

Beyond curriculum to the call of God

MARTIE DU PLESSIS

This month we will look at some of the different curriculum options, yet for us as Christians, the curriculum is just the means to establish a much higher call- the raising up of a people with a different spirit.

Fearless children who will say: "Yes, Lord!" – radical youngsters who will be prophetic voices and creative and dynamic influences in every area of our society.

Our children will not be products of the environment; but vessels shaped by God, using our willingness as parents and a chosen curriculum as an aid.

However, to get there we need a paradigm change from giving information (head knowledge) to training.

"Training involves forming the tracks for the train to move upon in the future as much as making the train itself." Jonathan David, 1997.

Training requires a commitment of relationship, rather than a curriculum. Only then can impartation of knowledge and skills, giftings and anointing take place.

Choose a curriculum that is right for you and your family. The following extracts of information about curricula are obtained from *Loaves for life* (Van Oostrum, 1997) and *Teaching at home journal and catalogue* (Oikos Resource Centre for Home Education, 1998).

The structured approach (formal curriculum):

"The curriculum provider designs a structured set of outcomes or objectives for each grade according to the age of the child, selects appropriate texts, workbooks and other materials, and sells this as a package to the home-schooling client. These courses are

designed around discrete subjects such as mathematics, history, etc.

"Often, the curriculum provider will also provide a pre-planned weekly or monthly work schedule and an examination service which may be a part of the package or an optional extra. Some of these programmes are designed to minimise the amount of parental input required, while others require continuous parental involvement.

Inexperienced families who feel more comfortable with a well structure system often choose this approach (Loaves for Life)."

Programmes following this approach in S.A. include: Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) (031) 5635-483; Brain Line (021) 468 658; Ken WEB (053) 2070 045; Moria (018) 2946 504; Theocentric Christian Education (TCE) (021) 5572 612.

Unschooling ("deschooling") , natural learning:

"This operates on the principle that a healthy child will naturally and instinctively interact with the environment, solving problems and learning in the process. The function of the educator is limited to providing a rich and varied physical and social environment for the child to explore, and to give information or "instruction" only when the child asks for it. In principle, unschooling is not without curriculum. The curriculum of the unschooled learner is embedded in his or her environment and text books and workbooks are avoided (Loaves of life)."

Unit Studies (Integrated subjects)

"Unit study is an extensive study of one topic (or unit) integrating all subjects (social studies, science, language arts, maths, Bible, music, art,etc). This is a natural way to learn. You

can create your own curriculum around this and teach every subject. Or you can look at a prepared unit study curriculum which provides the units for you. Unit studies teach the children how to use a library and also how to research. Unit studies also teach all of the children the same unit at the same time yet at their own level. Basic skills (reading, writing and arithmetic) which need to be taught in a sequential manner are always taught separately (Sonja Wood, Oikos). “

A programme following this approach is KONOS, available from Oikos Resource Centre for Home Education (033) 5029 050.

Computer-based education:

Computers are used in numerous ways in home education. Some systems are available which provide the whole curriculum in a computer mediated fashion (for example, Brainline), while other families use computers as a tool for a wide variety of purposes. Ken WEB employs text books as their primary resource, while computer programmes are employed to provide continuous evaluation. Programmes employing mediated learning include: Brain Line (021) 468 658 and Ken WEB (053) 2070 045.