

# ***FAMILY TIMES***

A Home-school Newsletter for New Testament Christians  
General Editors: Bev & Dave Hewitt, Karen & Dave Pratte  
Curricula review editor: Wayne Walker



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**September-November, 2007**

## **Time to Renew?**

With this issue we begin our 21<sup>st</sup> year of publishing *Family Times*. Some of you have received our panic emails telling how we lost our mailing list due to problems with our email website server. We thought we had completely lost our mailing list, but fortunately, after more than two months of trying, we were able to download and save the mailing list. Needless to say we are now on a different server and hope we have the list fairly well up-to-date (and a renewed commitment to make sure we back up the mailing list!).

The beginning of a new school year is when many people's subscriptions come due. Since all renewals run for three years, many of you need to renew. We have sent out email reminders about this. If you receive the reminder, please give it your prompt attention. And remember that, if you are on our HSLDA discount list, allowing your *Family Times* subscription to lapse will also end your HSLDA discount.

Once again we express our appreciation to all who contributed to this issue. We especially thank Dawn Thompson for beginning her new column about common grammatical errors (and please don't say you could care less about your grammar! ☺). We also thank Sally Anne Perz and Wayne Walker for their usual well-written articles. And we thank Brian Rukes for a follow-up to the article about evolution in our previous issue.

## **Article Request**

One of our subscribers has requested to receive reviews of Latin programs. If any of you have taught a child Latin, please write us at least a short summary of the material you used.

Besides writing articles for us, our subscribers can contribute to *Family Times* by submitting articles that you may read from other sources. Most of you read home-school articles from various other publications. If you see an article that you consider to be worthy of being reprinted for our readers, please forward it to me. If you can send it in e-mail format, that would be ideal. But even articles in print would be helpful.

Thanks for your interest in *Family Times*.

**Tell your friends about *Family Times*!**

## **You Don't Say!** **(Ah, but some of you *do* say!)**

by Dawn Thompson

Below are two statements I hear frequently that do not mean what people think they do when they say them.

“I missed not seeing you there.” I think it is safe to assume that the speaker intends to imply that he is sorry you were not there, but this comment actually means one of two other things. One possibility is that the person failed to notice you were absent. The other (not-so-nice) possibility is that you were there, and he preferred your usual absence. To correctly convey the message that he wishes you had been there, he needs to say, “I missed seeing you there.”

“I could care less.” Do you use this comment to mean that you are completely uninterested in or unimpressed by something? If you *could* care less, then your lack of interest is not complete. To mean you are totally uninterested say, “I *couldn't* care less.” Adding “if I tried” makes it more obvious that the first way is incorrect. “I could care less if I tried,” means that with an effort I could become less enthusiastic. “I couldn't care less if I tried,” means there is no way that I could make myself be less interested than I am already.

We know we should mean what we say. Why not also say what we mean?

## **Curricula: To Buy or Not To Buy**

By Sally Anne Perz

I recently came across a book title in a catalog that caught my eye and gave me a good laugh, *Homeschooling for Free*. The reason that this struck me as comical was because the catalog was well over one hundred pages—full of items that are not needed by anyone homeschooling for free. I wondered why the company was not threatened by the book—surely it would be bad for business if their customers purchased the book and ceased purchasing. Alas, this is not the case. Many will buy the book, ponder the idea before abandoning it, and then sell the book for half the cost they paid for it. Can this be avoided?

Homeschool catalogs are really a mixed blessing. There are many wonderful items for sale — some that many think they just can't do without. There are how-to books, books about choosing books, and curricula to suit every taste. Herein is the problem that many have with homeschool purchases. It is difficult to know what to buy, to know what will work for your family, and to know when to abandon a curriculum and when to stick with it. This is not a perfect science.

It is not my intention to condemn anyone for making changes when things just don't work. It is not wrong to make a mistake in your choice and end up selling items at a discount. It is not wrong to change directions or just simply to change your mind. Now that I've made sure that I am covering the bases as not to offend, let me say that it would probably be better for our schooling in general if we were not *tossed to and fro*. While it is certainly not wrong to change directions, it is a good idea to try to get a good fit at the beginning as to avoid unnecessary costs and wasted time, as well as the inconvenience of changing your chosen curriculum.

