

**Moving to the Next Level: Home-based College—The
Benefits Are Worth Thinking About**

An Educational White Paper from *The Christian Institute*

The Christian Institute

P.O. Box 1881

Arcadia, FL 34265

www.thechristianinstitute.com

October, 2004

Introduction

Home education is now in style. It has been well over two decades since the beginning of this learning revolution in America took place. Back in those early days, many parents suffered tremendously as they attempted to restore basic freedom in their homes by teaching their own children. Ironic isn't it? The United States of America is supposedly the freest land in the world. Yet the right to teach your own children was prohibited in "the land of the free" with parents suffering the threat of imprisonment, accusations of child abuse, and ostracizing by family and friends! Yet the courage and convictions of those early pioneers has resulted in tremendous liberty in many households. We can really appreciate the new meaning these early pioneers gave to the phrase "the home of the brave" as they fought statism and oppressive bureaucratic harassment by public schools and state education departments to win the right to teach their children at home.

What is taken for granted today must still be vigilantly protected. Recently some state education departments have begun to prohibit the acceptance of homeschoolers' diplomas legitimately earned and documented by their parents! (Check out current situations in New York, for example.) These parents are incensed! They are being forced to either ignore state regulations, or submit reluctantly to arbitrary discriminating rules.

Everyone knows that these students are ranking better academically than their counterparts in public and private schools. But since the state controls the rules, they are being forced to take lower rated GED examinations to validate their education. This is clearly prejudiced and flat wrong. Some speculate that the power of the National Education Association, who publicly oppose homeschooling is responsible for the political pressure behind these rules.

Such abuse is forcing homeschoolers to pursue smarter alternatives. The best of these is for the student to find other educational institutions that recognize the excellence of homeschooling and bypass traditional approaches to education.

This white paper explains some real options and how they are revolutionizing secondary and post-secondary education.

Abstract

This paper will outline new alternatives now available that are revolutionizing home education. Over the past decade parents have become quite competent in getting their children through high school. Now they are learning how to continue managing secondary instruction into the college level. In many cases, this is being done even while the student is studying high school work. Students that are as young as 13 and 14 are finding themselves already preparing for college. But it is not in the best interests for the student to go away to a campus at this age. So parents are looking for alternatives. Most colleges don't "get it." But there are now post-secondary institutions of higher learning

who are seeing the point. What are the possibilities today? Are there ways to educate at the college level in the home that allow parents to continue to control the curriculum and content? Is there a way to provide a good solid Christian college education in the homeschool? What about the costs of education? How do they look when home-based education is considered? Is there a more reasonable way to get an education than the thousands of dollars of loans that students have to take these days to pay for college tuition, room and board, and other fees? This paper will show that there may be some real alternatives now available that provide a parent-directed college education at a fraction of the cost of most colleges and provide a solid Christian content.

Background

Over the past few years homeschoolers have been learning a few very important things about institutional education:

1. For many children who have mastered elementary grades, seventh and eighth grades are “remedial.” What this means in practical terms is that there is very little information being taught in these grades that students don’t already know. For homeschooled children, going through a curriculum in these grades is simply marking time.

Students who use curriculum that is designed for public or private schools are finding their children bored and uninspired when they spend these two years just doing the textbooks because the subjects are designed that way. The students are showing that they are ready and capable of going beyond this level of study.

2. Once parents realize that seventh and eighth are remedial, they begin to also see that their children can move right on to high school work. So they venture into subjects like high school literature, American and world history, biology, algebra, and so on when their kids are twelve and thirteen years old.

What they also realize is that their children are capable of tackling subjects that are being taken in freshman and sophomore college classes. For example, they begin to work on subjects like Psychology and Sociology. Freshman college work is really just remedial high school in many community colleges today. So when a homeschooler studies for an Introductory Psychology course, for example, the fact is that the material is very understandable for this student. Why is this? It is because the homeschooled student is a well-disciplined learner who knows how to study, take notes, concentrate on the subject, and learn the material. Basic introductory courses provide no difficulty to understand.

3. With the realization that high school subjects may be studied simultaneously with its college counterpart, many homeschoolers are now pursuing “double credits.” This means that the student takes the college course and counts it as both college and high school credit. How is this done? Many times a local co-op will offer an

Advanced Placement class with a number of students being taught by a competent adult (perhaps a former teacher who is a homeschooling mom) for several months. They then take the AP exam.

Others however are using the oldest of the standardized testing approaches (around since 1965), the College Level Examination Program (CLEP™) to show that college-level mastery has been achieved. Because there is no instructional time requirement (like the AP exam demands), homeschoolers find this approach to be very appealing. Students simply study a syllabus outlining the material required to pass the exam, pay \$50 and an administrative fee, and take the 90-minute computer-based test at a local college or university. The pass-fail, multiple-choice (with an essay for Freshman composition only) test is a straightforward way to gain 3 to 12 college credits in over 34 subjects accepted at over 2,900 colleges and universities throughout America.

4. Parents also have learned that there is a way to get their children to “own” their high school curriculum. One tool to do this has been taught to thousands of homeschoolers by veteran educational counselors David and Laurie Callihan. This tool is called the “Grand Plan.” Basically it is an outline of the subjects that a student will take in the four years of high school. However, the subjects are laid out over a six-year plan (if needed) to allow students more time to get through high school than students in institutional schools normally do. It is quite common though for homeschooled students to not only complete this high school work with less effort, but in a lot less time than the scheduled six-year timeframe. In many cases, these students have been known to finish the four-year high school curriculum in two years!
5. This leads to a “problem.” Homeschoolers are finishing high school way earlier than expected. Since the next step is college or career, parents are all-of-a-sudden faced with another issue. If college is the goal, do they send the student off to a campus at the age of 14, 15 or 16? Or does the student go out and find a job for a few years until he or she is ready for college? Some parents choose a local community college. In taking this option, they are exposing their students to biased secular, humanist educators when their students are quite young. Even though these students are many times strong in their Christian convictions, they are still very impressionable and emotionally young. Are they really ready for the challenges of college at these ages? Many parents are struggling with this question. A large number realize this is a very risky situation.

