set around our own individual paces. This was because there was so few of us and because our parents didn't want to rush us or force us to cover new ground when we weren't ready.

Being a teacher, probably helped my mother. She was more confident and thought she could do it in the first place because she was a teacher. But it didn't make any difference to me. Other mothers in the group weren't teachers and they were just as good with their children.

My father did a lot of science with us including practical work. My mother did English, music, drama, geography and history. Father would do woodwork and hands-on things like gardening and cooking. I think he took us one day a week. But on the whole, my mum did the majority of formal teaching.

The thing that I feel really made my parents both excellent teachers for me, is the fact that they know me better than anyone. This meant that they were able to approach my learning in the best way possible because they knew what I was like and what I needed.

I have really fond memories of all the things we got up to. Little things we did in church, singing songs we'd learnt, playing musical instruments (piano and recorder especially) and we even put on a musical/drama production at Christmas time. Family outings were very educational. They stand out as well as trips to the toy museum and the science museum. We used to go on little field trips down to the pond to do water experiments. During the summer we had swimming lessons at the local pool and during other months we had gymnastics lessons including trampolining which was my favourite. It was lots of exercise, but great fun.

At that age, I wasn't really looking for any negative things so I don't remember any. I'd always been taught at home. I was used to it and happy with it.

Once I started going to school outside of the home, people would say you're quite lucky to have had the opportunity to be taught at home. By the start of year nine or just starting GCSEs in year ten, a lot of people were already bored with school and so couldn't muster the energy to put in the effort still required of them. But because I had only been to school for two or three years, to me all the novelty of it was still there, so I worked really hard.

Home schooling has allowed me to be very open with my learning. I was encouraged to ask questions and explore things. Thinking about things in a more rounded way, rather than just sticking to a syllabus. But now while I'm studying my A-levels, the skills that I learned way down the line are coming into play. With A-levels, although there is a set syllabus, you need to be able to explore things around the boundaries. While we were at

GCSE, we were encouraged to do just that. For me, the jump from GCSE to A-level has been a bit less, because of the fact that my primary aged schooling was very exploratory, rather than rigid learning. It was very much finding out what I wanted to explore about—quite creative.

Now, I want to explore things and I'm eager to investigate ideas for myself. I think that comes from the home schooling.

Going to my first formal school (a Church of England middle school), I have to admit was a bit strange, because I had all these expectations of what formal schooling would be like. When I got there, it was different from what I imagined. I can't remember what I thought it would be like. I just remember feeling, "Oh! This is a bit different ". I also had a slight feeling that I had been sheltered a bit, because there were things that the kids would talk about and the things they knew a lot about that I didn't know. (Not academic things, but cinema, the latest games stuff, music etc.) But then I'm not sure whether that was to do with the fact that I was home schooled or the fact that I came from an Adventist background. And it's not necessarily a bad thing. Other children were swearing and they liked fighting. You could tell they knew I wasn't like that. At first, that made me feel uneasy, questioning whether I really belonged with this group of people. But then, I was proud that I didn't do those things. Without the experience of home school, I would have had all of these problems around me as I grew up. However, by the time I was at school with a group of kids that swore, I already knew that that was wrong. If I'd grown up with it, that could have just been normal to me.

My parents decided that once I got to secondary age, I'd go to school. And that's probably why I had so much excitement about it. It's not that I wasn't enjoying my home school. It's just that I had so much curiosity about *the big wide world*. I wanted to know what it was like out there. But after I started school, it wasn't that brilliant.

I went to an Adventist school when I was 12. It was brilliant, because it was a small school, and very community-based - that's more like what I was used to and I loved it. When I got there, I met two other people who had been home schooled and found that we had a lot in common. They became two of my close friends. It was a good school. It was the best formal school my parents could have sent me to. The teachers were very understanding and supportive. The fact that I hadn't been in formal school wasn't a disadvantage in any way.

I did have a few challenges, but they weren't anything more dramatic than learning teachers names, organising my time for homework, different subjects with different classrooms and teachers. At home school, we didn't get homework. We did all the work in the allotted time and that was it. But I soon settled down into the swing of things.

I've just applied to do medicine at university, which if I get in, I should start next year.

I'd like specifically to do surgery. Over the years, I have been more and more fascinated with science and the application of science. I recently decided that for me the best career or vocation I could have, would be one where I could use my scientific knowledge or my passion for science in a way that can positively help people. I feel that medicine would be a good combination of those two things. I would still be learning very advanced scientific procedures, but I would still be using the talents God has given me—using what I'm learning--to help other people.

I've applied to fairly local universities, probably an hour away. It is my plan to leave home. But that's because there's four younger ones and I think I need to have my own space now. I don't plan to let this effect my spirituality or my Christian lifestyle. It will be a challenge especially with medicine. I recently found out after I applied that they all do lectures on Sabbath. There must be ways to make other arrangements, e.g. for Jewish students. So I'm going to try to make arrangements to have lectures taped or something similar.

Home schooling has helped me with a creative outlook on study. Obviously, with a university course, it's not just going to be about being spoon-fed by the professor. It's going to be about your own exploration, your own learning. The home school environment was the perfect environment to learn how to be dedicated enough to want to do these things on your own.

I've been looking at Loma Linda to do medicine, but my biggest problem at moment is funding, If we could get funding, it would be my ideal to go to an Adventist university. The influences and the environment there would be perfect for me, plus there wouldn't be lectures on a Sabbath. I'd also like the opportunity to one day work with ADRA or another Christian, voluntary-aided, missions organisation.

I don't feel that I was disadvantaged socially. I would admit that my friends were mostly limited to church people, but I don't think that was necessarily a bad thing, especially at that age. Now that I've been at school for five or six years my social skills are fine. I've met a lot of people from very different and diverse backgrounds and I am able to relate to and get on with people just fine. In fact, one of the reasons I want to become a doctor is because I like working with people. I'm also very active in pathfinders and go on all the camperees.

I would recommend home schooling to other children, but I would say that if parents are looking to home school their children, they must make sure they are going to put in the effort. **The thing that I think made home schooling work for us was that both my parents were very much dedicated to it.** If you're going to take your kids out of school, you have to be prepared to sit with them and help them to learn, rather than just

taking them out and thinking they'll learn. As long as both parents are dedicated to it and they want to—yes home schooling is great!

Personally, I don't think home schooling should go on for the whole of schooling.

The children should maintain contact with other children. We had pen-friends to write to. I also think the children should remain active in their church youth group, if they're going to be home schooled, just to make sure that their lives don't become too insular. Once children have gained personal maturity and have the character and grounding you want them to have, once you (as well as the children in question) feel they are ready to go to school, they should. My recommendation would be during early secondary years.

If I did have children in the career of medicine, unless my husband was able to home school them, I don't think I would. But having said that, I don't think I would want them to go to school from age two or three. I'd prefer from about six. If there was an Adventist school that would definitely be my preference, otherwise another Christian school.

If I get to follow my chosen vocation and I become a doctor, I don't think I'd be able to offer my children what they'd need from the home school environment. I believe that they'd need me to be there helping them. Obviously, with a career in medicine I'd be all over the place.

But, in all honesty, I admit that home schooling is the ideal, and I would try every means possible to put my career on hold in order to teach my children in a home environment where they can have the same opportunities that I did. It's just that with a career like medicine it may be very hard to follow this ideal.

At the end of the day, it's very hard to say because I don't know what the situation will be. I know that children's education should come first, because that's what will see them through the rest of their lives—how they're brought up in the first few years. It really does depend on the circumstances. If I could take the time off and come out of work then I would, but medicine is a very hectic job - I just don't know.

But when all is said and done, I wouldn't just be my ideal to home school my kids because of the experiences I've had. It's God's ideal too.

2. Single parent mother family

The mother first home schooled one child as a single parent and then two other children, after getting married. There are two girls aged 15 and 7, and a boy aged 6.

I listened to a health tape by a man from America who talked about his experiences home schooling and I thought, I'd like to do that. I also talked to a teacher from an Adventist school. I was a new Adventist, so this just seemed to be part of the lifestyle changes I was experiencing—natural living, vegetarianism etc. My daughter was about three at the time.

I'm not sure what spurred me on, whether it was confidence, determination or just rebellion or wilfulness. A lot had to do with my own schooling in England. **The schooling system damaged me.** If they don't understand you, you can be left behind. I was not understood due to circumstances in my life, coming from abroad, going into the school system and not seemingly as advanced as others. This probably influenced my decision to home school. My experience in school was quite detrimental.

If my son was to be put into school now, they would say he has special educational needs. He's good on facts, he remembers things, but his motor skills are lacking. So he would be categorised and I don't want my children to suffer that. I don't think it is necessary.

There is also the matter of morality. In schools there is a lack of knowledge and respect for God. Our children should not be in state schools. It is not a place for them. They don't understand our children or children, generally. The parent is the best person to teach and educate a child. If you need help with certain subjects as your child gets older, there has to be ways.

I met other home schoolers through an Adventist teacher and things developed from there. It all seemed new and fresh. I got a book from Newbold College by Home Study International. I didn't have a plan. I tried natural kinds of learning. We lived near a park, at the time. I made up my own programme as I went along.

You don't need a teaching background, but it would help. When you're fresh at it you're learning as you go along. Sometimes it's good and other times stressful, especially as we were also moving around a lot. As a single parent, you really need support and encouragement from others. It was stressful and tiring. It demands everything. You're there from morning till evening and if you're not encouraged you get quite anxious. There was more pressure on me back then to not be seen as failing my daughter in any way. When you're married it's fine. You don't get that pressure. It's a complete switch. Now you're perceived as knowing what you're doing, even if you don't. But by yourself, you're seen as totally incapable. It's unspoken, but there.

Home schooling done in the simplest way, it's good seeing your children learn and ask questions. When you show them something, seeing their expressions. Sometimes, they come out with spiritual things like, "God loves you", or "When I get to heaven". You're there to see, and hear all that. No one's there to tell them, "No there's not a God." I'm there to say, "Yes!"

Though it was a nice time with my first child, I was more tense. Now I'm more relaxed with the younger ones. I also understand their characters a bit better and how to teach them and how not to. With my youngest child, I would not teach him letters for another year. It's nice to learn with them. I'm learning as I teach. With my first child, I wish I had had the experience back then to sit back and allow her to grow into herself.

The challenges are putting together and using curricula. A lot of what I've used are American curriculum that tend to be very repetitious. I felt overwhelmed with too much to get through, whereas the project method is at your own pace. Home schooling is at your own pace. You can do a little a day and learn a lot rather than doing a lot and learning little. There was a lot to take in with the books I was using and I was overwhelmed, but I'm not overwhelmed as much these days.

I put my first child into school, just after I got married. It was pressure—my husband thought it was better for her. It was so hard to leave her there. It was very difficult. I think she enjoyed it. She likes the social side of school. When she was home schooled, she was on her own. She was a bit of an experiment and this can be unfair. If you have one child, you need to have regular contact with others. I used to meet up with others occasionally, but where I lived, there weren't many people around who were home schooling.

When I shared my ideas about home schooling with my sister and mother, they both said, I was mad, wicked, cruel and evil and that I was depriving my daughter of an education and a life. I was told, "Education is free, so why don't you use it?" **When you're a single parent, people think you can't do it.** No one's encouraging, but that didn't put me off. I got a lot of stick from not starting her with her letters, earlier. She learned them at about six or seven.

