



DIRECTOR'S COMMENT

PETER FROGLEY

Winter has arrived with a vengeance here in Canberra, alternating between frost and fog, and wind and rain (which should really be snow—it seems cold enough).

Mid-year is the slow time for us, or at least it is the time we try to concentrate on producing materials. That produces a challenge in that the financial returns for those projects are very slow developing and cash flow becomes an issue for us. Unfortunately the Australian Christian market is not large enough to warrant production of most materials so we have a conflict between ministry and paying our bills. We thus encourage you to purchase our materials when ever possible so that we can continue producing distinctively Christian curriculum.

Projects

- For students who have almost completed Volume 1 of *The Elements of Music*, Volume 2 is nearly finished and will be available before the November issue of *Light of Life*. Volume 2 includes a Student Workbook, Teacher's Resource Kit, a book of Musical Arrangements and a Test Book.

- *Let's Teach Art* is available for K, 1 and 2 and has been well received. *Let's Teach Art* Grade 3 is in final editing stage and should be available by September. Each of these books is in trial edition and we value any comments you have to make. Author Terry Lewitzka is working on a combined grade 4 to 6 book. Much of the material has been written and I am hopeful Terry will soon have the new book well underway.

This Issue

In this issue we have a variety of articles. In *Exploring Christian Education* I look at curriculum, emphasising the practical aspects of choosing curriculum. We reprint an article on how to tell when your child is ready for school. In health I look at the importance of rest and sleep, whilst Evelyn Garrard explores toys in Phonics Corner.

Keep educating for the Lord!



EVENT CALENDAR

COMING EVENTS SEMINARS PROGRAMMES UPDATES



Christian Home Education Seminar and Show

2002 SEMINARS

We invite you to join us for the seminar nearest you where you will find a challenging, informative and biblical range of elective sessions, plus the opportunity to browse the wide range of resources and mix with new and old friends.

Check our website at www.lem.com.au for details and downloadable application forms for all CHESS seminars.

The CHESS programme for 2002 has begun with very good seminars in Geelong, Benalla and Melbourne.

We are preparing and looking forward to CHESS seminars in Brisbane and Townsville this month.

CHESS SEMINARS FOR 2002

Brisbane	Saturday 10 August
Townsville	Tuesday 13 August
Sydney	Saturday 7 September
Dubbo	Tuesday 10 September
Perth	Saturday 21 September

Swan Hill	Thursday 24 October
Adelaide	Saturday 26 October
Hamilton	Tuesday 29 October

HOME EDUCATION SEMINARS—MELBOURNE

Organised by the Catholic Home Education group, the *Catholic Home Education Family Day* is from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm on Saturday 12 October 2002 at St Patrick's Parish Hall, Cnr Rogers and Childers Sts, Mentone (Melway 87:A6). Enter from Childers St.

All are welcome—contact Philip and Celina De Rose for more information on 03 9504 1008.

LEM Phonics

CHINA

Evelyn Garrard has enjoyed two weeks at home during July, largely spending time with family and friends. She has also been helping in the office quite a bit, as we make plans for the development of LEM Phonics.

Following the information in the last issue we have received several responses to our request for teachers for China, which has been quite encouraging. The need, however, is quite large and we will again

include the China flyer with this edition. If you believe God is calling you to China to teach please contact us whether or not you feel you have qualifications.

LEM Phonics in China continues to grow with some important breakthroughs in train at the moment. We trust they can be finalised quickly, but as always there will be challenges to anything we do. Now that LEM Phonics is becoming available as an English for Speakers of a Foreign Language (EFL) programme it can be quickly adapted for use in other nations. Already there have been enquiries from other nations and if you know of areas of need or opportunity, please let us know.

INTRODUCTORY SEMINARS

LEM Phonics Introductory Seminars are conducted by our Registered Instructors and are announced through flyers included with the Light of Life and in our mailouts. Downloadable versions are also available on our website at www.lem.com.au.

ADVANCED LEM PHONICS

The next Advanced LEM Phonics course will be conducted by Evelyn Garrard in Canberra from 6 to 17 January 2003. The Advanced Course will be conducted over nine days, concluding on Thursday 16th. The successful students who wish to become Registered Instructors in LEM Phonics will then be able to continue on for the Friday to complete the necessary extra work. Please apply early as places are limited and pre-reading assignments are required. A flyer is enclosed, or visit the website at www.lem.com.au.

LEM Peru

LEM's pioneering days in 1980 and 1981 saw a man named Bob Relyea teaching with us at Fountain Centre Christian School in Booleroo Centre, South Australia. Currently Bob and his wife Frances are serving in Peru, where they have been for the past 5 years or so.

This past Christmas they were back visiting Australia and called in at LEM. Bob asked if they could use the name of LEM for the work they are doing in Peru. After prayer and discussion we have signed an agreement to work with Bob and Frances as Ministerios Educacionales Luz Peru (that's LEM in Spanish!).

Bob has been working to develop a ministry in Christian education throughout Peru and beyond, and he has seen doors open in Christian schools, universities and theological colleges. They are preparing some of our materials in Spanish and are particularly keen to establish teacher retraining programmes using the LEM Diploma Course as the basis. We are encouraged at this development as it links to LEM's original vision of the torch being carried throughout the world.

