

The Need

You have probably considered the possibility of helping your youth by starting a Christian school, satellite school or home support group. You have probably also shrank back from the task because it always seemed too frightening-- after all there is just too much red tape. You may also have counseled parents whose children had become problems in school. At that moment you may have wished there was something more you could do for them. Perhaps you have wept because it seemed that the enemy was robbing your church or fellowship of the next generation of believers. There may have been times when issues like terrorism, violence, drug addiction and assaults on family values have frustrated you and driven you to prayer. It may have even seemed like Satan was winning the battle. Maybe you've just become tired of sending children into an alien environment and asking them to be 12 year-old missionaries. Perhaps you have just wanted the children whose lives you touch to have an equal chance for superior education and collegiate opportunities. No matter what the cause of your frustration, there is an answer to the problem. It is not too late; there is something you can do. Read on and discover what you, your prayer group, fellowship, or church can do to change the situation – NOW!

The Curriculum

The curriculum used is Accelerated Christian Education, more commonly known as ACE. The School of Tomorrow curriculum developed by ACE is the most widely used and commonly accepted Christian curriculum in the United States. Currently the Tennessee State Legislature has approved the ACE curriculum for use as a separate but equal curriculum. It is approved in the same way in West Virginia and many other states throughout the country. It is a pervasively Christian curriculum. History is His story. Mathematics is his accounting. English is the means by which he communicates with humankind. Science is the revelation of His dynamic power in the making and continuance of the earth. The Bible is not taught as a separate subject but is woven throughout the texture of all of the core curriculum. Some 18 electives are available to augment the core curriculum and give the enterprising student a jump on college requirements. At the collegiate level ACE operates Calvary College, a two-year associate level degree granting institution that operates with the student through correspondence. Declaration Christian Academy utilizes these resources and their own to provide preparatory training for young ministers developing for ministry. (Ask about our separate ministers training program)

The Opportunity

DCA has taken upon it the responsibility of being a leading provider of Christian Education and home schooling supplies and services. The administration, scope and sequence, evaluation, specialized testing, parent training, and curriculum management is all done by our staff. DCA is gladly extending its umbrella of opportunity to other groups and churches to form satellite schools by taking responsibility for legal, testing, and record-keeping tasks. Suddenly the onerous task of administrating a complete Christian school is lifted and the satellite group can concentrate on teaching while being coached by master teachers. This service is possible by the appointment of Dr. George McDowell Jr. as pastor. The McDowell's have long been known for their interest and expertise in the field of Christian Education both for residential and home schooling. George McDowell Jr. is a veteran of 25 years as Dean of Zion Christian College and Seminary and as Director of Learning at one of the campuses of the University of Maryland. Sis. McDowell has worked as a reading specialist. They collectively bring to the task a specialization rarely found in church leadership.

Getting Into College

Advocates of the Public School System often scare parents by telling them that home schoolers cannot get into college. This is simply a means to terrify parents. Beyond that, it is a bold-faced lie. College admission is based on SAT scores—get a 1500 on the SAT and Vanderbilt and Harvard both get interested. Yes, colleges do demand that home schoolers take the SAT or ACT college admissions test, but in most cases they are demanding the same thing of all students. Home school families need not shy away from this task because the child trained at home does very well on these tests. In fact all but two of the Nation's spelling bee finalists in a recent year were home schoolers. The same abilities carry through into other college skills. In addition, there is a little known Federal law that states that even those without a high school diploma may not be denied the right of advancement. Anyone who can pass with a 'C' 15 semester hours of work may not be denied the right to continue. Everyone must be given the opportunity to try through our community college system. Sometimes parents have to get a little verbal, but the reality is that colleges can lose their complete Pell grant program for failure to comply and they know it. The myth of college refusal is just that, a myth.

Legal Status

The state of Tennessee and the south has agreed that, for those wanting a pervasively Christian curriculum, a Constitutional right exists. The legislature has approved the ACE curriculum (see curriculum) for use in Christian schools. The right to have students, distribute curriculum, advertise a school facility, and call themselves an academy is left to bona fide local churches. This means, in short, that the church running the program must be a 501 (c) (3) or other not-for-profit religious institution. Those running the program must have certified administrator training from ACE. The training package costs thousands of dollars and is best assimilated by professional educators, though anyone may go to college campuses and receive it. From there, the state of Tennessee, and all other states, demand accountability on where students are being trained to comply with their truancy laws. Master student lists, transcript repositories, etc. are demanded, thus, the importance of an umbrella school. The State of Tennessee now regulates that all home-schooled children's parents must have a bachelors degree from an accredited college EXCEPT in the case of church-run schools. Church schools are the bastion of freedom for your community's parents.

Why Pull Our Kids Out?

The school that you went to and the one now are two different places. Values-clarification, humanism, and politically correct thought all proceed out of the schools like a foment of brainwashing. Our schools have become combat zones.

For 1999 –

- teachers were the victims of 342,000 nonfatal crimes
- teachers were victims of 14,000 serious violent crimes including rape or sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault
- students were victims of about 2.5 million crimes at school
- 1.6 million thefts occurred at school
- 8 percent of students reported being threatened with a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property.
- 50 percent of students in grades 9 through 12 had at least one drink of alcohol; 5 percent had at least one drink on school property
- 27 percent of students reported using marijuana; 7 percent on school property.
- 32 percent of all students in grades 9 through 12 reported that someone had offered, sold, or given them an illegal drug on school property
- 1 in 2 youngsters experiment with alcohol
- 1 in 3 youngsters experiment with sex
- 1 in 4 youngsters experiment with drugs

Money

The means to home school a child is well within the grasp of most parents. Often sponsorship can be used –grandparents, relatives, friends can help with the task. The initial registration of \$45.00 comes to the umbrella school but satellite schools may increase this based on need. Depending on whether the satellite school provides field trips, parents support groups, or other services, additional monies could be added for services giving the church an additional means for revenue.