I felt I had to prove myself. I was fighting constantly, being told that the child should be in school. Each time I met my mother and father, we argued on the matter of home schooling. They don't seem to do it so much with the two younger ones now. My husband's parents would prefer to see them in school, but they've only had that conversation once with me. **But generally, no one tends to challenge me on home schooling now**, whereas when I started, the world felt they had the right to challenge me. You stand better if there are two of you rather than one. It's harder as a single parent. The world views you differently. You need the emotional support of having someone else there. Of late, because the children like talking about things, my husband is actually getting more involved and that helps.

Within the church, as a whole, I didn't get much support, but there were some who were supportive. You were made to feel that it was something you shouldn't do, education is for educators and people who have been taught to educate—"how dare

you try to do it!" I tried to explain myself. I used to say, I've taken on Adventism and if you take something on, you take it on in the fullest with its lifestyle principles. But it's difficult when the majority of Adventists aren't doing it. You're seen as wrong. There wasn't anyone else, so I looked like a mad person by herself.

West Indians do not home school, generally. The majority of us are very education orientated. Maybe it's coming from the Islands to England and having to work hard to achieve and be someone, preferably a professional. As my mum probably saw it, it was opportunity thrown away. My in-laws haven't said it, but they probably believe the same. There is still the need to prove myself, but I've learned that I don't have to prove myself. I just have to do what I'm doing and understand my children.

My mum called the local education inspectors and they came round. The one time I saw them, they were OK. As long as the child is learning and being educated, they're happy about it. I've had no dealings with them regarding my two younger ones.

People that were involved, encouraged me. People that weren't didn't. You need ideas. I just met with another lady who was home schooling and occasionally with others. We never had school as such.

Presently, I meet with two families locally—two pastors' wives, once per week. We have a theme for a term. We hire a gym from the leisure centre for an hour and use apparatus there. We had a teacher for a little while, teaching them a few things. Someone also taught the trampoline. Sometimes I don't feel like going but the children like it.

At the moment, my older girl is rebelling. But when I'm not there, people give me some good feedback about her. Her conduct away is usually quite good. There will come a time when she will fall back on her training. There's a lot that God will use. The two younger ones are developing fine, spiritually. We read a lot of Bible stories and they like to discuss them.

Academically, they might be behind according as school might see it, but I think they're OK, according to their ability. The younger girl wants to start writing, because she's reading, whereas my son doesn't need writing for another year. He learns differently. They're enjoying it. My daughter didn't like a personalised learning programme that I used with her, because I wasn't a part of it.

Financially, it's difficult, because you have to have money for books. Books can be quite expensive. The project method is cheaper. The church doesn't help you in that respect. So you have to just manage. But God is teaching that you can make do with what's

around you, e.g. second-hand bookshops. You've got to learn to make do, and in this, you are also teaching your children to learn to make do.

At one point, with my older girl, I was working at a play centre. But I had to stop in the end, because she was coming back with all manner of things. I was there, but the influence of other children was just too much. I now work part-time and most other home schooling mothers do a little bit of work outside the home. You don't need a lot, but steady money coming in. **If you use it wisely and you can make use of resources around you**, then it's not going to be as bad. Maybe God has to teach us to be thrifty. Just using what's there.

The church should recognise that there are people who are home schooling and it's not a terrible thing to do. It's an alternative and we're afraid of alternatives. I don't think I've ever heard it mentioned as a possibility or have you ever considered it? It needs a profile. You may not get many involved, but a few will respond. Individual members need to be more encouraging.

The church needs to give education a higher profile generally, e.g. promoting small schools. **They need lots of little schools everywhere.** At ingathering time there is such a gusto of energy. That same enthusiasm, can be used for education. There could be more schools, if you sold it to the parents that this is yours. None of our children should be in a state school. They shouldn't be subjected to it. That's where the fault is.

Schools are also a witnessing venture, You've then got the audience of the parents for several years. But we tend not to see it. We evangelise after, rather than whilst the opportunity is there.

I would recommend home schooling to others, if they want to do it. It's possible, but what you need is a lot of support. It's good to have another person to work with even if you have to write the curriculum for them. Give them the curriculum. Tell them what to do step by step. For me I would have liked that. If you have to do everything for them to encourage them, then do that, to let them know that it's not an impossibility.

When children are at home with you, they want you, the parent. I am enjoying it as the years go on and it's good. I wouldn't go around shouting at parents but I would tell them **don't send your children to a state school. Only send them there if you want to lose their hearts.**

7 year old daughter

I'm taught at home because my parents haven't got a lot of money to send me to some of the schools where we live. I think it's nicer to have school at home, but sometimes I don't think it's nice. It's nicer at home because I don't have to do as much work as if I was at a building. Sometimes, I have to do a lot of writing and the writing I don't particularly like. I like doing drawing colouring and reading.

It would be good for other children to be taught at home because you can learn much more things and about God. I do writing, reading, and colouring. I cook and do art sometimes. I play in the garden lots of the time—that's the best thing I like. I have reading lessons to learn how to read harder words.

It's nice being home schooled with my brother because I play with him most of the time, but sometimes I don't. When we're upstairs with mummy we can talk and just sometimes forget about our work. Sometimes I can forget about my maths and talk to my brother. At break time, we can play with our pet rabbit if we want to.

We do some things with some other children. We go every Wednesday. We go to a hall and do some art. Then we go to the gym and do some trampolining. Then we go home and have dinner.

I'd like to be a cook. Being home schooled will help me to be a good cook, because mummy will help me. I can cook some things now, but if mummy teachers me now, I'll be a good cook when I'm older.

Home schooling would be good for other children because they would learn more things than if they were at school. If I had children I would home school them, so they can learn more about Jesus.

3. Single parent father (and resource developer) family

I was a church pastor for 11 years on two continents. I home schooled four children aged between 8 and 12.

I began to realise that a lot of the problems in the Church went back to the education children were being given. God has designed that every generation should rise higher, spiritually, in their understanding of God and the universe, but instead we seem to be falling lower with every generation. So progressively, I was drawn to become involved in education.

I took my children out of a church school and started home schooling them

because of concern about spiritual concepts they were being taught. With no clear pattern to follow initially, we got school textbooks and did state education at home. The children had much more freedom, e.g. they liked to swat large flies and dissect them under a microscope. But there was more pressure on them to learn and apply themselves since they were now in a smaller group.

I set up an education business, initially importing Christian education materials from other parts of the world. Then **I designed materials myself, based on the Spirit of Prophecy concept of how education should be done** and applying the biblical principles.

We began to get books from Christian publishers, but it became clear that none of them were based on the Bible. They separated education away from the Bible. So progressively I became drawn into developing materials, which taught the development of character as well as the mind. I couldn't find a Bible and Spirit of Prophecy based programme anywhere, so I and my children developed one.

Everything is based on the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. The programme works from the life of Christ. Illustrations are derived for the study of nature, society, mathematics and English language. We were getting the various learning disciplines out of the Bible passages we were studying. The children understood that life is not about distinct disciplines. We can learn from everything around us. The practical level is very important e.g. instead of just reading about trees, why not go out and look at tree and see how God has made them. Maths is just marks on a page, but when planting beans in rows, maths begins to make sense.

In the programme, a Bible text is studied and out of that text certain things arise. E.g. "Jesus is light of world". We can study light, how it works, how Jesus is light of world. You can go through all the academic disciplines from one text. The principles are all derived from Spirit of Prophecy.

When the programme was picked up by the **Moore Foundation, they said of all home schooling programmes based on the Bible, this is ultimate.** It went out widely in America for people seeking a true Christian biblical education, which would enable children to rise higher than their peers. It's still being used.

Families need to interact with other families doing home education. This provides a lot for the social needs. **One of main challenges** is working out how to fit together with other families not doing home schooling. There tends to be a certain amount of taunting. E.g. from relatives, who think you're doing inferior education. It's difficult to convince them that God's way is superior.

Single parents need to link up with other families who are home schooling to help and support each other. We met up with two other home schooling families for field trips. We went to the police station, local hospital, photographic studio and the driver training school. Then we went home and had a meal together. That was great for the children and the parents. I was a single parent as I home schooled and I had to make a living while I taught my children. We weren't dependent on social security. The Lord blessed us with everything we needed because we wanted to do what pleased Him. It's very hard work as single parent. I didn't know of any other single parent families, but the support of other families was a great help.

My advice to those considering home schooling is to consult with people who know what they're doing. Those concerned about not being trained teachers need to remember that God has given parents the 'response-ability'. People need to think through the issues before hand so that when pressure is brought to bear, you have answers to give.








Up until ten to twelve, children should be trained at home. **Church schools run according to the right principles can be very valuable**, but you need very special teachers to do that. Some children should be home schooled right through their teen years. Other children from their early teen years need to be in a school, but it's very variable. In home schooling, parents can decide which way is best for their children. It's God's system that our churches have small schools—simple schools where parents are involved in running them with a minimum number of teachers. In church schools we're not palming off our children, but co-operating together.

The training of minds is the greatest work. As parents learn about God's system, they will also learn. I would encourage anyone to think carefully and find out as much as possible about God's system of education. Satan is trying to draw our children's minds as far as possible from preparation for the final crisis. Home schooling is God's way of keeping our children in Gods message so that they can be the army of workers who finish His work and go home to live with Him.

4. Professional mother's family

We started home schooling at the end of May 1997. We have two children, a girl who was aged 6½ at the time and a boy who had just turned 5. My daughter had had one year and two terms at school and my son just two terms. My son is now eight and my daughter is nine and a half.

Reasons for home schooling

-  to fulfil our responsibility as Christian parents to “train up a child in the way he should go” (Proverbs 22:6) and also to be able to fulfil the counsel given in Deuteronomy 6 to talk about God and his commandments during our daily routine. We realised this could not be achieved by exposing our children to non-Christian influences for so many hours a day
-  to show how life is a whole, and not a series of ‘subjects’ in watertight compartments. We did not want the children to see God as someone who was just confined to ‘RE’ at school but to be able to bring God naturally into a lot of what we were doing
-  to develop and maintain a fuller relationship with our children
-  freedom to set our own hours, timetable and holidays
-  our children to have the freedom to be able to develop and progress at their own pace and ability and not feel they had to achieve a certain standard by a certain age
-  our children to build up a positive self-image/self-worth. This is not possible in a conventional school setting where children are constantly being compared with their peers
-  we felt that as parents we were the best educators of our children because no one understands a child better than a parent.

Starting

Once we decided to home school, we spoke to other parents who had home schooled and took advice from The Home Service (a Christian home educating support group) about the practicalities of de-registering our children.

We then made an appointment with the head teacher who, whilst never having come across such a request before, was very understanding and said we were fully entitled to do what we felt was best for our children. She contacted our LEA and found out that we just needed to write a letter to the head teacher, formally withdrawing our children from school and stating that we were taking responsibility for their education in accordance with section 36 of the 1944 Education Act. She would then send a copy of this on to the LEA.

Experiences

On the whole, it has been good, although like most children, my children have their “off days” when they are not feeling very co-operative. However, we have particularly enjoyed the freedom and flexibility it gives us. We have also been able to see the children develop at their own pace and have been very grateful for the opportunities to talk about God in lots of different situations and settings.

We have found that it has been the best thing for us as a family and we feel that we are having the opportunity of forging close bonds with one another. The children see more of their father than they might otherwise do if they were at regular school.

There are so many resources in the library for example, and so many topics we could do, that sometimes it is hard to know which topic to do first! We do not find we are short of things to do. In fact we find there are not enough hours in the day to fit in everything we would like to do.