Property Project

After more than two years waiting on acquiring a piece of land, we are finally at the stage of speaking with an architect and seeing some significant movement. We trust that in the next issue we can share our plans with you.

EXPLORING CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

44 Curriculum

PETER FROGLEY

Curriculum has and still does create much debate and discussion amongst educators and even amongst the general public.

Curriculum used to simply be a statement of the content of a course. Now with clever educators it has been expanded to become much more. There is some justification for this, but by and large it is a mechanism for creating a lot more work for teachers that seems to have little bearing on the effectiveness of the teaching they offer. Many would suggest it has been a major distraction.

Once curriculum was content, now it seems to have more to do with process. That is, once we were concerned about what information was going to be taught, now the emphasis seems to be on how we are going to teach. Generally, the how takes priority and this seems to be inefficient in that the content of courses shrinks year after year. The how is not unimportant because any teacher worthy of the name will always be seeking more effective ways to communicate to his students.

Philosophically, the reason why process has taken precedent is that absolutes have been rejected. Content tends to be absolute, thus content is de-emphasised in favour of process which is relative. We find then, as we look at modern curriculum it is often difficult to find the content in a vague forest of processes and outcomes.

Curriculum has thus been taken out of an absolute, godly, predictable and definable mode and placed in a humanistic, godless mess of verbiage. Unfortunately, the humanists control education today and to a significant degree have convinced most Christian educators to embrace their edicts. Christians in Christian schools are forced to frame their curriculum documentation in humanistic terminology, in a humanistic framework, to be accepted by authorities as Christians have allowed humanists to take almost full control of education. How often have I listened to Christian educators commenting on how they have to write their curriculum statements to suit Education Department officials, but claiming to set them aside to teach Christianly. Tragically, however, most Christians are unable to set humanistic ideas

aside as their thinking is already humanistic through their training in state institutions.

What is Curriculum?

Rushdoony points out in *The Philosophy of Christian Curriculum* that ‘curriculum’ comes from the Latin meaning ‘a running, a racecourse, chariot’. A *curriculum is thus the chariot, racecourse or vehicle whereby a culture expresses its religious faith and standards.*

That is a key for us as we see curriculum changing to express the ‘prevailing religious faith and standards’.

How do we then, as Christians, assess curriculum that is going to support our religious faith and standards? Rather than exploring the philosophical implications of types of curricula alone, I would like to pursue that idea in as practical a manner as possible. How do we assess curricula that will benefit our children as they grow in Christ?

Let us look at curricula from three aspects: academic standard, biblical orientation and practical organisation.

Academic Standard

I have chosen to look at academics first because many Christians are inclined to

think that academics are of secondary importance. I understand what they mean and there is relevance to their concern, but when we speak of academics we are

humanists ... to a significant degree have convinced most Christian educators to embrace their edicts.

concerned about the mastery of knowledge that is God’s knowledge. True academic learning, therefore, is learning about God and His creation and becoming proficient in our mastery thereof. There will be problems with academics if it is framed and taught from a humanistic perspective, but for us as Christians, we frame academics in godliness. Failure to do so will, of course, give the results that give many Christians concern.

Academic standards have developed over years as subjects, or disciplines, have developed in our various educational institutions so that we can say that a certain standard of academic achievement is, for example, grade 5 standard. It reflects the development and ability of the average child at that particular age. Courses and thus texts are written with this accumulated knowledge in mind. There are many who want to contest this standard and some want to stand it on its head. I would encourage you not to do this! Whilst this standard is not presented as absolute for all

children, nor as sacrosanct, it is a very useful guide.

Curriculum writers take this foundational content and organise it according to their own thinking and methodology. I contest that those who do this in the most careful, formal and orderly manner are the most successful. In this the writers of Rod and Staff curriculum have done an excellent job.

On a broader front we find increasingly that the content that was found in grade 5 books is now appearing in grade 7 books which indicates a lowering of standards. The standards of even the better Christian curricula are being lowered with each new edition. Nevertheless, they are still, generally, of a higher standard than most state materials. We find that children working at, say, grade 7 in a state school will commonly need to begin two to three years lower in the Christian curricula we stock at LEM: Rod and Staff, A Beka Book or Bob Jones University Press. That is, the standard of these curricula is significantly higher.

Biblical Orientation

It is quite difficult to find a suitable measure for biblical orientation as it means different things to different people. For me it means writing material that reflects that ‘all things were created through Him and for Him.

And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist’ (Colossians 1:16-17). The King of kings and Lord of lords needs to permeate all that we think, write and teach.

Too often parents will opt for cheap books from the supermarket, but the savings are not worth it

This is the great challenge for writers of Christian curricula and generally they have been moderately successful. The range extends from rather poor to quite good, bearing in mind that we are just beginning into the second generation of Christian curriculum from America and the first generation in Australia.

Biblical orientation is important if you want to train your child in biblical thinking. Earlier we discussed the humanistic process that has become endemic in education pointing out that this is developed in the process of education. For Christians it is the biblical orientation that provides the impetus for the ‘process’, which we could call Christian character development. If Christ is central to our curriculum it will reflect His character and provide the foundation for the building of Christian character in our children.