Consider a few things that may help this decision process. First of all, know yourself and your children. If you consider various things like personality, learning style, preference, and grade level ahead of time, you may save yourself time and money. Often parents consider a child's learning style, but forget to consider their own preference. Parents need to consider what they may like, particularly with a curriculum that requires teacher/student interaction. If you are not knowledgeable about a subject, read reviews and ask fellow homeschoolers before purchasing a curriculum. Do comparisons between various curricula so that you know the pros and cons before ordering. While purchasing is not a commitment to use, it is a shame to waste money!

Knowing yourself and your child may not be enough. You may just need to say, “No.” Let’s face it, there is so much out there that we don’t need! Just because it is packaged up and sold does not mean that we need it. Some things can be taught free — with very little structure! Say no to spending lots of extra money. Say no to buying so much that you will never use it.

Finally, consider carefully why you are abandoning any curriculum. Can you adapt it and save the time and money required to change? Consider these aspects. Do your kids hate it? Do they hate it because it is difficult or are they being lazy? Is it too much work — is your goal to get the easiest thing available? Will the work benefit them? Sometimes we will end up learning a lot from things that challenged us. If we fail to meet the challenge, we are selling ourselves short. Try to do your research so that you can make the best choice available! Be willing to try it out and stick with it if it is a good program! Don’t let the students dictate—as the parent, you should know best!

### **Once Again Homeschoolers Score High on the ACT Exam**

HSLDA, July 31, 2007

Recently released statistics show the 2006 average ACT composite score for homeschooled students was 22.4, compared to the national average composite of 21.1!

Now homeschoolers have an unbroken record for the last 10 years—since 1996, when testing officials started tracking them—of scoring higher on the ACT than the national average.

For example, the 2005 average ACT composite score for homeschooled students was 22.5, compared to the national average of 20.9.

The 8,075 homeschool graduates who took the ACT in 2005 comprised about 1 percent of all those who took the college entrance exam.

The 1996 ACT results showed that in English, homeschoolers scored 22.5, compared to the national average of 20.3. In math, homeschoolers scored 19.2, compared to the national average of 20.2. In reading, homeschoolers outshone their public school counterparts 24.1 to 21.3. In science, homeschoolers scored 21.9, compared to 21.1.

According to the 1998 ACT High School Profile Report, 2,610 graduating homeschoolers took the ACT and scored an average of 22.8 out of a possible 36 points. This score is slightly higher than the 1997 report released on the results of 1,926 homeschool graduates, which found that homeschoolers maintained an average of 22.5. This is higher than the national average, which was 21.0 in both 1997 and 1998.

In 2003, Iowa State University’s admissions department data showed that homeschoolers had a 26.1 mean ACT composite score, as compared to a 24.6 mean score for all entering freshmen beginning in the fall of that year. The University of Iowa and the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) have also seen higher ACT and SAT averages from homeschoolers in comparison to the total school population. The cumulative admissions data from UNI reveals that the average ACT score for homeschoolers was nearly 2 points higher than that of regular freshmen: 25 versus 23.5.

In 2004, the 7,858 homeschool students taking the ACT scored an average of 22.6, compared to the national average of 20.9.

Since 1985, research consistently shows that homeschoolers on average do better than the national average on standardized achievement tests for the elementary and secondary grade levels.

This academic success continues through college.

The bottom line is: Homeschooling works!