Joys

- ✿ to see the children making progress in all areas
- ✿ My daughter learnt to read largely at school but I have had a real kick out of seeing my son progress with his reading. To me, it is on a par with seeing him take his first steps as a baby. I am pleased and grateful to have had the opportunity to observe his development in this area. My daughter had such a bad inferiority complex with regard to her experiences at school in Maths that it has taken about two years to undo the damage that was caused. It brings me great joy to see her grasping the concepts and making progress in this subject.
- ✿ to see how our children have developed spiritually
- ✿ as parents, being able to have a meaningful private devotional time in the morning, before our home school day begins, without watching the clock thinking it's time to rush off to school!

Challenges

- ✿ to find ways of explaining something in more simple terms when the children are not grasping what I am trying to teach them. I have to keep reminding myself (or the children remind me!) that I have the advantage of knowing things as an adult and they are coming to it for the first time (This particularly applies in Maths!)
- ✿ to find some time for myself to do those things which I would like to do
- ✿ to balance my time so that each child gets a fair (not necessarily equal) share of my time, bearing in mind that they are at different levels. Helping my daughter to see that her brother requires more of my time at present than she does. Having to remind them that even when we do project work together, they are at different levels of ability so he will not always be doing as much as her. Getting my daughter to accept that this is fair!
- ✿ to help my son not to feel inferior and stop him from comparing himself with his sister
- ✿ having patience to allow them to help me with the cooking, when I could do it much quicker myself!

Reactions

Reactions were mixed but the number one reaction concerned socialisation. How could the children learn to socialise if they didn't go to school? My way of dealing with this was to ask the person concerned what they meant by socialisation. I also pointed out that by the end of my son's first week at school he had learnt to "push and shove" (his own words) in order to get his coat hung up. When I asked him why he didn't wait and let the others go first, he said that he was being hassled by the dinner ladies and teachers to get his coat hung up and go and sit on the carpet in the classroom. Hence he copied the other children and pushed and shoved until his coat was hung up! Not the type of social skills I wanted him to learn!

Professional career

Another reaction concerned the fact that I had spent all these years studying law and now I was not practising it. Others actually expressed admiration and respect that I would be willing to give up my own career prospects to teach my children at home. I dealt with this by realising that in actual fact my health at present would not permit me to continue a career in law and so I therefore felt I was not "giving up" something that I would have preferred.

I also strongly felt that my children's spiritual well-being was far more important than any career. If my children stand a better chance of being in the kingdom by being home schooled, rather than being exposed to non-Christian influences for large numbers of hours a day, I am more than willing to home school.

There were some who implied (not always in so many words) that I was perhaps trying to make them feel guilty because they were not willing to home school their children.

I dealt with this by making it clear that we were doing what we felt the Lord was calling us to do and that each parent has the right to decide what is best for them and their own children. I pointed out that for the majority of parents, they were completely unaware that school was not compulsory and just sent their children off to school without considering or realising there were other options to consider.

Education authorities?

A week after seeing the school head teacher and telling her of our plans to home school the children, we received a letter from our LEA. They were asking for details of the arrangements we intended to make, including details of the educational programme and the curriculum we intended to provide, together with details of timetable, resources, teaching etc. This was before we had even formally written to the head teacher informing her of our decision to remove the children from school, two months later at the end of the spring term!

I felt a bit intimidated by the letter from the LEA but contacted some other experienced home schoolers who assured me that I was not under any obligation to provide all the information the LEA were requesting. I therefore wrote back saying we intended to cover such subjects as English, Maths, Science, Geography, History, Technology, Music, Art, Physical Education and Religious Education and would deal with this mainly in a topical way, rather than in separate subjects.

A month after taking the children out of school, we received a letter from a Specialist Adviser at the area education office, asking to arrange a visit to discuss with us our children's education. The visit went off very well and the adviser was quite impressed with the range of resources we had already acquired. She tried to stress that it would be sensible for us to follow the National Curriculum and familiarise ourselves with the National Curriculum expectations at each Key Stage. We diplomatically chose not to get into a debate about the pros and cons of the National Curriculum and expecting all children to be at the same level just because they were the same age! We didn't hear anything further from the LEA.

The following year, we moved to another town. I wrote to the LEA stating that we had recently moved into the area and intended to continue to home school our children. I subsequently found out that we were in fact under no obligation to contact the LEA at all and I wished I hadn't!!

This LEA was obviously not as familiar with the principle of home schooling as the previous one was and we had a letter from them asking us to submit a programme/timetable of education. They said they would then arrange for a home visit from a member of the advisory team.

Various phone calls and letters followed in which the education department kept asking for timetables etc and I kept telling them we were under no obligation to provide this information.

It was at this time I came across a book in our local library entitled 'School is Not Compulsory', produced by Education Otherwise and this was extremely helpful in my further dealings with the LEA. It was at this time that we came in contact with an Adventist teacher who also told us that we were under no obligation to notify the different LEAs as we moved from town to town.

I eventually produced a letter (based on an example in 'School is Not Compulsory') which seemed to satisfy the education department and they arranged for a home visit.

After all the telephone calls and letters we were not quite sure what to expect when the advisor came. However, she was very nice and told us that it was the policy of the LEA to

have minimal involvement, once they knew that the children were in fact being educated and were not just playing all day! She did not ask to see any of the children's work. She just chatted to us generally and asked if I would be willing to let the children read to her. I said it was up to the children and they agreed and read her a little bit each. She seemed quite satisfied and said that she felt we were providing an adequate education and the children were obviously happy and contented.

A few days later we received a letter from her, confirming that she was satisfied that we were providing appropriate education at home for the children. She also went on to say that given that our time in the town was likely to be relatively short, she would not plan a return visit but that we were free to contact her at any time, should we have any questions or want advice. We expect to be moved later this year and do not plan to inform our next LEA!

Links with other home schoolers

None at present, although we do have a contact list from The Home Service and Education. Otherwise should we feel the need to contact others.

Importance of home schooling for Adventists

Personally speaking, I am convinced that home schooling is a topic that needs to be brought very much to the attention of Adventist parents today. As mentioned earlier, many parents are not even aware that school is not compulsory or what is involved in teaching your child at home. I feel the church should do more to make parents aware of their options, for example by articles in the Messenger etc. Many parents who live too far from an Adventist school think they have no option but to send their child to a state school, or another private school, if finances permit.

As a church, we lament the number of young people who are leaving the Adventist church. Personally, I feel that if we expose our children and young people to worldly non-Christian values and ideas for so much of their lives, (particularly during the formative years and the teenage years when they are under so much peer pressure to conform), we cannot be surprised if, at the end of the day, they choose a worldly lifestyle.

When I first contemplated home schooling, I contacted the BUC Education department and asked if they could let me have information on the subject. The secretary I spoke to did not know anything about it and promised to try and find out some information and contact me. I never heard anything further. I felt rather let down by the church in this regard and instead telephoned a minister's wife, who I knew had home schooled her children in their early years. She was extremely helpful and gave me the information about The Home Service and put in the post the same day various articles and a book that she had on the

topic. Another Adventist member lent me Raymond Moore's book "Better Late Than Early" and these books helped me decide to home school.

Perhaps the education department at the BUC should encourage church librarians to purchase these sorts of books for their local church libraries, so that parents can become more aware of the issues involved. A list of helpful books could be compiled and sent out to the churches.

It would also be extremely helpful if the BUC Education department could build up some resources that could be made available to parents who could then purchase photocopies of the worksheets from the BUC, paying the cost of the copies and postage. The BUC would soon recoup the money spent and could add to their resources and at the same time the parent would have received some helpful material at a fraction of the cost they would have paid in the shops.

The church could also compile a list of Adventist home schoolers and circulate this amongst the home schooling parents. This would enable us to make contact with other Adventists, pooling ideas etc. The Home Service, which is a Christian organisation, is very helpful in this regard but it would be nice to know how many other Adventists are actually home schooling.

Results

It is rather hard for me as a parent to comment on all aspects of the children's progress. Various people have said that the children are "a credit" to us and have commented on their good behaviour. One lady, some months ago said that if there had been any doubts about whether home schooling was the right thing, the behaviour of the children certainly showed that we had made the right decision. This comment came after a couple of hours spent in this lady's home, when the children were "socialising" and relating quite happily to people of all ages.

I feel that spiritually the children think on a deeper level than many of their peers, as evidenced by some of the comments that they make from time to time and some of their prayers during family worship.

It is hard to make a comment on the results of their academic achievements as we have not compared them with others, but we can see that they have made improvements on a personal level.

Financial implications

Obviously, having made the choice to home school my children, it means that I cannot have a regular job that brings in a second wage. Our family circumstances, with my husband, as a pastor, mean that I cannot even have a regular part-time job, as I cannot guarantee whether he will be able to look after the children at any given time.

This means that finances are rather tight and the children do not enjoy all the “extras” that other families might enjoy, such as holidays abroad. They have to be content with holidays to grandparents, aunts and uncles. Having said that, they feel that they get a lot of breaks away from home with attending camp meeting etc, but they would like the chance to travel on a plane!

We also have to purchase our own workbooks and although I try to keep this to a minimum, I have felt the need to purchase maths and English workbooks from the bookshops in town.

Recommendations

I would recommend home schooling. I know it is hard for a lot of people to contemplate giving up their careers, particularly if they have spent several years studying to achieve a particular goal. I also realise that in some careers, such as a doctor, it is hard to take a career break, without losing out on new advances in the profession, for example, and I believe that that applies increasingly in many professions today.

However, I would recommend that a professional mother give serious considerations to the eternal issues that are at stake. As mentioned under question 6, I felt that if my children stood a better chance of being in the kingdom, as a result of me home schooling them, I was willing to give up the career I had studied so many years for. It is a very personal issue and I would not presume to tell anyone what they should do. It is a decision they have to make for themselves, having been made aware of the options and weighed the priorities up for themselves.

Unfortunately, in many professions today, considerable pressure is being put on the employee to devote more time to their careers and some parents get very little time with their children. Home schooling provides at least one parent with the opportunity to really get to know their children and spend quality and quantity time with them.

9 year old daughter & 8 year old son

Reasons

Daughter– Because I wasn’t getting enough help with my maths and I was finding it difficult. I was very good on my English and I’d read all the books in class 1 and some of class 2’s books. They said it would be hard when I moved up to class 2 because I’d read nearly all of the books and there wouldn’t be anything for me to read.

Son– Because Mummy didn't like me learning my letters as "W" for "Wicked Water Witch" and "R" for "Red Robber".

What did you think?

Daughter– My parents talked to me about it. I thought of it in two ways. I was glad in one way because I would get more help and sad in the other way because I wouldn't have that many friends. I also felt sad because there were some parts of school that I liked.

Son – I don't remember. I was glad to stay at home and not go to school.

What's it like?

Daughter – I like it better than school because my mum has more time to explain and help me with the work than the teacher did. I get holidays more often. I don't have to sit at a desk or wear a school uniform. I don't have to be woken up in the mornings and rushed off to school. We get more trips out than when I was at school. I don't have to be embarrassed at sports day or feel unhappy when I'm not given a merit certificate when I've done my best all week. I don't have to ask for permission to go to the toilet and I can have drinks whenever I want them.

Son — Really, really good. I think home schooling is better because I get more time to play and holidays more often and I get to sleep in in the mornings without a wet flannel splatted on my face! I can just go to Mummy and ask her to help me without putting up my hand. At school, I would put up my hand and it would ache because the teacher wouldn't come round, even though she saw me.

Do you feel different?