Check out the resources you are using to see if they are biblical in their overall thrust or whether they appear biblical because there is a Bible verse on most pages. This

often passes for Christian curriculum, but is quite deficient. It is worth seeking out a curriculum that is truly Christian. Too often parents will opt for cheap books from the supermarket, but the savings are not worth it in terms of building Christian quality into a child's life.

Practical Organisation

Christian curriculum materials are organised by the authors to suit their particular educational philosophy. In general they could be summarised under the following categories.

INDIVIDUALISED LEARNING

This style of packaged curriculum is quite popular in Christian Home Education circles. Its claim for individualised learning is, however, something of a misnomer for some in that whilst these materials are presented for individual student packages, they are not individualised in the sense of being specially prepared for each child. Rather, they break down regular curriculum content into smaller packages.

These packages are designed to minimise the need for a teacher, which makes the material the teacher. Rather than a positive, I consider this to be a negative as the human relationship between teacher and student is a key to good education.

This type of curriculum is the easiest to use and is thus attractive to many parents as it involves the least effort from the parent or teacher.

THEMATIC APPROACH

Thematic simply means that a concept or idea rather than a particular discipline becomes the focal point for the curriculum. An example would be that we use the sea as the theme for a unit of study that may take several weeks. Under this topic we could study the sea through the marine sciences, stories and poems about the sea, painting pictures of the sea, etc. The thematic approach can be an interesting and thoroughly rewarding methodology. Done properly, however, it involves a lot of extra work for questionable advantage overall. It certainly can be a very interesting method of teaching, but a good teacher will always endeavour to make subjects interesting whatever method is employed.

Generally, thematic materials do not cover the core disciplines such as grammar and maths as it is very difficult to fit them into a theme. This is perhaps an Achilles heel of the thematic approach.

TEXT BOOK APPROACH

The name says it all; the basis of the course is set out in a text book. Text books are usually organised so that they contain a year's work for the average child. In the home education environment some children will finish a book in much less time whilst others will struggle to complete the text in one year.

The benefit of textbooks is that they lead the teacher and student logically and sequentially through a body of material. This ensures that the subject is mastered

without omitting important areas of knowledge. LEM sells and promotes textbook oriented materials partly because of these benefits.

The text book is the time-honoured method of presenting curriculum content. Whilst many modern textbooks provide some process, by and large they present the material for you, the teacher, to teach the child. This is a key to quality education. It is a sound method of learning, producing good results. More importantly, it encourages discipleship. The child submits to the teacher and without submission the child will not learn. In the place of submission God is able to build the child's character. The result is the biblical development of the child. His character is built through the very discipline of learning and such learning does not produce pride which is the bane of every educated person.

We do caution teachers and parents that the text is the guide to the course of study; you are not meant to be its slave. We find some parents and teachers believe they must adhere to everything in the text, regardless of its suitability for their situation. We encourage parents and teachers to use the text book to fulfill their goals for the particular subject.

Whatever style of curriculum we use it is advisable to think for yourself whilst preparing to teach as God will often give you better ways to do things than has been set out in the book.

What to Do?

There is an abundance of curriculum materials available and plenty of people seeking to sell their materials. This can be very confusing—we often speak to people at CHESS seminars who are overwhelmed at the array of materials that are available. How do you decide what curriculum will suit you—after all in a perfect world you could write your own, and some people (whilst not necessarily perfect) do just that. For most of us, however, that is really out of the question for any number of reasons, the most significant perhaps being time—we only have 24 hours in each day! Many creative people will choose wisely and modify existing materials to suit their particular need and situation.

Define Your Goals

In choosing curriculum first define what you are trying to do for your child. What do you want your child to be like at age 17? Your answers to this question will help guide you to the curriculum most suited to your needs.

I am assuming that as Christians you will want, as far as possible, to use Christian materials. Then, as you explore Christian curricula, your goal will be to find the curriculum that will most effectively help you fulfil the goals you have for your child.

If you want a curriculum that does most of the work for you, because you don't have time or don't know what to do, then one of

the individualised curriculum packages would best suit your requirements. Many would believe, however, that the results achieved may not be according to your expectations. If you are a creative person with lots of energy and time and your main aim is to provide your child with exciting learning experiences, then the thematic approach will suit you well.

If you want a high academic standard achieved through well organised materials that will ensure a balanced and well-

rounded education, then the textbook approach will suit best. If you desire to work creatively with your children you can! If you are unsure of your own abilities the textbooks and teachers manuals will provide invaluable assistance for you.

It is our experience that the textbook approach provides the best basis for a good academic outcome and the rigor of study will produce good character traits in the child.

THE DIVINE AUTHOR AND CREATOR

It has been the error of the schools to teach astronomy, and all the other sciences and subjects of natural philosophy, as accomplishments only; whereas they should be taught theologically, or with reference to the Being who is the Author of them: for all the principles of science are of Divine origin.

Man cannot make, or invent, or contrive principles. He can only discover them; and he ought to look through the discovery to the Author. When we examine an extraordinary piece of machinery, an astonishing pile of architecture, a well executed statue or a highly finished painting where life and action are imitated, and habit only prevents our mistaking a surface of light and shade for cubical solidity, our ideas are naturally led to think of the extensive genius and talents of the artist. When we study the elements of geometry, we think of Euclid. When we speak of gravitation, we think of Newton.