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## Evolution in Schools across the U.S.A.

by Brian Rukes

I wanted to let you all know that I found a webpage that has information about how prevalent evolution is in the state academic standards for **most** of these United States of America. I haven't checked out the individual state standards for most of these, but I think this is probably a pretty fair assessment. Here's the link: [http://www.edweek.org/media/epe\\_evolution1105.pdf](http://www.edweek.org/media/epe_evolution1105.pdf) The local congregation where we are members recently had a special series of lessons about evolution. I did some investigating afterwards, and I found out that in the state of Indiana, for instance, there are many academic standards that science teachers are supposed to teach that directly relate to evolution. One even says that students are to "Recognize and describe that fossil evidence is consistent with the idea that human beings evolved from earlier species." If you have family or friends or know of other Christians who live in the states addressed in this report/article, you might want to forward this information link to them. Furthermore, I would encourage you to urge them to check out their own state's Department of Education website and view the actual state standards themselves. (If they need help finding it, I will be glad to assist them as much as I can.) The more we know about what our respective state standards say, the more prepared Christian parents can be to combat these false teachings—and to prepare their own children (even if they are not in the public schools) to know how to handle teachings they might encounter that oppose the solid, foundational teachings about this and other subjects that their parents have already taught them the **truth** about from an early age at home.

## A Homeschooler's Guide to the Great Orchestral Music of the Western World – Part 2

by Wayne Walker

(Originally published in Biblical Homeschooling, 9/2006.)

1. ARCHANGELO CORELLI. Possible research sources: *The Gift of Music*, pp. 29, 33, 40, 41. Suggested piece for listening: Concerto Grosso No. 8 in g minor, op. 6, no. 8 ("Christmas Concerto"). Other possibilities: Any of Corelli's other Concerti Grossi from op. 6.

2. HENRY PURCELL. Possible research sources: *The Gift of Music*, pp. 210, 215, 288. Suggested piece for listening: Selections from *Abdelazer*—Overture and Rondeau. (You will want to keep the Rondeau portion of this piece in mind because it will be the "Theme" upon which Benjamin Britten wrote his set of variations known as "The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra," which will be studied later.) Other possibilities: Any of Purcell's incidental music for plays or orchestral excerpts from his operas.

3. ANTONIO VIVALDI. Possible research sources: *The Gift of Music*, pp. 26-30. Suggested piece for listening: *The Four Seasons* (The Trial of Harmony and Invention, Op. 8, Concertos #'s 1-4). Other possibilities: Vivaldi wrote literally hundreds of concertos including those for violin (op. 3), trumpet, lute, mandolin, flute, oboe, bassoon, etc.

4. JEAN PHILIPPE RAMEAU. Possible research resources: *The Gift of Music*, pp. 31, 183. Suggested piece for listening: *Ouverture to Castor et Pollux*. Other possibilities: Any of Rameau's other overtures for operas, ballets, or plays.

5. JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH. Possible research sources: *Spiritual Lives of the Great Composers*, pp. 16-24; *The Gift of Music*, pp. 31-38. Suggested piece for listening: *Brandenburg Concerto #2 in FM, BWV 1074*. Other possibilities: Any of the other five *Brandenburg Concerti*, the four orchestral suites, violin and clavier concerti, orchestral transcripts of organ and choral music.

6. GEORGE FREDERICK HANDEL. Possible research sources: *Spiritual Lives of the Great Composers*, pp. 26-34; *The Gift of Music*, pp. 39-46. Suggested piece for listening: *Concerto #7*

in BbM for Organ and Orchestra, op. 7, no. 1. Other possibilities: Water Music, Royal Fireworks Music, Concerti Grossi op. 3 and op. 6, Concerto for Harp and Orchestra (op. 4, no. 6).

7. BENEDETTO AND ALLESANDRO MARCELLO. Possible research sources: *The Gift of Music*, pp. xix, 122. Suggested piece for listening: Oboe Concerto in cm (transposed from dm, originally attributed to Benedetto but now believed to have been written by his younger brother Alessandro). Other possibilities: Any other Marcello concerti, although these may be somewhat hard to find.

8. CARL PHILLIP EMMANUAL BACH. Possible research sources: *The Gift of Music*, p. 33. Suggested piece for listening: Concerto for Oboe in Eb M (Wq XXI, No. 165). Other possibilities: Other C.P.E. Bach concerti, including those for oboe and for harpsichord and piano

9. JOHANN CHRISTIAN BACH. Possible research sources: *The Gift of Music*, pp. 34, 54. Suggested piece for listening: Sinfonia Concertante in FM (T287/2). Other possibilities: Any other J.C. Bach Sinfonia Concertante or Concerto for Piano.