Daughter – Yes, I do feel different in some ways because most of the children I know go to school and I don't. But I'm glad I don't.

Son – Yes, because there aren't any children shouting.

What are your parents like as teachers?

Daughter – Very good. They help me to understand subjects that I find difficult and I like it better because they are my parents and I can keep in touch with them in a way that I couldn't with a normal teacher.

Son – Really good, because I get more help. Daddy isn't my main teacher but he does help.

What things do you like the most and least?

Daughter—Most: more holidays and help with my work and not having to rush to get up in the mornings.

Least: when I can't play with my friends all day when they're on school holidays because I've played nearly all day and I have to do some schoolwork.

Son – Most: because I have a smashing teacher and I get easy schoolwork and not as much as my sister.

What do your friends think?

Daughter – I think some of them like the idea and wish they could be home schooled and sometimes they're a bit jealous because I get lots of holidays.

Son – My friend says he would like to be home schooled because he thinks it's really good and his sister does too.

Do you spend enough time with other children?

Daughter – Yes, I think I do because I get to play with my friends most days when they come home from school and in their school holidays. I also see my friends when I go to church and Pathfinders.

Son – Yes.

How has home schooling affected you?

Daughter — It's helped me a lot with my maths. When Daddy goes to conferences and other meetings, I get the chance to visit my grandparents and visit museums and other places of interest. I get the chance to go to camp meeting which I couldn't do if I was in school.

Son – I don't know.

What would you like to do in life? How will home schooling help you?

Daughter – I'd like to be an author and illustrator or a vet. I get plenty of chance for art and English and for my reading I read a lot of stories in the Animal Ark series, which is about a girl whose parents are vets and I learn a lot about animals from these stories and tapes.

Son – Be a fire fighter or a policeman. My Daddy arranged for me to have a visit to our fire station and I was able to talk to the boss and squirt the water and wear the chief's helmet while I was squirting the water and having a ride in the fire engine.

Recommending home schooling to other children?

Daughter – Yes. I would tell them I like it because I get more help with my work and I also get chances to visit places which I wouldn't if I was in school and I still have friends in the street and at church and that home school is fun.

Son – Yes, I think it's good.

Will you home school your children?

Daughter – Yes, because I can start them from whatever age is suitable and do work with them bit at a time and we could have lots of fun trips.

Son – It depends if my wife and I want to.

5. Single Adventist spouse family

An Adventist mother with a non-Adventist husband has home schooled three boys 17, 15, 3 years of age and one girl of aged 10.

I started home educating in 1990 for **several reasons**: I wanted the children to have a Christian education; I missed them whilst they attended school; my oldest boy has dyslexia and we felt a more closely related education would encourage and make him feel less different; I began to resent the National Curriculum and its restricting boundaries.

I wrote a letter telling the school that we would no longer be attending and that we were starting home education. I wrote to an organisation called Rod & Staff and ordered materials. I also joined Education Otherwise.

My experiences as a lone Adventist parent have been challenging, but very rewarding. I had the benefit of a husband working through the day and consequently I have been able to do pretty much as I have liked. He has offered no resistance to home education other than the occasional expletive argument, blaming home education and God for all our troubles.

The greatest joys have been to be with the children through their growth in character and spirit. The challenges include: keeping things in order; patience; being motivated for the children's welfare consistently; finding good materials; supporting the children in all their needs and socialising for the older two boys as very few children of their age are home educated.

The reaction of relatives initially was one of horror, although they softened to the idea and sometimes they helped. But mostly, it was a 'put up' or 'shut up' situation and they mostly 'shut up'! My parents have been supportive from a quiet perspective, offering financial help occasionally and child-minding the younger ones.

Friends were quite supportive, although some put me down as a religious crank and others felt guilty that they weren't home educating and consequently our friendship petered out.

After nine years though a great deal of respect and non-judgmental attitudes have replaced any animosity.

Church members have always been fairly supportive, sometimes more than at other times, and some people much more than others. It depends on their experience with home education and whether they admired the example of others in the church before. Some saw it as fanatical and unnecessary, but were still kind.

All of these reactions from others were dealt with on a day to day basis, not by brooding or worrying about what others thought, although criticism was hard to take. I knew it was right for my children and that God would see me through.

I had three visits from the LEA. The first was to check that we were actually schooling and the others were to check that the two older boys were progressing. All contact with the LEA has been fine.

I am a member of Education Otherwise and have as a consequence a contact list of other home educators we have regular contact with, where we live. They have organised a wonderful programme of learning and socialisation amongst themselves.

Home education is important for Adventist families that feel that they can do it and I would encourage them whole-heartedly—it is by far the best way if you can do it!

Financial help would be welcome from the church and maybe resource centres and advice about the curriculum from the education department. Some parts of our home education have definitely been lacking, but generally I would say that **my children have better characters than if they went to school**—who can say? As a mother, one is always very critical and wants a very high standard.

Financially, home education has been difficult but we have always been provided with what we need. Praise God!

I would definitely recommend home education, even with a non Adventist spouse.

15 year old son

I am home educated because it's better than the state schools and I wanted to have a Christian education. I was only six when I started and consequently I don't remember any discussion about it.

Home education is great. I don't feel different. My parents were good teachers. The things I like most about home education are that there are no fixed hours and I can do my favourite topics. All my friends are home educated, but I do not spend enough time with other kids.

I don't know right now how home education has affected me. I don't know what the future holds. I would recommend home education but I would advise others to have more contact with similar aged children.

6. Pioneer home schooling family

A family with two daughters who were home schooled well into their teen years. They then both attended Adventist schools abroad. The daughters are now in their 20s.

Reasons

Our children never went to school. We decided before they were born that they weren't going to school. As we looked at society, this decision was confirmed more and more by the children around us. Our children didn't have any formal bookwork until they were nearly eight years old.

I began reading the Bible when I was pregnant with our first child. We adopted an Adventist lifestyle, but without Christ. Finding Christ put us into the Adventist church. We became Adventist when our children were three years old and five weeks old. In the process, we read some of Ellen White's books and the penny dropped. It fitted in to what we had already discovered rising up in our own hearts. It was in harmony. It put a reason to why we were feeling the way we were feeling, although what I got was an impact rather than detail.

My husband had gone to a public school. He was very gifted, but completely anarchic. He couldn't cope with the system and the hypocrisy. He went to Church of England schools. The whole system to him was a complete travesty of what reality was. The only classes he liked were oil painting and he found out he could write. Other than that, he didn't do very well at school.

I was a good student. I loved school. Both my parents were teachers. But when I got out of it, I realised I had been performing for individual teachers. I hadn't really learned anything. I

had memorised a lot of things, but was not prepared for life. I went to university for a year, but then dropped out and moved up into the mountains. I was drawn to natural living and eating healthfully. It seemed reasonable to me.

I never liked city living or what society was offering long before I knew why. I suppose school was just a part of it. I didn't want to give my children away when they were so young. I wanted to have some impact on their choices and I wanted to share with them some of the answers that I'd found, without having to go down the routes I went down looking for them.

When I got pregnant with my first child, I felt so responsible for her life. I almost felt like the Virgin Mary. I felt so privileged to be carrying a child. It was just such a miracle to me. I had a responsibility to this new being that was coming onto the earth. I felt so responsible to raise her right. That's why I started reading the Bible. I wanted to give her the best start she could have. With my second child, it just intensified. I wanted these children to have the best chance. We lived four miles out in the countryside and always had nature around us. We usually had people coming out to visit us.

Starting

I didn't start home schooling until we came to England. The oldest girl was six, and youngest was three. There were now a lot of people, too many people, giving us advice. I wanted my children to be free to explore who they were and I probably didn't do that enough. I tried too hard to make them conform, because of my education. But there wasn't anything else. Home schooling was the only alternative.

I couldn't send them to a state school. I couldn't do it. I knew enough from other people's children. **I knew people who had no serious Christian walk and repeatedly people said, "I sent my children to school when they were five and I lost them"**. I loved my children and I liked teaching them things and there were a lot of things I could do. I would watch them explore and discover and draw things and make things and say, "mummy, look!". It was such a privilege. I didn't want to give that to someone else. I knew them the best. I cared the most.

They read and learned all kinds of maths and probably reading too, but it was never enforced. If we were out in the garden, I'd say, "would you help me hold the tape and can you count how many footsteps it is between here and there." Or I'd say, "Let's make bread. Can you put in three cups of water". They learned totally by practice. There was no saying, "Now today we're going to have a maths lesson." I knew how to read when I was three and I had dyslexia by the time I was five. I still get it when I'm tired. I didn't want to do that to my children.

At the same time the pressure was on, to send my first girl to nursery and to school. So I thought, I'll show people how smart she is, I'll teach her the alphabet. I was just playing at it

with her, drawing the letters on the beach with her, one day, and she was going “A, B, C”. All of a sudden, I thought, “What am I doing to this kid?” So we just erased it and drew a picture. After that, I was really careful. It was a really calculated move when we sat down and opened a book. We always read the Bible and I read them stories every night. We had worship morning and night. We had loads of verbal contact and people coming through our home. It was a very social place. They had a lot of communication and ‘down on the farm’ skills. They’d seen a lamb born from their own sheep before they learned how to spell it. Our resources were real life experiences and country living.

I got in touch with Rod & Staff in America. Their programme was very good in the early years. Their maths and English is really good, and they don’t use computers. The children just learn how to use their mind. I think it’s really wrong to give young children computers. For a little while, I used an Adventist programme called Ladder of Life Series for preschool. I looked for science experiment books and we got lots of nature books. We used a beautiful nature magazine called ‘The Country Companion’. It had geography, science, crafts and natural medicine in each issue. They learned a lot about nature without having to memorise and get tested on it. They learned how to read in about three weeks.

Joys

The highlight for me was living with my children. For so many parents, by the time their children are twelve, they don’t know who they are anymore.

Home schooling is brilliant, because if something is happening, we could just stop and go. If the lambs were being born, we would forget the books. We went out and took care of the sheep. It was so nice to live—just to be alive with my children.

Everyone says how level headed, thoughtful, kind, hardworking, honest and practical my daughters are. When the eldest went to an Adventist college, she said the girls are so different. She had just never gone the route of what interested them. She wasn’t interested in boys movies and make-up. They’re in a much better state than I was at 21. I can’t make them believe in God. I can’t make them make the right choices, but I feel I did the best I could. They had a priceless childhood being in touch with nature, so much. They’re not as strict now as I would wish, but they know. It’s in them and they have a good foundation.

The youngest girl chose to go to an Adventist school in America near her sister. She was a worthy pupil. She got almost straight A grades. After a year, she applied to an Adventist college and was accepted at 17 with no exams—nothing. She’s now studying business. She’s got another year to go. The eldest wants to be a doctor. Her dad always used to say he wanted to be a doctor, but never did it.

Both were accepted into college on the basis of their interviews without any exams, but they still didn’t believe it. They had to sit the GED for college entrance in America. Both did really well on it and were surprised. I said why are you surprised? It’s because everyone

filled their heads with, what will you do if you don't have your exams? I said God will show them what they should do. The youngest was in school because she felt she had to do it. She had to have a piece of paper to prove she could do it.

They say they wouldn't home school their own children because of the commitment. But they don't have children yet. Once they do they'll be very possessive of their children. I would offer to come and teach their kids for the first few years.

It's very hard to let go of your children and home schooling deepens the bond. A really nice thing is that I'm really good friends with my children. The eldest talks to me about everything, any subject however personal. I feel so privileged.