How then is it, that when we study the works of God in the creation, we stop short, and do not think of God? It is from the error of the schools in having taught those subjects as accomplishments only, and thereby separated the study of them from the Being who is the Author of them.... The evil that has resulted from the error of the schools in teaching natural philosophy as an accomplishment only has been that of generating in the pupils a species of atheism. Instead of looking through the works of the creation to the Creator himself, they stop short, and employ the knowledge they acquire to create doubts of His existence. They labour with studied ingenuity to ascribe everything they behold to innate properties of matter, and jump over all the rest, by saying that matter is eternal.

Thomas Paine, 1797



SCHOOL READINESS

ELVIN SHERTZER

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School readiness refers to a child being adequately prepared to master tasks at school.

It is the child's ability to cope with the school environment physically, socially, emotionally, and academically without undue stress. It includes his ability to keep up in that environment. Boys develop more slowly than girls do. In the age range of five to seven years, the difference is about 6 months. Whereas girls ought to be fully six years old, it is in the boys' favor if they are six and one-half years old when they start first grade.

As preschoolers develop from infancy into the more active childhood years, it is wise to remember that the day is coming when they will leave the shelter of home and parents to begin their formal schooling. Effective communication begins early. This includes talking to the baby, singing, and reading stories—especially Bible stories. The warm and caring atmosphere of the Christian family is a marvelous foundation stone on which to build a child's life. Each child needs to learn to obey promptly and willingly. It is not right for the school to have to be frequently sidetracked from academics to deal with matters related to obedience that students should have learned at home.

In rearing each child, it is needful that we have a goal as to what he will become as a

youth and as an adult. As concerned parents, we have fond hopes that each child will develop into an effective, zealous Christian servant. God's help and blessing needs to permeate all our efforts.

The following activities and skills apply primarily to a child within two years of entering school. Some points may apply to younger children as you perceive readiness. It is beautiful to observe children moving from play activities to performing small acts of self-care and helpfulness around the house.

SELF-HELP SKILLS

- Putting on and taking off outer clothing
- Learning to manipulate buttons, snaps, and zippers
- Putting on boots and rubbers
- Tying shoestrings
- Self-care in the bathroom
- Washing hands and face
- Wiping the nose
- Combing hair
- Eating mannerly
- Recognizing and caring for clothes and possessions

PRACTICAL-LIFE SKILLS

- Following simple directions
- Listening carefully
- Opening and closing doors and drawers

- Putting toys away
- Making beds
- Dusting
- Washing and drying dishes
- Setting the table
- Folding napkins
- Helping put groceries away
- Sweeping the floor, porch or walks
- Counting objects, silverware, buttons, or people
- Comparison of sizes (big-little, long, short)
- Recognizing colors
- Learning to stick to a task without being distracted

COORDINATION SKILLS

- Throwing and catching a bean bag or a ball
- Walking on a line (straight line or circle)
- Proper use of playground equipment
- Easy puzzles, peg games, or blocks, for eye-hand coordination
- Coloring within lines
- Finger painting
- Holding and using scissors (not pointed ones)
- Modeling with clay or dough

LANGUAGE SKILLS

- When reading to your child, occasionally slide your finger under the print to show left to right, and top to bottom—the directions used for reading. The same applies when singing.

- Surround the child with good books.
- Use the Rod and Staff *Preschool A-B-C Series* (set of six workbooks) during the year preceding first grade.
- Be a good model by speaking in complete sentences.
- Speak clearly. Do not use or let your child use ‘baby talk’.

SOCIAL SKILLS

- Teach basic manners—‘please’, ‘thank you’.
- Teach your child to take turns, applying the Golden Rule.
- Help your child to accept disappointments such as losing in a game, changes in family plans, or sickness.
- Have a daily family routine, but allow some flexibility so the child learns to accept necessary changes.
- Instill virtues of kindness, obedience, and compassion.
- Teach your child to be neither too shy nor too forward.
- Visit school with your child.
- At a later time, arrange with the teacher for your child to visit without you.

In the spring (Summer in Southern Hemisphere) before the child enters first grade, it is of value for him to take a preschool readiness test. It gives the teacher needed insights regarding his readiness and ability to perform in the school setting.

As parents, we owe deep gratitude to God for the ongoing blessing the Christian school is to our families.

‘READ US A STORY’

BY TIMOTHY WEAVER



Most teachers and parents have heard these familiar words.

Perhaps we picture a group of boys and girls quietly listening from their desks while the teacher conducts Story Time, or perhaps we envision a family gathered around the rocking chair while Grandma, Mother, or Father read favorite stories or even books to the rest.

Indeed, these descriptions are wholesome and beautiful, and they ought to be a coveted scene in our homes and schools. So how can we be assured that story time, whether at home or at school, is all that it ought to be? Let us consider the following points.

Purposes of Story Time

Story time gives opportunity to illustrate good oral reading skills. Listen to the good oral readers among your acquaintances. How fast do they read? They do not use artificial expression, do they? Their enunciation is precise, yet not cumbersome. They can read dialogue in such a way that it is easy to distinguish between characters. And somehow the listener is totally involved, right from the start.