10. FRANZ JOSEF HAYDN. Possible research sources: *Spiritual Lives of the Great Composers*, pp. 36-43; *The Gift of Music*, pp. 47-51. Suggested piece for listening: Symphony No. 94 in GM, "Surprise." Other possibilities: Any other Haydn symphonies (he wrote over 100!) or concerti for trumpet, cello, or winds

11. ANTONIO SALIERI. Possible research sources: *The Gift of Music*, pp. 75, 110. Suggested piece for listening: Overture to Tarare, or Axus, Re D'Ormus. Other possibilities: Any other Salieri overtures or his piano concerti

12. WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART. Possible research sources: *Spiritual Lives of the Great Composers*, pp. 44-52; *The Gift of Music*, pp. 52-59. Suggested piece for listening: Eine Kleine Nachtmusic Serenade for Strings #13 in GM, K. 525 (this is a great piece for learning how to identify the general form and specific movements of a symphony because it is a symphony in miniature—exposition/development/ recapitulation of the first movement, theme and variations of the second, three part minuet form of the third, and the rondo of the fourth). Other possibilities: Any of Mozart's 40 plus symphonies, 27 piano concerti, overtures, divertimenti, other serenades, or concerti for violin, bassoon, clarinet, flute, or horn.

13. LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVAN. Possible research sources: *Spiritual Lives of the Great Composers*, pp. 54-62; *The Gift of Music*, pp. 60-67. Suggested piece for listening: Symphony No. 5 in cm. Other possibilities: Any of Beethoven's other eight symphonies, five piano concerti, Violin Concerto, or overtures.

14. CARL MARIA VON WEBER. Possible research sources: *The Gift of Music*, pp. 84, 107. Suggested piece for listening: Overture to Der Freischutz (The Huntsman; the opening theme of this overture is the source for the tune used with the hymn "My Jesus, As Thou Wilt.") Other possibilities: Any of Weber's other opera overtures, two symphonies, two piano concerti, and two clarinet concerti

15. GIAOCCHINO ROSSINI. Possible research sources: *The Gift of Music*, pp. 68-73. Suggested piece for listening: Overture to William Tell. Other possibilities: Any of Rossini's other overtures, especially The Thieving Magpie, The Barber of Seville, Semeramide, La Cenerentola (Cinderella), and The Italian Girl in Algiers.

16. FRANZ SCHUBERT. Possible research sources: *Spiritual Lives of the Great Composers*, pp. 64-72; *The Gift of Music*, pp. 74-80. Suggested piece for listening: Symphony #8 in bm, "Unfinished." Other possibilities: Any of Schubert's other symphonies or his music to Rosamunde.

17. HECTOR BERLIOZ. Possible research sources: *The Gift of Music*, pp. 86-91. Suggested piece for listening: Symphonie Fantastique.

Other possibilities: Symphony "Harold in Italy," overtures.

18. JOHANN STRAUSS SR. Possible research sources: *The Gift of Music*, pp. 81-83. Suggested piece for listening: The Radetsky March. Other possibilities: It is extremely difficult to come across recordings of any other music by Johann Strauss Sr. other than his Radetsky March

19. MIKHAIL GLINKA. Possible research sources: *The Gift of Music*, p. 149. Suggested piece for listening: Overture to *Ruslan and Ludmilla* (opera). Other possibilities: Glinka did write other music, but not much of it is well-known; his *Valse Fantasie* and two *Spanish Overtures* are sometimes recorded.

20. FELIX MENDELSSOHN. Possible research sources: *Spiritual Lives of the Great Composers*, pp. 74-81; *The Gift of Music*, pp. 92-96. Suggested piece for listening: Suite from *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Overture, Scherzo, Nocturne, and Wedding March, plus any other selections). Other possibilities: Any of Mendelssohn's five symphonies, twelve early string symphonies, two piano concerti, two double piano concerti, two violin concerti, or other overtures.