Challenges

My husband took it very hard when the children left home. I had more of the home schooling than he did. By the time they left I was prepared for them to leave. I had had my go. This is one of the dangers of home schooling it can alienate one of the parents. My husband felt I took over. Most mothers that take on home schooling are strong-willed. A man, if he is insecure, can feel sidelined.

People used to come and say what a good mother you are, what a great job your doing. My family knew I was human. My husband spent more time with his children than any father I know. He would want to do something exciting with the kids and I would say no don't do it. I would put up such a barrier, because I was teacher and mum. He felt really ruled by that. He wanted more input. He wanted to teach them geography. But he's not a book teacher. He's not interesting if he's teaching out of a book.

He felt like I ruled, but I didn't. I felt like he ruled. He and I were not equally sharing the schooling. He was the more practical teacher. Part of it was they were girls, so I was teaching them girly things, spinning, sowing, baking, cleaning and gardening. He would take them out and do things, but they weren't boys. The gender issue had a big impact. Also, he didn't have a good experience at school, so he doesn't gravitate toward teaching. He was a good teacher at Sabbath School, because it was a different type of teaching. But for early years teaching, he's not that good. In retrospect, mothers should encourage fathers to do more and to pray more seriously about it.

My eldest girl said home schooling was great. There was a stage when they couldn't wait to get out of it. In the teen years, it became a great burden, because we were very unsettled. We didn't have a place to live for several years. It was always an upheaval. They were happy to go to school. Now though, they have a lot of happy memories. The eldest says, "The problem was you were mum and teacher and there was no one else to go to." If I was a single mother, I would find it very difficult. Looking at it now I would say for the early years I would home school. At 11 or 12, school or a group situation is much healthier.

We tend to isolate home schooling as something separate, but home schooling is life. The real thing makes you get on your knees. The most important thing is that the family operates together. Academics are really a sideline.

I was always stressed and felt, I had too much to do. Maybe that was because my husband didn't contribute as much as he could have in some ways. I don't think God meant women to teach their children right up through the teens. Not the sciences, history and algebra etc. I don't think that was the point. In Ancient Israel, the mother taught the daughters. The daughters stayed home and learned to be wives and mothers. They didn't have to sit down with books and answer all kinds of questions. It was life as it presented itself and what you do in the situation. The boys began reading when they were eight. They were sent to school or to work when they were about 13.

Reactions

My mother called the police, when we were in New York. I wouldn't inoculate my children and I wouldn't send them to school. She was upset. She got a friend to talk me into it. Because my mother had been a teacher, she was just desperate that I wouldn't send them to school. Now she thinks home schooling is the best thing I could have done.

Church members were very defensive. A lot said, I'd like to do that but I'm not smart enough. I'd like to do that, but I have to go out and work. Oh it's all right for you, you have two such nice little girls. My husband's family just looked down their noses and still do. They thought it was very quaint. They would get me into intellectual discussions to see if I was really capable of teaching them to write a literate sentence. They made me angry, or fight. I used to quite like a challenging conversation. Because we had each other, it was quite easy to stand there and link arms and say, "We know what we're talking about and you'll see." It made us more sure. We really felt it was the only choice we could make for our children.

We never had any dealing with education authorities. I kept records because I was warned. But the law is, if you've never sent your child to school, they have no authority. It's once you've taken your child to school and take them out that the LEA gets uptight. Strangers who visited the home were always impressed. They looked at us like it was 'Little House on the Prairie'. We fitted people's stereotype.

We had no links with other home schoolers. Toward the end, a friend was beginning it, but before that nothing. I never heard of Education Otherwise. Part of it was my ignorance. I just didn't know about these organisations. There were others I influenced in their home schooling. One minister came to our house and was really impressed. A lot of people came through and said, "Yes, this is the way life should be!"

Adventist and home schooling

Home schooling would be good for church members, while they're still free to break from the government's concept of education. People are strangle-held by the idea that you need GCSEs. I haven't died and I haven't got any degree. I don't think it's a sin to study for GCSE, if you've got a foundation of proper education, but I don't know that it does you a lot of good.

I don't think home schooling is the issue, but real Christian education. The church needs to be convinced of it's own message. If they're convinced the rest follows. If they're not convinced it won't make a difference. You can't follow Christ by outward obedience. You can't educate by outward compliance.

Finance

On the financial side, my children didn't cost me anything until they left home. It was minimal. The books were expensive. I got family credit. I used to feel guilty for getting government aid till I found out that it cost the government about £2200 per year to educate a child in the school system. I saved about £5000 per year.

Finance is not an obstacle to home schooling. Anything is an obstacle if you think it's an obstacle. To me it was like, you wake up, you breathe. You don't think of whether it's financially good to breathe. You just breathe. To me home schooling was, you got up and you did it, because that was the only option. I sold books and health foods. I never made any money. I just broke even. I occasionally did a cleaning job here and there. We were happy to be poor because we had family. We had each other and that was so precious.

Advice

For those considering home schooling, I'd say go for it on your knees. If any sense of pride or any sense that you're a cut above rises up, because of what you're doing, really step on it, because God is teaching your children, you're not teaching them. God is teaching you and He's teaching your children. The academic stuff is really a side issue. Don't be ruled by what people say your children need. I've had Adventist home schooling teachers come to me and say, "Your children have to have GCSEs." But I said my children don't need GCSEs. My kids had so much pressure when they grew up. When they left home, they felt that they had been denied and that somehow their education was lacking.

If you seriously want to home school, you're going to get opposition. If outside opposition doesn't work, the devil is going to bring it really close to you. God will enable you to survive it. But education is not just to get your kids through eight grades. In my education, I feel like I've just begun. It's an ongoing process.

I don't think there is righteousness in home schooling. It can be worse than if you send your children to school. In some situations, I would say send your children to school, e.g. in a bad family situation. If the mother is not sufficiently educated to share enough so the children can get a well-rounded education or where there's not enough social interaction in the family or with other people.

7. Late starting and group home schooling families

The mother home schooled her three teenage daughters. The family did a joint programme with other home schooling families. There were about ten children at one stage with three parents sharing the teaching of a younger and a older group of children.

Home schooling was more my daughters' idea than mine. I didn't think I was able to do it. I always wanted to, but didn't feel capable. As I was reading the Spirit of Prophecy, it became stronger in my mind as the years went on. But when it really hit home, I didn't actually think I could do it because of their ages and I'm not very well educated myself.

The state of the worldly schools was what made me think it was better not to let them go to school. I was seeing influences and they themselves were very much aware of the influences in the school that they went to, which was one of the better schools. They got the idea of home schooling from church meetings we went to, where they felt the contrast was so strong to what they were getting at school. They hadn't met any other home schoolers.

Two of them went to a secondary school about an hour's drive from here. First of all, there was terrible music on the bus and they didn't want to put up with that. Secondly, they couldn't see themselves doing the subjects being offered, so they left after a week.

We considered sending them to an Adventist school, abroad, where they would get a complete Adventist education, but that didn't work out. Because of this, I felt it was going to be a big disappointment having to send them back to a worldly school. So in a way I was forced through circumstances to take them out of school. **I could give them the education that I read about in the Spirit of Prophecy, which is about preparing them for heaven.** Earthly position is not really important.

My husband was against them going to an Adventist school abroad, so when they stayed at home it was a much better option than them going away. From that point of view he was quite happy for us to just get on with it. He wasn't involved. My older son wasn't interested and I didn't try to persuade him. I found it difficult enough to deal with the girls' ages. He was older and very clever. He would have controlled us.

When we were abroad, we met an Adventist teacher and her husband. They had a lot of home schooling materials, which we purchased. We didn't have everything we needed so

we went to local bookshops and bought what we thought was missing from what we felt their education needed. Because we took them out of school at such a late stage, we felt we had to carry on with some of the things they had been learning, like maths and try to keep along those lines so they could at least take the exams at a later stage. We taught them French, maths and biology, but besides that we gave them a lot more spiritual food. E.g. we went through the Sanctuary in great detail. We did studies from the Bible. We did some work on diet and hygiene.

At that time, we contacted Education Otherwise. They put us in contact with a local person and she gave us some ideas. She was teaching her own children but didn't live near us. I couldn't visit her on a regular basis, but we did receive some encouragement from her. It was very very remarkable to hear her, not knowing Spirit of Prophecy, give us the principles that are laid out in the Spirit of Prophecy about education. That really amazed us. We were ashamed of what she was bringing forward.

There were a few other families in the church that were interested. They joined us at that time. We also approached a young man who was a friend of the family and asked if he would be willing to teach certain subjects, I felt I had no idea about, such as maths and the sciences. He came to live with us for a short time.

We took on a big challenge, because we had some of the other children from church as well. There were about nine or ten children altogether. It was really too much of a challenge. But looking back, even where we failed and didn't do very well, it wasn't really a waste of time. I'm glad that they were away from school at the age when they were most impressionable by their peers. I think that this has stood them in good stead in terms of the direction they chose later on.

One mother sold her house and came with her daughter to live with us. This worked fairly well, but her daughter was not as motivated as our girls, due to a more difficult family background. She found it more difficult and after a year, went back to school. Our girls, after the first year, decided to continue with their studies by themselves, without any assistance and went into adult education. The adult education people were willing to take them on for a few of the subjects they were interested in. They were happy to let them take GCSE exams at their centre.

We also had a few smaller children with us—a family with two girls and a boy who had learning difficulties. These things complicated matters a bit. They eventually decided to send their children back to school. One mother came regularly to help with the little ones. Another mother, who was working, assisted with the younger ones when she was home. The young man, who was helping us, along with myself, taught the older ones. We had two groups in two different rooms, at the same time and came together for worship and singing. This lasted about a year.

We really took on too many children. It would have been better if individual families had taken responsibility, but they would never have done it. That was certain. It was the best we could do under the circumstances. It was extremely stressful, but I also experienced a lot of strength from God. In my stress, God was still there to help. Every time I asked for assistance, I got it.

My children were a bit on the old side to start with. If I had started with them when they were younger, I could have continued on. I would have been learning along with them and I would have understood the concepts better.

A very positive thing was the relationship that the children and myself developed during this time. It was very much stronger and we understood one another much better. We had to deal with one another's characters much more, than we would otherwise have to do. I think this was a very positive result.

The reaction of friends and other church members was virtually all negative. The church members never inquired. They just pretended that none of what we were doing existed. It didn't affect us. We went on regardless of what anyone thought. If we had more encouragement, we could have asked someone with more ability to assist us, and things might have actually developed from the point where we began to feel our failings and couldn't continue. It might have gone on if the church had stood behind it.

Outside people were very often positive and admiring. We didn't have any links with other home schoolers, but didn't feel isolated. I knew of others that were doing it. I knew there were a lot of people being home schooled in America. I knew that there were some Adventists in Britain, who were home schooling, but they were very rare. I didn't try to contact any of them. I had seen television programmes about other Christians who were home schooling their children, so I knew it was not a rare thing for other people to do.

The education authority came round to find out what we were doing. All they did was to have a discussion about what we thought we were doing. I think they saw them at work as well. They were quite favourably impressed, even though we weren't, ourselves. They left us alone from that point onward. They saw us once or twice and had no problem at all.

We are so concerned about our children having an education to fit into this world and have jobs. When we look at the subjects the world thinks they need, it can scare us a lot. But if we can't do those subjects, we could leave them until our children are older. They can do them in other ways. There are so many options.