Story time must carry a definite focus on listening and comprehension skills. Parents

and teachers alike must insist that their listeners pay close attention, understand what is being read, and are challenged to evaluate the deeper aspects of the story. Challenge children to evaluate attitudes and responses, comparisons and contrasts, and other aspects of the story that go deeper than what is obvious to the casual observer. If story time is only serving as entertainment, something is wrong.

Story time with preschool children gives early exposure to knowledge and develops comprehension skills at an early age. Most teachers agree that students whose background included ample amounts of oral reading demonstrate, on the average, increased language skills throughout life. Reading to young children is an excellent boost to their academic development.

Story time gives opportunity to utilize valuable materials that may come from less-than-ideal sources. Perhaps it is a selection from a secular literature book. Or maybe the contents are acceptable, but the illustrations are not. Unacceptable details may be omitted or substituted. In all such situations, care must be given to not allow free access to these materials, unless such objections are disposed of properly.

Story time gives opportunity to share readings that may be old, rare, or even

original. Perhaps it is a newspaper clipping found in Grandpa's attic. Or perhaps it is an original composition, penned by a seventh grader a few decades ago. Unedited materials can be reviewed while they are being read. Once I even heard a teacher reading (and translating) a book printed in another language.

Story time gives opportunity to share new writings before they enter the home or school library. This method is utilized by parents and teachers

alike. Is there a new book available? Read it to the whole family. In the classroom setting, perhaps the teacher can keep his eyes open for new titles, or as mentioned previously, obtain manuscripts prior to publication.

Story time gives opportunity to challenge the intellect and improve listening skills.

We would not expect first graders to get much value from an article written on a high-school level, but neither should we expose upper-grade students to a constant reading diet that fails to stretch their listening and comprehension skills. Multigrade settings and homes should avoid extremes in their reading selections.

Cautions Related to Storytime

Of course, we do well to consider a few cautions and challenges that also relate to

the subject. The following points should be kept in mind.

Story time loses its value when there are too many distractions. Should students work on homework assignments while stories are being read? Not if they are expected to hear the story. How about art and craft projects? At times, yes, and at

the listener is **totally involved,**
right from the start

times, no. Excessive background noises, uncomfortable accommodations, and new or unusual surroundings may hinder effectiveness.

Story time should not whet a reader's appetite to read materials of doubtful character or of a forbidden nature.

Teachers need to follow their school's procedures for approval of material to be read. Parents need to be discerning and careful regarding the material found in their home. Perhaps an article can be clipped or copied, and the rest destroyed. Whatever the case, two rights never outweigh one wrong, so caution must be used.

Story time can be overdone, just like most other good things.

It has its place, of course. And it is a highlight of classroom and homelife in most cases. But we are called to be 'temperate in all things', and this is no exception. Nor should story time ever take the place of more important items

of the schedule, be it family devotions, math class, or dismissal time.

Story time needs to be teacher, or parent-directed for maximum value to be obtained. Children enjoy suggesting titles to be read, and such suggestions should be welcomed. But the final decision must be made by those who have the maturity, the discipline, and the character to make proper decisions regarding what to read. Some materials of great value may be found inside tattered covers, in boring boxes, or cased in difficult or outdated language.

Story time can become counterproductive if too high a percentage of materials used are of a technical nature. A class or family may find an informative article on ‘Hummingbird Migration Patterns’ to be of value, but it will likely be appreciated most if combined with a regular diet of stories whose nature attracts more human interest.

Utilized properly, story time can be an excellent tool for promoting good will and knowledge in our homes and schools. May God bless us to that end.

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CHRISTIAN FAMILIES, KIDS AND POST-MODERN SOCIETY

BY MIKE WHITROW, EXECUTIVE OFFICER, KINGDOM DEFENCE TRUST

The 18th century Enlightenment launched ‘modernism’. For the first time, man was seen as a rational being, capable of understanding, explaining and ultimately controlling the secrets of the entire universe.

Further, Enlightenment thinking viewed God and His Word as part of that universe, and therefore subject to man’s reason. Christianity was reduced to being just one more ethical system, and human reason displaced God as the ultimate authority.

Enlightenment thinking was bankrupt from the beginning. It was merely the latest—and perhaps the most comprehensive to that

time—expression of human rebellion against our Creator. Today, the world’s thinking has moved on. Today’s worldview is called *postmodernism*. Today, truth is not regarded as something man discovers through reason. Today, man *creates* truth and reality, including each individual’s own moral standards. There are no longer any universal constants; everyone constructs

their own universe. The reality of course, is that because most individuals hardly think at all, *community thinkers and leaders* construct universes, and then require the whole community to interact with those universes entirely through their laws and regulations. And effectively, government (as creator, interpreter and enforcer of those laws) replaces God as the author and finisher of our lives.

The proof that government has become even our god is found in the attitudes and expectations of Christians, despite our religious-sounding platitudes. We turn to government for virtually every practical aspect of our lives. We have reached the point where we rely on government as the source of our standards, the provider of our well-being and the benevolent regulator of our world. We blame government when almost any aspect of our world is not to our satisfaction.

Our individual and collective reliance on government is nothing more than socialism, that form of society in which all the economic resources and legal structures are totally controlled by the state.

