

HOMESCHOOL REVIEWS

PROVIDED BY NETWORK OF IOWA CHRISTIAN HOME EDUCATORS BOARD MEMBERS

Biblical Concourse of Home Universities™

Homeschool AFTER High School? Why do we send our children to college? It's an interesting question from a number of different angles. Why, for example, have we spent the last 12 "academic" years teaching them at home to ensure a biblical foundation and a fulfillment of Deuteronomy 6, only to send them off to a secular university to have all that subtly attacked by serpents far wiser than our doves? Why have we spent those last 12 years using non-classroom methods of education which statistically have produced more well-rounded, more biblically socialized, and more academically astute learners, only to put them into an institutional classroom construct that forces teaching to the "weakest link" at worst or "c-level" at best? Why, after mentoring them by living with them as they learn do we believe that at age 17, 18, or 19 they are supposed to leave home and independently learn from teachers whom we don't know?

These and other questions led Jim Bartlett to start the Biblical Concourse of Home Universities™, a concept that brings together home, church, and community in a unique way. To best understand the idea and its goals, one only needs to look at the words used to identify it.

Biblical - this is the most important element. Far too many children of professing Christian families are heading into universities professing the faith of their fathers only to come out four years later denying the faith. While there are ministries and conferences designed to "prepare" teens for the onslaught against their faith that they will face, the Biblical Concourse of Home Universities™ believes it's better to educate with a biblical worldview, even at the collegiate level.

Concourse - the unique element. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th edition, defines "concourse" as "an act or process of coming together and merging; a meeting produced by voluntary or spontaneous coming together; an open space where roads or paths meet;" or "an open space or hall (as in a railroad terminal) where crowds gather." This is the goal of the Concourse - to bring together students, skilled craftsmen and tradesmen, pastors, and parents so they can meet together and appropriately interact in the training of the next generation. Students learn the specific skills they need for the vocation they are pursuing from those in that career. Pastors assist in ensuring that everything is taught from a biblical perspective, whether economics or engineering, theater or theology. And just as parents have done in home educating their children prior to their entry into Concourse classes, they continue to be the primary supervisors and graders of the progress.

Home - touched on previously, but key to the concept. Parents still know their children better than anyone else. The goal of the Concourse is to maintain parental involvement in the education process. Either the course is a self-directed course that the parents oversee, or the teacher is in a cooperative relationship with the parents for the instruction of the student.

Universities - a plural term describing broad academic institutions. The hope of the Concourse is that elements of university learning will spring up nationally (and internationally) as Christians, especially homeschool families, make use of and expand the offerings of the Concourse. Imagine taking economics with the teacher being a homeschool dad who's a CFO of a corporation in Louisiana. How about studying animal husbandry with a dairy farmer in Wisconsin as the instructor? Maybe your dad or pastor, or a church member is skilled in some area - they could be a Concourse instructor, too.

Of course, there are the traditional expectations of a "college degree" that need to be addressed. Here's how the Biblical Concourse answers one of them on their web site:

Are you accredited? Yes. We train parents to accredit individual student character and abilities based on family, church, academic, and professional excellence. The Concourse Review Boards are formed for each student and consist of the student's parents, pastors, academic advisors, and discipline specific professionals. Acknowledging the authority of the family and church are key to the highest quality and most effective accreditation.

You probably have more questions than I've answered, and that's both understandable and honorable. "If I let my child do this, can they still reach their career goals?" "What about the costs?" "Are these classes really of value?" "Can my child really get this level of education at home?"

However, you may have also caught the vision and seen that the possibilities are tremendous. Perhaps you, the reader, are one who could teach a course. Possibly your pastor would be an excellent resource for not only a course in theology or biblical studies, but also in providing a sound biblical worldview for other lessons. Maybe your church would want to host a course and be a training center locally and online.

To learn more about the Biblical Concourse for Home Universities™ visit their website at www.biblicalconcourse.com, contact Lynn Bartlett at info@biblicalconcourse.com, write them at 1854 107th St NE, Bottineau ND 58318, or call (701) 263-4574. Remember, about 20 years ago, everyone thought homeschooling through high school was an insane idea. Let's take that "insanity" to a new level!

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