So far our children haven't had to depend on any worldly qualifications. One of them is teaching English in Europe. Another is a teacher at one of our Adventist schools in America and the other is also studying to be a teacher. This might have happened regardless of them being home schooled. They might still have chosen directions in which

they wanted to serve God. Some of it was their own choice not to study in worldly schools and universities. They've closed the doors themselves. They had several opportunities at a later stage, but each time the circumstances were not favourable enough for them to go ahead with it. As a result, their education has been more directed than it would otherwise have been.

We didn't push them in this direction. Possibly they may even have had more pushes from their father in the direction of going to conventional schools to do some 'proper' studies. I didn't stop them from that at all. These opportunities were there and one doesn't know what the future holds for one's children.

There are a lot of advantages of home schooling. The children are a lot more able to communicate with adults, integrate into society and to do certain tasks. E.g. they arranged their own flights to America all by themselves. I didn't have to do anything. They grew up in their social and spiritual abilities much faster. But they've stayed more childlike in other respects—innocent concerning certain things of the world, which is what we want.

Academically, my daughters don't have any problems. They've been able to keep up. One of them has managed to do three years work in two years at an Adventist college. She's well able to cope with what they're offering.

Financially, it was expensive. We had a little money, a few thousand pounds that had been given to them for their education. It was meant to be for when they were 18, when they were supposed to go to university. It was given by a family member. We asked if we could start using it. We bought a lot of expensive books with it and the materials that we needed. In the end, we didn't use a lot of the books. We were over anxious and bought more than what we needed. We bought some Christian materials that we didn't use. They were too difficult because we hadn't started with them from the beginning.

I think if you really want to home school, the money will come. We wanted to do it and we had the money, but we didn't have money for much else. We were always short, even though the Lord had already provided for the home schooling. But even if you have to start without all the finances, I'm sure the Lord will provide.

For Adventists today, I would say never, ever send your children to school. Never! When I read the paper, I think how could anyone bring a child into the world and let it be educated by the world? It's just asking for them to be lost.

If the church is in the business of saving souls, it had better be in the business of saving our children. That's really our first priority. It's more important than anything else. It's the same in a family. If a father is going to be a missionary, he had better be one to his children before he's one to anyone else, outside. It's the same with the church. Every

church, whether big or small, should get together and try to home school the children, whether there's one, ten, twenty or more—groups of families coming together and other people helping, trying to find out the best method for their situation.

Those children who are home schooled correctly will become workers for God one way or another. There's no doubt about it. So if the church invests in home schooling it will benefit the church. When you invest in children being home schooled, it will bring very rich returns, not just in terms of them being more spiritual and an asset to the church, but also, they will be able to work for the Lord in a more self-supporting way and not have to draw on the finances of the church in the same way that full-time paid workers do.

I would recommend home schooling to anyone. I would say do not be scared. Pray more, start small and don't worry. Increase subjects as you go along, as you feel impressed to. Prepare a whole plan so that you have something to show the authorities. Know what your abilities are and make specific use of them. The children may have certain abilities too that you as the parent are not so good at. Teach them to develop them so that they can work independently, especially where you feel very inadequate perhaps. There are a lot of things to be learned by looking in books and concordances and encyclopaedias. The church could purchase some of these.

Our situation was a bit unusual because we had taken on extra children. If you just home school your own children, it's a tremendous benefit on the family. The children in the home school have to integrate the domestic work. This needs to be incorporated as part of the school programme. Then the parents don't feel they have to do all the work before or after school like the cooking etc. and give their children an education that compares with the worldly schools.

Home education is really to make children proficient in looking after themselves and to be spiritually independent. They should be able to rely on themselves. They should be able to cook and keep the house clean. All this is part of the home schooling. As a parent, you actually get help from your children, if you do it properly. Then when you sit down with the books in front of you, it becomes a pleasure, a time of relaxation for you as well as the children. Another aspect is going outside. There's much to be learned from gardening and physical exercise. It's all part of the programme. Going out for walks to collect items in nature. The schools outside do it, but we should do it even more so.

I don't think we had everything in the right balance at that time. We've learned a lot more since then. I think the home environment plays quite a role in this. We lived in the town at the time. We did take on an allotment but it was possibly too far away. It was a difficult allotment to work with. It was just full of weeds.

Moving out into the countryside, where possible, would be a tremendous aid to a much more helpful home schooling educational environment. Environment isn't a 100%

necessity, one should start where one is, if it's possible. But if you can have the right environment, as well, that would be wonderful.

8. Overseas family in Britain

A family from Europe with five children (three boys 18, 15, 9 and two girls 14, 8). They spent nearly five years in Britain, during which time they home schooled all five children.

We first heard about home schooling from our minister when our first child was a baby. I didn't think I could do it. I started home schooling the first child when we were in France, after checking the legal side.

We decided to home school due to non-Christian influences in school and peer pressure. We didn't consider it for academic reasons. It's nice to be with the children together and to know each other. When they're at school, you don't know them.

You can home school in our home country, but you have to take state exams at the end of the year. You have to teach the same curriculum as in school. We had to apply to home school. Even the authorities didn't know that it was possible. We then sent the children to our Adventist school.

The main challenges are getting them to do things with joy, as they get older. Also there is no one to measure them by. It seems like it's just me, as a parent, enforcing this. As a home schooling mother you don't have someone else to give you a change. I liked it, but it was too much for me with four different levels and having to do my own work. You can't concentrate on what you should give them. It would be nice for my husband to take over the role, but it's not always possible. We didn't have problems with relatives. They already thought we were crazy as Adventists.

What astonished me was that my oldest boy could do GCSEs in time and in another language. I am totally against the idea of not doing exams. Where would they end up? They could never become a doctor or a teacher, even for the Lord's work.

It's a blessing to family life. You have them in hand and next to you. Some teachers in school just don't bother. The children have to cope by themselves. Home schooling is the best option for the primary level, especially when you don't have to take an exam. For secondary level, it would be better to have more options, e.g. church schools or tutors going around, so that not all the pressure and burden is on the mother, especially when you have more children. I had to neglect my primary children for the secondary ones.

It was very nice to have links with other home schoolers. You can do field trips together. It's a good opportunity to share your faith and lifestyle. They're different, but open in many

ways. **You need links with others**, otherwise your children don't see other children and have the opportunity to have friends. But if you want to combine with others, you have to ask, which principles and guidelines are you going to follow?

To those considering home schooling, you need to think about it and know the advantages and disadvantages. For primary level, a mother who is a little organised can do it with good materials. Talk to the BUC, who should supply you with a list of books you can get, so that you don't have to start from scratch. **Financially**, there could be some support from church.

Britain is certainly the best place for home schooling. There's no doubt about this. It's to do with the mentality of the English. They just don't take everything so seriously. It's good that you have this freedom.

Now that we're going to Germany, I have no fear for my older boy. There is a good youth group in the church and he can separate himself from his friends at school. For my second boy, he needed to be somewhere with more formal teaching. I'm a little bit concerned about him. My home schooling will just shift to the afternoon. I'd rather send them to school in Germany than in England. In England, they are in school all day long. In Germany, the younger children start school at 7.30 am and will be home by 11.30 am. I would not like to send my children out for all day at primary level. Their eating together would disappear.

15 year old son

I was home schooled because the school doesn't teach everything right, especially about religion. When I was at school, it wasn't too bad, but I had quite a lot of bad days.

I like home schooling better than school. You're near your parents, your brothers and sisters. I like being near my family, the most. I would recommend it to other children. Home schooling helped me grow in my faith especially and in my schoolwork, because in the school, you don't get everything.

What I didn't like was that I couldn't see friends that often. Going to school in Germany will be a hard time, but I'm sort of prepared having been home schooled.

I don't know what I want to do in life, but I will go where God leads. I would home school my children, if possible.

9. Home schooling researcher & authority (Raymond Moore)

Raymond Moore and his wife Dorothy have sometimes been called the grandparents of the modern home schooling movement. With many years of experience in different areas of education, they now run the Moore Foundation which specialises in the promotion and facilitation of home schooling. Their work is based on extensive research which supports what the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy have to say on child training.

I got interested in home schooling through my wife. She was very interested in school entrance age and I had done child development psychology in my doctorate work. **We decided to do some research to see whether science supported what Ellen White had said about early schooling.** We did research from 1969 to 1972. And wrote an article for a magazine which Readers Digest picked up and sent out to 52 million people around the world. We talked in the article about children not attending school until 10 to 12 years of age. This got our home school movement started. We home schooled our children from birth.

Leading universities like Cornell and Stanford were saying that children shouldn't start formal education until the early teen years if you want to avoid learning failure. I've written 12 books and written parts of 35 to 40 books. I wrote for university professors who were writing books on child development. I worked hard to get good laws in every state on home schooling.

In America, the number of home schoolers is in the millions. Ours is the most successful education movement in America and probably in the world. There are laws providing for home education in almost all 50 states. The two worst states are California and New York due to the Home School Legal Defence Association.

In Japan there are 100, 000 to 200, 000—maybe more. New Zealand is well covered and it's very popular in Australia. In Europe the numbers are much lower.

The main benefits of home schooling are:

- keeps the family together, when properly done, and gives a child a balanced life
- ☛ teaches him to earn a living as well as shoot a basket or kick a ball. It teaches him the nobility of work experience and serving others, altruistically, instead of trying to beat someone in a ball game
- ☛ gives the child experience of really appreciating his parents and family values
- ☛ the Smithsonian Institute says, most importantly, it provides warm responsive adult care for a child

- ✠ gives the child a sense of security away from his peers who are very dangerous, these days
- ✠ gives him more creative freedom to do things than to do everything the same way everyone else does it

The greatest challenge to home schooling is the public schools of America and particularly the educational associations who totally ignore the research. There's no research in the world that says you should put a child into school by four, five, six or seven. They gave us a lot of trouble. The publishers fought us at first until they realised that we had a good thing going.

My advice to parents is don't rush the child at too early an age. Target the child's interest and give him a balance between work, study and service. Have the child in a structured environment, going to bed on time and sharing in the duties of home. Emphasise obedience and service to others. We don't have any failures. We tailor the curriculum to a child's interests and aptitudes. It's not about just bringing the school into the home with canned curriculums for each grade. Choose teacher and pupil friendly books which are very interesting and have effective learning outcomes. I would advise parents to be very careful, get acquainted and learn as much as you can about home schooling.

We help single parents by teaching them how to make a living from home, if possible, and to teach the children how to help them. Where there is a religious divide between parents, we suggest they call us personally and we give them a thorough historical background to home schooling. We suggest they have a trial period and have the children report to us so that the parent can have a more relaxed environment.

One of the most interesting experiences with home schoolers is Joe Harrington who at 13 was teaching one of the world's major corporations how to change its gold extraction operations by using bacteria. Now at 21, he has his own corporation, earning over \$1million a year, cleaning poisons from factory waste with bacteria.

The goals to be reached are harmonious development of the child; teaching them how to earn a living and be an evangelist. Home schooling has turned out to be one of the top evangelistic methods in the world for Adventist. Some people, even atheists, have become Sabbath keepers. We've been retrieving and restoring families, working to avoid the loss of family security—that is the big thing we're doing. When God gives a package, it's complete.

Historically, whenever the family broke down, society broke down. Also if the family is not together, then evangelism is decimated. We want our children to stand on their own two feet—thinking for themselves and from a younger age. Peer dependency is a social cancer.

We were inspired by DEUTERONOMY 6:6,7; MALACHI 4:5,6, the Elijah message. The spirit of Prophecy has been our guide all the way through this. This is God's doing. He is guiding us through all the pressure. **It's the Elijah message.**

10. Former home schooling family

The two children were home schooled when the family lived in the West Indies. When they came to Britain, the children were sent to state school. Now the daughter is 13 and the son is 10.