Today in our relativistic world, we focus for instance on the painful, tragic negative consequences of human behaviour (including crime), rather than its moral character. Our thinking has reached the absurd position of claiming *there are no*

absolutes. We have arrived at the place where—for many outside the faith—life no longer has any meaning.

Christ is Lord of every part of creation, and of every aspect of our lives. We dare not live as if it were otherwise.

I am sure you can readily see that both modernism and postmodernism are simply two expressions of man's sinful, rebellious nature. But those of us who are part of the Household of Faith are not immune to this dangerous thinking. We too have our idols. One of those may be called the 'civic god'. This is the god to whom we bow when we meekly accept government edicts regarding such matters as educating our children. Instead of relying on the Bible for our instruction, we turn to government, whether out of fear or ignorance, for directions and guidelines. So our lives drift inevitably toward conformity with the 'dumbed-down' mediocrity of the rest of our society.

If we are not careful, our children see our faith as impotent at worst, or irrelevant at best. We *say* we trust Christ for salvation, and regard His Word as our only rule for faith and life. Yet our behaviour is

indistinguishable from the lives of our unbelieving neighbours, work associates and (for some) extended families.

Consider:

- If we become sick, do we turn to prayer as our last resort, rather than the first? *Matt 21:22, Jas 5:15-16*
- Do we rely on insurance and superannuation to secure our present safety and our future security (and rely on God only when we see no alternative)? *Matt 6:31-34, Luke 12:28, Jas 4:13-14*
- Do we rely on government welfare payments to maintain our families? *Matt 6:24*
- Do we cave in to government bureaucrats when they exert pressure on us to conform to their regulations? *Acts 5:26-29*
- Do we meet readily with other Christians, yet avoid more than minimal contact with unbelievers? *Mark 2:15, Luke 15:1, 1 Pet 2:12*
- What do our children hear us chatting about immediately after church, and on the way home? *Ps 50:23, Eph 4:22, 2 Pet 3:11*
- Do we see our adolescent children taking up the faith we have sought to pass on to them, or are we watching them adopt the lifestyle of the unbelieving kids around them? *Ps 127:3-4, Prov 3:35*
- Are our children eager slaves of style and trends, or are they growing up as

trend makers and leaders among their peers, prepared to stand alone if need be? *Prov 1:7, 2:6-7, 3:35, 9:10*

- Do we look for outward signs of faith in others, yet excuse ourselves when we fail to outwardly demonstrate our faith?

If we are to impact our society in our generation, we must return to the faith of our fathers. We must boldly live by the standards and instruction of scripture without compromise. Not a wooden, inflexible approach, but a practical one suffused with wisdom, gentleness and above all, the love of Christ (*Matt 10:16, 2 Cor 5:12-14*). Even so, those who refuse to compromise their faith, sooner or later feel the weight of government seeking to bring them into conformity to society's socialist profile. Then Christian families face a choice: Comply with government or uphold their faith.

Christ is Lord of every part of creation, and of every aspect of our lives. We dare not live as if it were otherwise. When otherwise lawful government seeks to impose requirements that are beyond any Biblical mandate for government, our reaction must be Biblical. The Kingdom Defence Trust is a vehicle set up to help Christians affirm by their actions and response to such situations, their unswerving confidence in the God of heaven.

Families anticipating difficulty in their interaction with government authorities are invited to contact the Kingdom Defence Trust for guidance, counsel and help.

NOW I LAY ME DOWN TO SLEEP

PETER FROGLEY



God designed us to need rest and sleep. We can, of course, take an extreme position, inferring that Proverbs teaches we need to be careful not to sleep too much and drive ourselves to illhealth.

‘A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep—so shall your poverty come on you like a prowler, and your need like an armed man’ (Proverbs 6:10–11).

Such people consider this to be a reason to minimise sleep, but our Creator designed us with a need for adequate rest and sleep. How much sleep you need is determined by what you do to and with your body during the day.

We need to rest and sleep for the healing and maintenance of our bodies—and it feels good, too!

To remind us to keep on the straight and narrow in terms of our sleeping habits, however, read Proverbs 6:6:

‘Go to the ant, thou sluggard’.

This is good advice, but the approach can lead us to striving and condemnation to minimise sleep and force ourselves to live on dangerously little sleep, which ultimately undermines our health.

For those who don’t like condemnation and have a healthier understanding of God’s position when it comes to sleep, read Psalm 127:2:

‘It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so He gives His beloved sleep’.

Now we have covered both sides of the issue, and we all have a verse to justify our particular perspective, let us have a look at this important subject—please don’t go to sleep as you read!

Rest

As we rest and sleep, the various systems of our body can restore their energy and nutrient supplies which we had expended during the activity of the day.

There are three different types of rest.

- **Physiological rest** occurs when the minimal amount of metabolic processes are carried on to maintain life, when virtually all conscious physical activities are halted.
- **Sensory rest** is when we rest all or most of our five senses. The sense of sight, for example, is a large consumer of energy—perhaps that is why we close our eyes to pray?!
- **Emotional and mental rest.** Whilst our emotions and our thought processes are different they do overlap, and probably require more energy than all our other activities.

Sleep is the important time in the body's metabolism. Our bodies work through three distinct phases each 24 hours:

If you feel tired during the day— take a nap

- **Digestion**—processing the food we eat; between noon and 8:00pm.
- **Assimilation**—taking the nutrients to the different parts of our bodies; between 8:00 pm and 4:00 am.
- **Detoxification**—the removal of toxins from our bodies; between 4:00 am and noon.