21. FREDERIC FRANCOIS CHOPIN. Possible research sources: *Spiritual Lives of the Great Composers*, pp. 82-91; *The Gift of Music*, pp. 97-102. Suggested piece for listening: Piano Concerto No. 1 in e<sub>m</sub>, op. 11. Other possibilities: Piano Concerto No. 2; Chopin wrote very little for orchestra other than a few short pieces for piano and orchestra, but sometimes you can find transcriptions of his piano pieces for orchestra.

22. ROBERT SCHUMANN. Research sources: *The Gift of Music*, pp. 103-108. Suggested piece for listening: Symphony No. 1 in B<sub>b</sub>M, "Spring," op., 38. Other possibilities: Any of Schumann's other three symphonies, Piano Concerto, Cello Concerto, or Violin Concerto.

23. FRANZ LISZT. Research sources: *Spiritual Lives of the Great Composers*, pp. 92-100; *The Gift of Music*, pp. 109-113. Suggested piece for listening: *Les Preludes*. Other possibilities: Any of Liszt's other tone poems, including *Tasso*; two piano concerti; *Hungarian Rhapsodies*

24. RICHARD WAGNER. Research sources: *Spiritual Lives of the Great Composers*, pp. 102-109; *The Gift of Music*, 114-120. Suggested piece for listening: Overture (Prelude) to *Tannhauser*. Other possibilities: Any of Wagner's other overtures or preludes and orchestral excerpts from his operas, including *Das Liebesverbot*, *Meistersinger*, *Der Fliegende Hollander*, *Parsifal*, or *Rienzi*, and the *Ring of the Nibelung* cycle.

25. GIUSEPPE VERDI. Research sources: *The Gift of Music*, pp. 121-128. Suggested piece for listening: Overture to *Les Vespres Siciliennes* (opera). Other possibilities: Any of Verdi's other overtures or preludes to his operas, including *La Forza Del Destino*, *Nabucco*, *La Traviata*, and *Aida*.

26. CHARLES GOUNOD. Research sources: *Spiritual Lives of the Great Composers*, pp. 110-119; *The Gift of Music*, pp. 144-145, 290. Suggested piece for listening: Ballet Music ("Walpurgis Night") from *Faust* (opera). Other possibilities: Gounod did write two early symphonies which are not well known but interesting to listen to.

27. CESAR FRANK. Research sources: *Spiritual Lives of the Great Composers*, pp. 120-128; *The Gift of Music*, pp. 112, 144. Suggested piece for listening: *Symphonic Variations for Piano and Orchestra*. Other possibilities: *Symphony in d<sub>m</sub>*.

(to be continued)

### **Back to School: Parental Check List**

from the Illinois Family Institute

[Editor's note: Illinois Family Institute sent us this check list for parents to use to investigate what mischief might be afoot in their children's schools. We thought it might be useful to remind us as homeschoolers of the things we do **not** have to worry about! And you might want to pass it on to others you know who are in the public schools.]

Parents, grandparents, and concerned taxpayers take notice! As your children start off a new school year, take time to get to know what's going on in your local public schools.

Your local public schools are supposed to be places where young minds are taught the basics — reading, writing, and arithmetic. But, increasingly, they are becoming institutions where liberal social engineering agendas, designed to desensitize our children to the truths found in tradi-

tional values, are being implemented. Today, more than ever, parents must take to heart their God-given job to guide their child's education and moral training.

The following checklist may prove to be very helpful as you prepare your family to return to school:

- Find out what clubs your child joins or what club meetings they attend. Research the clubs that are offered at your child's school by calling the school administration and exploring your school's website.

- Find out who will be speaking at school assemblies. Organizations such as GLSEN are often invited by school administrators to speak at these all-school gatherings without any warning, leaving parents without even an opportunity to opt their child out of the assembly. Ask your principal to advise you of any such assemblies in advance.

- Inquire about fine arts assemblies. Schools often invite outside theater organizations to perform skits, many of which include controversial or offensive content.

- Volunteer at your local school. Attend school functions. Get to know the teachers and administrators so you can work more effectively with them to further your child's education.

- Talk with your child to find out what is going on in the classroom. Ask your child specifically if these issues are being addressed during class time. Find out if teachers in your school are actively pushing the homosexual agenda. Schools have no right to actively attack your family's religious beliefs.