After I had just come into the church, **someone lent me the book 'Adventist Home'** and I read a bit in there about how to train our children. **I decided that I would never send my children to public (state) school.** We didn't have an Adventist school locally so I decided that we needed to have one. I tried to get the church to start one. Eventually, they did, but later on I read in 'Child Guidance' that sending your children to school for just anyone to teach them wasn't the best. It said the only teacher for the first eight to ten years should be the mother, so I decided to do it at home.

My daughter went to the church school for a year later on when she was about five or so. They were doing a good job and she was older by then. I sent her partly due to pressure from friends—mainly people from church that taught at the school. I decided I might give it a try, but I wasn't very satisfied as the school had more non-Adventist children than Adventist. I didn't think that the influence was of the best sort. Though the teachers did well, the children tended to override that. I decided to start home schooling again. It was a bit weird since I was the one that had encouraged them to start a school.

I remember speaking to an Adventist doctor who said if he ever had a child, he would never send them to school. He shared experiences of how children are better off at home. There was a little book from the World Health Organisation that I read that showed that children who were home schooled performed better. There was also some research that showed that children who went to school earlier experienced damage to their eyesight.

I also read about the experiences of others who had home schooled. **One experience that impressed me was Arthur Maxwell.** He spoke about how his wife decided to stay at home and look after the children as soon as they started having children. They had six children who all stayed in the church.

One of the things that got me in 'Child Guidance' was that a child's mind is being formed and whatever you put into that child's mind shapes the character. Also reading about

Jesus learning at the feet of Mary. The Jews didn't send their children to school until they were 12. All of that reinforced my determination. I can't think of one person that supported it at that time, but God would send me things to confirm and support what He wanted me to do.

I went to public school so I knew what that was like. I didn't want my children exposed to other children who learned bad habits. Having felt the duty of parenthood and what I needed, I felt all the time from when my children were born that my job was to prepare them for eternity.

I accepted everything I read in God's word and thought He knew best and even when it didn't look as if it was going very well and some of the children could spell long words which my child couldn't spell, I wondered, but **I knew, in the end, that God's way is best.** I realised that the sort of education that God wanted for our children wasn't the sort of education you get in school.

One of the things that impressed me was that a child's ability to reason does not develop until about seven. I was convinced that education like maths, saying timetables, was putting too much weight on their young minds. I didn't think it would be beneficial, so I didn't want them to learn that way. There was another woman who was supportive. She said her grandson was very bright. He started school at about two, but when he was in high school, he dried out and became backward and yet he was so bright in the beginning.

Another factor was my sister who didn't go to school because she had Sickle Cell. She was 12 when she started to go to school. She could read as well as any of us. She graduated from school with nine O-Levels, so I knew there was some benefit. She could grasp things better than those who went to school. She's now studying to be a doctor now.

A minister's wife came to the church and talked about home schooling. When I was AYS leader, we did a lot of programmes on education. Some people still didn't accept.

When I started, I was impressed to work on their memory. I used to have them recall things. I'd have little books that I would read to them. I took them to places in nature. We lived near the sea and that was beautiful. I took them for walks. I was getting them connected with the fact that God was creator. There was also an Adventist children's programme on radio telling stories. I wasn't following the school curriculum. By then, I was convinced that this wasn't the way to go.

I had no contact with any others who were home schooling or any home schooling organisations, so I was quite isolated. My husband wasn't absolutely convinced that I

was fitted to teach, that was challenging. Most people could understand if there wasn't an Adventist school nearby, but because there was one, I ought to be sending my children there. People were afraid that they would be dunces, but they knew this wasn't the case. They had the ability to learn and had very good recall. They had almost perfect recollection. It was a walk of faith, really. It's the conviction that it would pay off in the end—in the long run, not in the short term. I never looked at the short term benefits.

There was the thought in your mind, am I doing the right thing since no one else is doing it? There was the fear that the children wouldn't fit in when they eventually started school. The children wanted to go to the church school. My daughter was keen initially, but not so keen afterwards. The children had interaction with other children in the neighbourhood.

I had no dealings with education authorities. The laws weren't as stringent. My relatives thought Adventists were a bit queer anyway so I didn't have much pressure from them. People couldn't understand that there was a church school and I was keeping my child to grow up to be a dunce. They were concerned that the child wasn't going to school. But there comes a time in life when you're so convicted about something that you start thinking, how can I follow other people? Many times I've had to make that choice. If we can't stand for what we believe on our own, how will we stand in 'Time of Trouble'?

Home schooling is more important for Adventists, today, than it ever was. I read something in 'Child Guidance', which said, "How can you teach your child at home to serve God and then hand them over to the Devil?" It's really a concern of mine that we haven't got more facilities to teach our children. It can be done. From what I've read in Ellen White, I get a picture of each church running small groups.

Pathfinders and Sabbath school are probably the only places where our children can get Adventist education. Adventist teachers and parents could start some small groups, not for the under sevens. We wouldn't have people who are not coming from Adventist backgrounds. I think our children would benefit so much more.

Whenever my children looked at anything, they could see it through the eyes of God—it's like having third vision. They could see God in everything. This is not so much the case now. Sometimes you see glimpses of it. When my children went to state school they were so unhappy. They would come home every day and complain. They didn't want to go. **Now they're enjoying school. I know it's because they've been desensitised.**

They were having worship, recently, and they were laughing and giggling which they wouldn't do before. They do get into arguments with teachers like in RE. They are comfortable with who they are and confident. This came from home schooling.

Financially, it didn't cost me anything. In fact it saved me, because it was \$200 per quarter for the Adventist school. I didn't spend anywhere near that to home school. Because the kids were young I didn't need the books, but I'd need them now. I can't see that it would be significantly more to home school, unless you send them to state school, which is free.

From my experience, I would recommend home schooling to others, most definitely. It is not an option really. We really all should home school. When a child is young, it shouldn't be a question of whether I should home school, because we're preparing children to be the way that Christ would have them be. I think that the mother is the only person fit to do that at a very young age. If you start home schooling in the earlier years, you don't want to let your kids loose into the hands of others. I've seen the damaging effect state schools have on my children. I would definitely recommend home schooling and after that sending your kids to small Adventist schools, rather than sending them to schools overflowing with non Adventists, even if it is an Adventist school. The effects are still damaging from what I've seen.

I've been hoping to take my kids out of school now. I find that it's a very hard decision, seeing that the kids are no longer as enthused to stay at home. This is one of the damaging effects of sending your children to state schools. At their age now, I would need to have their full support for it to work. I do pray about it a lot. I find it hard to be courageous. It's really hard now to do it the second time at their age. Even today I was sitting here and thinking, what would be the results, though, of not doing it. I can tell you, I've seen the harmful results of sending my children to state school.

My advice to those who are home schooling would be, never stop! Don't ever break the cycle. It's like backsliding. It's very hard to regain the momentum once you've lost it. You should always continue. The Lord is always your helper. It's hard to know and not to do. As Solomon said, "Much wisdom, much sorrow." The more you know, the more the weight of responsibility. Try to make friends with others who are home schooling.

You need to decide, what you're raising your kids for. Do you want them to be fit to succeed and prosper in this world or do you want them to prosper in this world as well as in the world to come? That's the major decision you need to make. Once you've made that decision to prepare your children for heaven, then the choice you make will definitely be to home school.

For those who have started, I'd say don't make the mistake of going back. When Mary and Joseph lost Jesus, it took them three days to find Him. Whenever you start something like home schooling, if you turn back, you'll have that experience. You will find it very, very difficult, because you've lost confidence. You lose so much. It's really the worst decision I've ever made.

When I just came to Britain, people used to say how different my children were. People at church have noticed the change from what they were to what they are now.

13 year old daughter

My mother chose to teach us probably because we were younger. She didn't want us to get onto hard things while we were at school. She didn't want us to get any bad habits. I just remember staying at home and trying to read, learning my ABCs. It was a happy time. Going to school was different. I preferred school. It was better than being at home all day, and at least there we had something we could learn. You can concentrate better at school because you're under an atmosphere that makes you work better.

We didn't have to do as much work and we weren't in the school all day. We used to go out on trips. I was learning from some of these. Sometimes, I found it a bit boring because I was in the house, all day.

My mother was quite strict as a teacher. I wanted to be with other children around my age. I learn better now. The teachers spend time to speak with you and they explain it better than a parent. They won't shout at you for not knowing, like parents do when they become frustrated.

Spiritually, it's quite hard. I concentrate on my schoolwork more than anything. When I'm at school in tests, I'll ask God for help. RE is difficult as a Christian, because I believe in something different from them. When they're doing about Christianity, I find some of the things they're talking about rubbish. But I can't say that because it might offend people who believe in that. I just do the work and if I believe in something else, I just put it on my work and I'll get marks for doing that. My school friends go to church as well. They're not unruly, they won't swear or anything. They respect me.

I would recommend home schooling to other children, but it would be up to them and their parents. They would have to think about it really hard because, if you're at school doing SATs and the curriculum tells you to do this. Now they're making laws that you can be fined for not going to school, so you'd have to think about it very long and hard.

I want to be a doctor. My home schooling will help, because when you're with your parents they help you to be determined in life. It helps me along with everything. I keep on going when things get tough and I ask God and try to be determined.

I want to be a doctor because it's very helpful and you have to look after other people and you can help them become what they want to be and save their lives. You can give them advice to let them carry on with their life.

I would home school my children while they're young and I'd try to get them to go to a Christian school, if they're older, because it's hard for them if their friends are going to school and they want to go at some stage. I would do them at home first and then bring them to school. That way they can learn what they should and should not do. If you go to school at a young age and the parents don't teach them any manners, they can become unruly. It would be hard for them to be at home all the time because they could get bored. You won't get as much attention when you're older, because you'll be having to help your parents, but if you're at school you might work more.

I think God thinks it a good idea. I don't know about home schooling now, because I'm at school now doing my GCSEs, so I want to be at school to be doing them. I'll probably be better there. It's a better atmosphere under the teachers. Parents would be there, telling you to do something and if you don't know something they might get frustrated at you. I wouldn't like that. The teachers are there to help you.

11. Pastor's family

We home schooled all three of our children, just for the first two years, from the ages of five to seven. There are two years in age between them. When the first child was seven, she went to school and we started home schooling the second child who was now five. This meant that we were only home schooling one of our children at any one time. Our children are now 21, 19 and 17.

As our children were born, my husband and I discussed all sorts of issues that were relevant to raising children, especially in an Adventist context. This included the more practical issues of formal schooling. **Ellen White says so much about the importance of the home in teaching our children.** While in America, we heard of Raymond Moore, his research work and the Home Study Institute. So we wrote for information and bought some books on home schooling by Raymond and Dorothy Moore and others. We also went to a lecture by John Holt on home schooling which we found excellent and very helpful. We bought one of his books.

Other factors were also influencing us toward home schooling. My husband, being a pastor, spent every afternoon and evening out visiting or taking meetings. He usually spent his mornings at home studying, writing letters etc. We had spoken to a Minister's wife, who had young children at school, and she had expressed sadness to us when

she told us of a piece of work her daughter had written entitled 'My Family'. She had written a little about each member of her family. When she got to her father, she wrote, 'I have a daddy but I never see him.' We did not want our children to write this about their daddy.