Sleep

Sleep is the cessation of all consciously induced activity. Sleep is essential for life and health. Sleep allows our bodies to cleanse, rest and be replenished physically, mentally and emotionally.

THE BENEFITS OF SLEEP

- Regenerates energy
- Restocks cells and organs with fuel and nutrients
- Destroys old, damaged and toxic cells and replaces them with new cells
- Eliminates toxins from our bodies
- Allows the reorganisation of mental and emotional thoughts—probably accomplished through dreams.

FACTORS THAT AFFECT QUALITY OF SLEEP

The amount of sleep we need is determined by the amount of toxicity we need to eliminate and the energy we have expended from the day's activities. Ideally 7–9 hours sleep per night is the norm.

The less sensory input during sleep the more beneficial the rest will be.

Consider the following:

- lack of noise
- lack of light
- loose fitting sleepwear
- a good mattress, water beds are the best
- proper temperature—the body uses

energy to compensate for being hot or cold

- proper ventilation—fresh air
- sleeping posture—best to sleep on our back or side
- avoid sleeping with an electric blanket that is turned on.

Sleep quality can also be affected by the lack of food and chemicals in our bodies. Don't eat late in the day as the body wants to begin assimilation, not digestion, at this time of day and it can't do both at once. Chemicals such as medications, alcohol, sleeping pills, etc. may help us to fall asleep, but do not make for good rest.

Ensure that your thinking is positive as you go to sleep. Prayer and meditation on the

Word is the best preparation for a quality sleep.

THE NAP

If you feel tired during the day—take a nap! A five to thirty minute nap can be worth an hour of sleep at night.

A nap does not cause insomnia. Insomnia is caused by extreme toxicity, exhaustion or emotional and mental tiredness.

If you have read right through this article you will need to have a nap now to recover from mental strain.*

The author is indebted to Dr Joel Robbins for the material used in this article.

* This is an attempt at a joke!

WE WANT HOMESCHOOLERS FOR THE U.S. ARMY

'I understand that this is only anecdotal, but when you get enough anecdotes, it is certainly worth considering. I am the commander for Army recruiting in a large [American] metropolitan area. Only about 45% of those who take our entrance examinations score above a 50. The exams are exponential, in that a one-point difference (a 51, for example) indicates a much greater knowledge. A potential recruit for the Army MUST have a high score because of the technology requirements of today's Army. That said, one of our management tools is projecting how an applicant will fare on the test. Applicants who have been homeschooled ALWAYS pass the test ... [and] ALWAYS score above the 80th percentile. Since homeschoolers are such a small percentage of the population yet their mean is so far above average, it should give us pause for consideration.'

The Federalist Brief, 17/6/02

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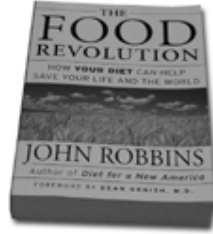


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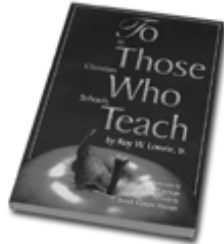
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LEM PHONICS CORNER



Greetings again to you all from China (and it's *really* me this time)!

Just recently I was back home in Australia for a couple of weeks. It was great to be with family again. I enjoyed the cold Canberra weather and realised again as I breathed in the beauty of the scenery there and felt the freedom of being able to drive myself to the shops and speak to the shop assistant in my own language, how much I really do miss Australia.

Walking around the shops in the Belconnen Mall I can never seem to avoid seeing and thinking about the name of one particular shop, 'Toys Я Us'. Is it spelling out (albeit dyslexically) that in today's society in the West, 'we are what we play with'?

Perhaps there is more truth in this message than at first we may think. Children today are certainly owners of more things than children of past ages ever had. The range is vast—from every push button gadget imaginable which walks or talks (or both), to an astounding variety of plastic toys which will attract children by their bright colours or unique appeal and often attract the parents because they are advertised as 'educational'.

It would therefore be impossible to say that toys do not have an effect on the young of today. It should be our duty then, as parents, to consider how different toys may affect our children—which toys can be helpful and which ones may be a disadvantage to wholesome growth and development.

I have previously written about ways in which we can help the pre-school child prepare for formal learning at school. I neglected to address the subject of toys in those issues, but it has been on my mind for some time to write about it.

Phonics Philosophy

Let's apply two aspects of the philosophy of learning, which we use in LEM Phonics, to the area of toys.

Will the toy advantage the physical, mental or spiritual growth of the child (or disadvantage it)?

Things which a child can take outside to push, pull, pedal or climb would definitely help the young child to develop physically. My father (more than fifty years ago) erected an 'exercise bar'—just two thick posts set in the ground with a metal bar

attached between them. My siblings and I had endless fun on that simple apparatus and at the same time all of us developed a range of physical skills. The other piece of physical apparatus was a swing which also delighted me for many hours.

Toys which can develop the finer motor skills are things which involve manipulation with the fingers. Often normal household objects can do the trick, such as bottles or containers with lids, rolling pin and dough, biscuit cutters, etc.