In addition, if the parents decide to send their child off to a four-year school, what assurances do they have that the student is not going to be negatively influenced by college life? For many families, the effect can be devastating! Even homeschoolers aren’t immune to the spiritual, moral, and psychological damage caused by ill-prepared homeschoolers who prematurely attend college.

In a recent series of unscientific surveys done by one homeschooling ministry, it was found that as many as 90 percent of parents asked said that they were interested in a “home-based college” option.¹ Once this opportunity is realized, will it change the way homeschoolers “do” college? Some educators think so.

Thesis

Home-based college is clearly an answer coming at the right time. Estimates are that there are at the minimum a million homeschoolers in the U.S. On the high end, there may be as many as 2.5 million children being taught at home across America. Since many states don’t have a way to measure exact numbers, we will go with the lower number to be conservative.

If we assume that at least twenty-five percent of homeschoolers are in secondary school, there are well over a quarter of a million students who are in a place to consider home-based college.

A large number of these homeschoolers are evangelical Christians. They want to provide their students with a Christian education that extends into the college level. In most cases, parents have up until now thought that the only way to do this is to enroll their children in a “Christian College.” However, just as in any aspect of life, using the words doesn’t guarantee its existence.

Parents would be much more comfortable if they had a direct part in their children’s education at the college level. Is this possible? Some homeschoolers think it is. The goal of the rest of this paper is to expand this concept, showing that such an idea isn’t just theoretically possible, but actually feasible today.

The concept is being presented to families through a new home-based college called *The Christian Institute*. It is a non-denominational Christian College that has recently been authorized to provide Associates and Bachelors degrees in the state of Florida. The first class of students is being offered application in the fall of 2004. The college is starting with offering of an Associates of Biblical Worldview Studies in Arts and Sciences, a two-year, 60-credit degree.

Immediate benefits to this option are:

1. CLEP™ exams allow students to study for college credit at home. *Students* who enroll in *The Christian Institute* will use the CLEP™ as their first step of learning in each subject taken for this degree. This means that the student will have successfully earned and received 3 college credits for each subject studied with the college.
2. The college will use each of these courses as a starting point for study of the biblical worldview material in the subject. The cost of gaining this credit is just the cost of the study materials, \$50 for the CLEP™ exam, a small administrative fee

charged by the college giving the exam, and transfer credit costs by the college providing the degree. In most cases, this will be hundreds of dollars less than the cost to take the course at a college or university campus.

3. The biblical worldview materials provided in each course will be offered to the student in the home environment. This is the environment in which the student is already comfortable doing study.
4. Parents who wish to continue educating their children will be able to do so into the college level. *The Christian Institute* plans to provide ways for the parents to be involved in the academic evaluation process, including grading and remedial study. Since homeschooling is family learning, this provides the opportunity for the mentor-student relationship to continue as it has already developed for many years.
5. Specific theology, doctrine, and life philosophy that a student and parents hold can be preserved. The content and subjects that are open to biblical interpretation can continue to be taught and directed by the parents. Instead of being forced to compromise certain beliefs that a specific Christian college might hold, or worse yet, the bias of a secular college can be avoided. Instead of students being taught against their upbringing by secular professors, parents and pastors can continue to teach these students what they think is right. The integrity of the Christian's faith is maintained and even supported in this way. In addition, since many Christian colleges have compromised biblical truth in exchange for secular positions, this approach helps students to avoid being misled because of the naivety associated with assuming a Christian college has Christian content in all subjects being offered. The parents can be involved in the curriculum at the most foundational level.
6. Since the student is living at home, the cost of college housing is eliminated. This can be up to fifty percent or more of the costs of college.
7. Students can study these subjects on their own, with siblings, with their parents, or even as a group in a local community. There is no limitation on who can take courses from *The Christian Institute*. Obviously it is open to all homeschooling students who are ready for college-level courses. But parents can also take these courses if they haven't completed college, or wish to have a degree with a biblical worldview. A wonderful opportunity exists for true family learning to take place with this new and innovative Christian College!
8. With the cost of college skyrocketing, the low fees associated with *The Christian Institute* make sense to many families who want to avoid the prices of post-secondary education. Students can "pay as you go" and prevent getting loans that bind them for years to come.
9. The time and expense of college can both be reduced. Homeschooled students who are prepared for *The Christian Institute* will be able to finish college much earlier and at a much lower cost than traditional college options.

10. Students who “double credit” high school and college can actually get their Associates degree and high school diploma simultaneously. This will allow students to move on to their specialty degree much sooner than a standard college degree allows. It also allows a student to complete college sooner and get on to a career earlier. In other words, it prepares the student to commence family life and career at a younger age.

Summary

The bottom-line is that homeschoolers have a true option now that allows parents to instruct their children at the college level. *The Christian Institute* provides a way for homeschooling families to continue doing what they do well—educating at home. But with one additional bonus—with biblical content and the ability to do parent-directed education at the college level.

It’s a home-based solution whose time has truly come of age.

For more information, go to <http://www.thechristianinstitute.com>

or email *The Christian Institute* at info@thechristianinstitute.com.

Mailing address: *The Christian Institute*, P.O. Box 1881, Arcadia, FL 34265

Phone: 315-657-1119