Also, as we read more and observed other children, we saw that young children don't naturally share. They snatch toys and want everything for themselves. At the younger age levels, a child's attitudes and Christian principles are learned much better from a loving, caring adult than from another child. So, although my husband is a Pastor and I'm a physiotherapist, and neither of us has been trained as a teacher, we decided to keep our children at home until the age of seven, and, by the grace of God, give them an all-round Christian education.

We contacted the education authority and were given an appointment for an interview. The lady we saw was very pleasant. We told her our **two main reasons**:

1. keeping the family together for a little longer when the children were little in view my husband's working hours
2. wanting to be the main carers of our young children and so teaching them the values and attitudes that were so important to us.

You can imagine our amazement when she told us that she fully understood where we were coming from as she grew up a vicar's daughter! Then she couldn't do enough for us. She said that she would consider us as teachers and that we could use the teacher's resource centre like any other teacher.

The education authority only visited once a year and they were always amazed when we showed them what we were doing, and what fun we were having. They told us that our children would not be getting 'any of that' if they were at regular school.

We bought teaching aids from the church and purchased the 'How it all Began' set of stories, teacher's manual and children's work sheets to teach Bible stories. We also bought the 'Ladder of Life' storybooks, teachers guide and cassette tapes, as well as the Sabbath school felts.

Although, home schooling was relaxed and informal, we did write a timetable to help us keep on track. **My husband purposely spent time with the children every morning when he was home.** We would have our morning worship time with lots of singing, Bible stories, felts etc. and then everyone prayed. After breakfast while I washed the dishes my husband would play games with them to teach maths. I usually taught the reading and writing. There was always lots of play-shops, houses, cooking etc., walks, outings (especially to the zoo), collecting nature items and having a nature table, story time and serial stories. We took the children to swimming, violin and piano lessons, and

to gymnastics. Our children had a lot of friends in the neighbourhood as well as at church.

One aspect of home schooling that is very important is that you can tailor make it to suit the different interests of each child. Our oldest child was very academic and loved stories, reading and writing them and being read to.

Another child was very artistic and loved to spend time drawing, painting and making things. Our kitchen was often full of paper-mache hanging on string to dry. The other child loved the world of play and often converted the sitting room into a shop, which he would manage and sell all sorts of treasures in. Giving such individual attention and developing a child along the lines of his/her own interests is just not possible in a school classroom of 30 plus children.

Looking back now, I feel that children grow up so very quickly and that the few short years that God grants us to enjoy and train them passes all too quickly. Let me tell you an experience to express how I feel. Once I was with my daughter and another mother asked me if I sent her to nursery school. When I said "no" she was surprised. She said that she couldn't wait to send her son for three mornings a week to get him out of the house as he drove her mad when he was at home. I asked her what he did at nursery. She told me all the wonderful, fun things he did at nursery and how good it was for him to go. She gave me a list of things that I did with my daughter at home. I thought to myself, 'God has given me this bundle of childhood for me to enjoy. How could I give her to another woman to enjoy when I could be enjoying her?'

Probably the greatest challenges were:

1. making my own time for God
2. maintaining the energy and enthusiasm to keep up with a young child and constantly finding new activities to do
3. maintaining a balance in life between physical, mental, spiritual, and social development.

When we home schooled our children it wasn't very common and a lot of people, both secular, and in the church, didn't understand why we were doing it, nor did they agree with it. We tried to avoid conflict so didn't tend to talk about it, unless asked. We did know another pastor's family who were home schooling their children at the same time We would sometimes share information and encouragement.

It's hard to assess how home schooling has affected our children. Would they be the same as they are now if they had always gone to a regular school? I think we will have to wait till eternity to have that question answered. We felt that home schooling was right for us and that God definitely led us in that direction.

To anyone thinking of home schooling I would say that you obviously need the time to do it. You need 100 percent commitment and to trust God with your finances as you have to give up work. Both parents need to be convinced that this is God's will for you. Then go for it and trust Him to see you through all the difficulties and challenges. Family love and 'togetherness' are so very important, and these qualities grow as we spend time together. Ultimately, the most important question that we must ask ourselves as Adventist Christian parents is not so much how well we are teaching our children the 3 R's, but rather how well are we preparing them for eternity? "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" "Mark 8:36. We need to pray for God's guidance and pray for our children.

Quick questions & answers

Don't children have to go to school to be educated?

NO: All children need to be educated, but this does not have to be in a formal school setting. The home is a dynamic educational setting in its own right.

Does the Bible support home schooling?

YES: This was God's original plan for educating children and throughout the Bible, parents are given the first responsibility for training their children.

Should Adventists home school their children?

YES: This is potentially the best method for training children to be committed, consistent Christians and helping them to fulfill their purpose in life.

Am I really the best teacher for my child?

YES: You know and love your child more than anyone else. This provides the best conditions for learning.

Is it legal to teach my child at home?

YES: According to the law (Education Act 1996, Sec 7) it is your duty to ensure that your child receives an education. You can do this by sending your child to school or educating them in some other way, like at home.

Does my child have to follow the National Curriculum and take national tests?

NO: The law requires that children be educated. It does not prescribe that education should consist of or what you should teach your child. Home schooling allows you to develop your own programme according to the needs of your child.

Do I have to be a trained teacher?

NO: Any loving, committed parent, whose willing to learn, can teach their child, regardless of their own educational background.

Can I home school my child with special educational needs?

YES: The school setting can create learning difficulties for many children. Home schooling can often solve or dissolve special educational needs' problems.

Can I, as a single parent, home school my child?

YES: With good management of your home, time and resources, the co-operation of your children and linking up with other families, home schooling can be much more realisable for single parents than it may at first seem.

Isn't home schooling expensive?

NO: If you are economical and sacrificial, it doesn't have to cost you a great deal. You can use a lot of real life ready-made sources for learning.

Would my child be able to socialise?

YES: Your child simply does not need to be around a lot of other children of a similar age in order to socialise. Most of this interaction is negative. Social interaction with yourself and other family members should be the basis of your child's social development. Meeting up with other home schoolers and church activities can also provide meaningful opportunities.

Would the church support me?

YES: The BUC Education Department are keen to support home schooling as another option for giving your child a Christian education. This could help your local church to be understanding and supportive in the best ways they can.

Does home schooling have it's problems?

YES: Like any other meaningful endeavour in life, home schooling presents unique challenges you need to rise to rather than avoid. If you are convinced that this is the option that God wants for your child's education, then you must believe that He has a solution to every possible problem you will face. With much prayer and good planning problems can be overcome.

Can home schooling prepare my child for a careers?

YES: If God has called you to home school your child, He will make a way for your child to become all that He wants her to be in life. Home schooling opens up many alternative routes into careers apart from the conventional exams and qualifications.

Is there research evidence to support home schooling?

YES: A lot of research has been done in America and there is a growing body of research in Britain showing that home schooled children do better in their all-round character development, self-concept, academic performance and social skills compared to conventionally schooled children.

Wouldn't it be difficult to put together an education programme?

NO: Learning is a much more natural and simple process than we're led to believe, especially when it's taking place on a one to one basis. High quality learning can take place without excessive teaching and elaborate education programmes.

Amazing facts about home schooling

Originated from mind of God

Home schooling is not a human creation. It originated from the mind of God as the best plan for educating children.

Jesus was home schooled

Jesus' only known human teachers were His parents.

Many famous people were home schooled

Some of the most influential people in the history of this world were home schooled including: John the Baptist, Sir Isaac Newton, George Washington Carver, Alexander Graham Bell, Leonardo da Vinci, Albert Einstein, George Washington.

National & international policies support home schooling

The law in Britain, European and UN policies all recognise parents, not the state, as having the first rights and responsibilities in the education of children.

Better academic performance

British and American research consistently reveal home schoolers outperforming formally schooled children on national tests.

Religiously affiliated home schoolers ahead of secular

Research in Britain shows that religiously affiliated home schoolers make greater academic progress in the early years than their secular peers.

Formal teaching unnecessary for learning

Learning is a natural process. Children do not have to be formally taught in order to learn.

Harvard University gives priority to home schoolers

In its admissions policy, Harvard University, gives priority to young people who have been home schooled, because of their superior development all-round.

Need for early formal education—a myth

There is no evidence from inspiration or research that supports the idea that the earlier children start formal schooling, the better they will do. In fact, there is clear evidence to suggest the opposite.

Better socialisers

Measurements of social skills in America reveal that home schooled children are generally better socialisers than age-segregated, peer-dependent, conventionally schooled children.

Formal schooling a recent phenomena

Formal schooling for the majority of children in Britain has only happened over the past 100 years or so.

Some Christians bypass GCSE & A-Level

Some Christians involved in home schooling and organising Christian schools in Britain have bypassed SATs, GCSE and A-level exams and set up their own Christian-based qualifications, which have been nationally recognised because of their quality.

Dissolves special needs problems

The standardised formal schooling system inevitably creates learning problems for those children who do not fit in with its narrow and rigid approach to education. Home schooling has the flexibility to cater for almost any learning style, level of ability, peculiarity of character and pace of learning, thus dissolving most special needs problems.

Contains ingredients for genius

According to the Smithsonian institute in America, every child is capable of genius in some area. The key ingredients are:

1. warm responsive parents
2. freedom to explore his interests
3. very limited interaction with his peers.

Christian home schooling is ideally suited for this. Conventional schooling isn't.

Best preparation for work

Home schooler, Joe Harrington, started to read science books at home from back to front out of curiosity to know the answers. At 13, he was teaching one of the world's major corporations how to change its gold extraction operations by using bacteria. Now at 21, he has his own corporation, earning over \$1million a year, cleaning poisons from factory waste with bacteria.

Helps fulfil end-time Elijah message

Christian-based home schooling is a part of the fulfillment of the end time Elijah message to be given by Seventh-day Adventists (MALACHI 4:5,6):

*Behold, I send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall **turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers**, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.*

Bibliography and recommended reading

Bible

— *Kings James Version*

Spirit of Prophecy

— *Ellen White*

Adventist Home
Education
Child Guidance
Counsels to Parents, Teachers & Students
Fundamentals of Christian Education
Mind, Character & Personality
The Ministry of Healing

Moore Foundation

— *Raymond, Dorothy Moore*

Better Late Than Early
Home Grown Kids
Home Built Discipline
Home Made Health
Minding your own Business
The Moore Formula Manual
School Can Wait
The Successful Homeschool Family Handbook

☞ *see chapter 6 on research and section 14 on organisations and resources*

Other Adventist

The Home School Manual

— *Theodore E. Wade Jr., & Others (Gazelle Publications, 1991, ISBN 0-930192-25-7)*

Journal of Research on Christian Education Vol.4 No.1

— *School of Education, Andrews University, Spring 1995*

Natural Healthcare For Your Child

— *Phylis Austin, Calvin & Agatha Thrash (Family Health Publications LLC, 1990, ISBN 1-878726-01-3)*

Christian

The How and Why of Home Schooling

— *Ray E. Ballman (Good News Publishers, 1987, ISBN 0-89107-425-2)a*

The Home Education Handbook

— *Jane Lowe (Home Education Advisory Service, 1998)*

Learning from home-based education

— *Edited by Roland Meighan (Education Now Books, 1992, ISBN 1-871526-06-X)*

School is NOT Compulsory

— *Education Otherwise (1993, ISBN 0 9521703 0 2)*

School's Out: Educating Your Child At Home

— *Jean Bendell (Ashgrove Press, 1987, ISBN 0-906798-77-9)*

Teach Your Own

— *John Holt (Lighthouse Books 1981, ISBN 0-907637-00-0)*