A good set of building blocks will be used much by almost every child. *Lego*, besides helping the children to manipulate with their fingers, encourages creativity of design and some analytical thinking about how to actually make the object the child had mentally pictured. The same would apply to any toy which involves the creativity and mental skill of building a whole thing out of parts, for example, jigsaws, sand or clay.

Let us now move to another aspect of the LEM Phonics philosophy.

Learning takes place within an orderly framework.

The child has these possessions called toys. He needs to learn to be accountable for what he owns more and more as time passes. This means that he must learn to put the toys away in a way in which he can easily find them again. His possessions can be a tool to help him learn the skills of organization. But the little fellow or lady is

only three and a half or four years old! Of course they need some help. If the child has too many different toys this can become a daunting task for both the mother and the child. It is better to have fewer toys in use at one time. With fewer toys you will be able to work with your child helping him to organize them, together finding special places to put each one. Jigsaws will go here. Vehicles there. Too many boxes on top of each other will be hard to manage, because when the child wants the bottom one and pulls it out, the others will fall down!

In the kindergarten in which I used to work we would only have certain toys available for the children for a week at a time. Then we would change some of them around. The children were then trained to place the toys back in their designated places.

This use of the toys is teaching the child to be orderly and tidy, as well as developing categorisation skills. He is developing a sense of responsibility which will be invaluable to him throughout his life.

A neat and orderly environment is conducive to an orderly and peaceful mind. Of course, the children need to have things off the shelf while they are playing and there will be some mess involved, but if the child is gradually trained to put the last toy he played with back in its place before he gets the next one out, it can be such a help to himself and the parent who cringes at seeing toys lying all over the place in disarray.

Believe me, as a mother, and being the particular character I am, I did not find it easy to maintain order when my children were young. And many times I failed. But, I know it is a worthy quest for the sake of both parent and child.

Imagination

Imagination is part of the mental development. It is a wonderful faculty which can bring the rewards of joy and delight, satisfaction and a sense of achievement. It is used in art and also in science and nothing has been invented without it. How can we help our children develop this faculty? I have watched my grandchildren play sometimes. I really enjoy seeing them take a scarf, or a broom handle or any ordinary household item and make it suddenly become something else. The scarf becomes a tail or a snake. The handle is a horse. Then the imaginative play begins with conversation flowing (at about the age of three to four). This play is extremely valuable. The child is using everyday things to create his own imaginary creatures and world, but at the same time he is acting out the drama of real life.

I wonder if some toys could be a detriment to this powerful tool of mental imaging. My theory is that many toys which do the job for the child by only asking him to press a

button could deny the child of the imaginative exercise. It reminds us of the LEM Phonics philosophy that we should challenge the child to think for himself.

Spiritual

What about the spiritual dimension? I am appalled at the ugliness of some toys. Do I want my child to have devilish faces around him, as some toys depict? Do I really want the world of monsters or 'super creatures' to invade the purity of his God-given imagination? It will be hard to refuse the child some toys which you may know are not the best, as society pressures are strong. Your child will want what his neighbours or peers at school have. You will be tempted to compromise and say, 'It can't really do any harm'. But a determined effort to keep toys pure now, may save a lot of devastation in later years.

There are so many more things which could be said or asked about toys. How may a doll help the development of the child? What message will the shapely figured Barbie Doll bring to the child's mind?

There is not enough space to continue, but I urge you to think about this subject carefully as you seek to train you children in godliness.





Have you clicked yet?

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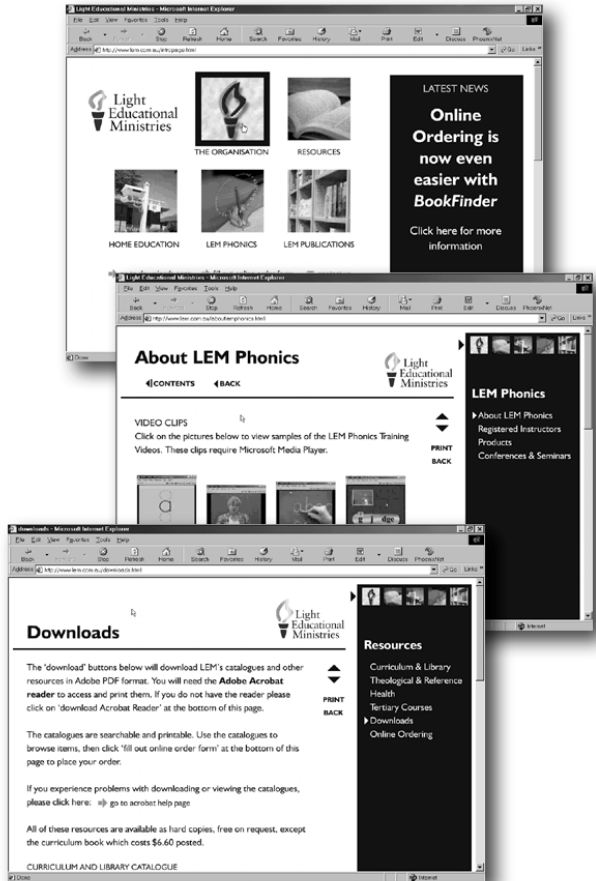
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