- Find out if your school has an "opt in" or an "opt out" policy. Will they notify you and ask consent before your child is exposed to sexual or other controversial subject matters in class?

- Opt Out! Write a letter to your school principal and your child's teacher explaining your wish that your child not be exposed to any material that addresses sexual orientation or sexual identity or any sex-education messages in the classroom.

- Find out if your school has a student newspaper and subscribe to it. There are often announcements in student newspapers concerning controversial matters on campus, such as a gay-lesbian club activities, etc.

- Find out if your school has a policy that allows minor students to leave campus for confidential medical treatment without notifying the parents. IFI has information on how you can take this matter to your school board and attempt to have the policy changed to a parent-friendly policy.

- Find out if the school authorizes or conducts any "gay" oriented programs such as a "Gay Day of Silence." Many parents have been successful in stopping these from happening in advance. Contact IFI if you want more information.

- Ask your child if any of their teachers discuss "social justice" which is an ideology that includes non-normative views on sexual orientation and sexual identity.

- Do teachers use the terms "heterosexist" and "homophobia" which imply a denigration of traditional views of homosexuality? Teach your child how to respond to the myths taught in public schools that contradict your values, such as the homosexual agenda, evolution science, etc.

- Scan textbooks, workbooks, teaching materials, and classroom handouts to ensure that your children are being taught in accordance with your values.

- ✓ Is it anti-parent? (Parents are ignorant, old-fashioned)

- ✓ Does it instruct students to keep secrets from the parent?

- ✓ Does it encourage a negative view of the child, his family, his country, or his future?

- ✓ Is it preoccupied with death, tragedy, hate, anger, revenge etc.? (e.g. does it require the student to write his own epitaph.)

- ✓ Is it anti-religion? Does it lead the student to reject morals and values taught at home or church?

- ✓ Does it suggest that there are no absolute standards? (morality is relative and depends on the situation.)

- ✓ Does it encourage experimentation with sex, alcohol, or drugs?
- ✓ Does it exclude all knowledge of the importance of religion in American history?
- ✓ Does it ask the student, for example, if it is okay to lie, cheat, steal, kill, have sex outside of marriage, have an abortion, or commit suicide in hypothetical situations?
- ✓ Does it ask students to answer invasive questions about their family's private attitudes, behaviors, customs, or political views?
- ✓ Does it blur traditional concepts of gender identity and lead students to accept feminist notions?
  - If you have any questions about your rights (and responsibilities) as a parent or guardian, contact IFI's School Issues Advisor, Lora Sue Hauser at [school@illinoisfamily.org](mailto:school@illinoisfamily.org).

### Day Care Linked to Bad Behavior

CitizenLink.com, 3-27-2007; from staff reports

Keeping a child in day care for a year or more increases the likelihood they will be disruptive in class after they enter school, according to the largest and longest-running study of American child care.

Regardless of the quality of the day care, children in the study displayed the same negative behaviors: interrupting class, teasing and bullying. Researchers noted the behaviors persisted through sixth grade. An estimated 2.3 million children younger than 5 are in day-care centers.

Margaret Burchinal, a senior scientist at the University of North Carolina and the study's coauthor, said the negative effects of day care are slight, but worth noting.

"For kids who had a lot of center-based care — say four or five years of center-based care — they were more likely to be viewed as somebody who argued with the teacher, who got in fights, who was stubborn, who had temper tantrums," she told Family News in Focus.

In all cases, parenting was still the strongest indicator of academic success and behavior. Sharon Landesman Ramey, director of the Center for Health and Education at Georgetown University, called that good news.

"This is an affirmation of the centrality of families," she said. "That's worth knowing because some people claim parents don't matter."

### Special SAT/ACT Prep Offer!

HSLDA, in cooperation with a special program sponsored by NFL players, is excited to offer SAT and ACT Preparation DVD/CD-ROM packages that retail for \$199.95. Each package costs just \$13.84 — the cost of shipping and handling! Order online today at <http://www.hsllda.org/tour/satprep.asp>.

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