Commission works as follows:

Tier 1 Tuition – \$10 commission to satellite

Tier 2 Tuition - \$12 per student per school month commission

Tier 3 Tuition - \$18 per student per school month commission

Elective/Additional Courses - \$10 commission to satellite

Example:

Tier 2 Tuition: 10 students per year – would bring the church approximately \$1200. This quickly becomes cost effective use of paperwork and facilities.

Flexibility

For the startup church or group, this is probably the most flexible program going. Satellite schools can begin with two or three students and as the school grows up in the local church it can develop additional activities, presence and involvement. Eventually, someone at the local church with the qualifications and calling may wish to become a residential school or hub for home schooling. DCA will assist with this transition. DCA will also help the starting school through periods where accountability for tasks may have to be divided until the new school can get on its feet.

In addition, it will help with the transition for students if a residential school or home schooling cluster has lost their school or covering. It does this by serving as a grade repository so that students' transcripts are never lost. It moves existing students into materials sequentially and smoothly and provides support to parents who may have a sense of loss during this transition. This will allow startup schools the right to independently operate if they desire and still maintain services and testing for special students through East Nashville, a sort of external guidance department.

Why do we offer these services to the Body of Christ? In short, we believe in the concept so well as to promote it and duplicate it across the church.

How the Program Works

The ACE curriculum is a self-paced workbook design. Students may proceed as slowly or as quickly as they need to go to master the material. Failure is not an option as failed workbooks must be repeated. Because the program is self-paced, slow learners and gifted students may work side by side. Indeed grade levels become increasingly unimportant as students find themselves in 6th grade math, 7th grade English, and 8th grade history, etc. Subjects that are hard for a given student are augmented by other subjects in which they excel.

The emphasis is on success, not grade levels. In the final analysis, each student is in competition only with him/herself. The student is working to be the best her or she can be. Parent/teachers interact with students as needed for questions, tests, projects and homework. Parent/teachers may also lay a given subject aside for a time while a lagging area is caught up. Students may also haul their current workbooks along on trips, vacations and ministry times giving Mom and Dad needed time to rest, live, minister and refresh themselves. Students take a mastery prep test at the end of each book. Upon passing, they take the final and move on to the next book. Twelve workbooks constitute an average year's work. Gifted students go faster; slower students finish less but all succeed at their level –a positive experience for everyone.

What Do We Need To Do To Get Started?

Those interested in forming a church satellite school should work with their pastor or education leader to find the numbers of families that are interested. If the church is going to sponsor such an endeavor, it may need congregational or committee approval. It is important for leaders to make sure that the church understands that this is a side door ministry and people who are not church members or attendees may want to get involved. The church should be prepared for this as a substantial and ongoing ministry and the pastor "should write the vision and make it plain." DCA staff is willing to come to local churches to explain the task and answer questions.

Once interested parents have been identified, a meeting can be arranged with DCA staff to talk to them about the flow of records, transcripts, curriculum, payment and troubleshooting. It is always best if a DCA staff member comes to the church site to get things started on a solid footing. Some parents may wish to sign up for a variety of workshops covering different parts of the educational scheme. Parents will approach the task differently but there will be common threads. A local support group will be organized. Parents will also be given a hotline for troubleshooting. They will also be hooked into the DCA newsletter and an electronic network will be established. Parents will also be made aware of the ministry web site, its services, goods, and opportunities.

Records

Many parents and even schools do not take adequate care of records. The government, very rightly, is concerned about where and how records are kept because they represent learning and a life. Thirty years after an individual finishes school he or she should be able to retrieve their records. Because of the stringent need for verification, DCA provides a comprehensive database to input students' records. Additionally, the school guarantees the data base to continue in perpetuity for the foreseeable lifetime of all of its students. Should DCA close its doors, its records will be stored and be retrievable for all of her students. The serious task of keeping records to insure students' futures is lifted off of the satellite school by the filing of semester grades, teacher's comments, citizenship or other records the parents wish saved. Parents may elect to store the only copies of data themselves by asking the umbrella school to release all records. DCA strongly recommends that parents allow a copy of transcripts be held by the school should tragedy strike the family. Such information may also be demanded by the courts in order to substantiate learning experiences. This is a safeguard. Except for subpoena, no record can be removed from DCA without the family's permission.

Benefits to the Local Church

Few programs have the potential to benefit the local church as dramatically as a home schooling satellite center. The program has the potential to not only bless and help church people but reach to the community as well.

Families looking to a local church for schooling often look to that church for spiritual guidance as well. Home school satellite programs are positive, community services to needy families. While it is true that public school advocates may balk at such a program, most Christians are well aware of the advantages of these educational services. The parent support groups help your saints meet and identify other parents wanting the best for their kids. Soon these people bond and become friends. Through these friendships whole churches have been built. It is true side door evangelism. A wise pastor uses this opportunity to gather families in search of a school in finding a church as well.

The program also puts kids in specialty activities around your church. And we all know kids draw kids. It is a natural for a youth group builder. Though these kids may start out with activities at their church, wise use of activity planning will blend the activities of the school into the activities of the youth group. Before long, parents, kids, and your youth are all participating in a group of related activities and the new found children want to be with your kids –it's a win-win situation!