

A Charlotte Mason Education—A True Alternative

2011 Charlotte Mason Education Conference Speakers

(Updated 5/17/11)

Jack Beckman

Jack's thirty-five years of school experience include serving as a teacher, Principal, school-starter, and professor of education, and have encompassed master's degrees in both Curriculum and Instruction, and Educational Research, and a Ph.D. in Teacher Education from the University of Cambridge. Charlotte Mason's model of teacher training drew him to the UK to complete his dissertation on that topic. In collecting data, Jack spent a full year driving from the South Downs to the Lake District of England interviewing Charlotte Mason-trained teachers ranging in age from 101 to 78 -- listening to their stories of life in college and in the classroom. At present, he is Associate Professor of Education at Covenant College. Jack and his wife Barbara have two lovely daughters, Kara and Anneliese, one grandchild (Jack Henry), and another on the way!.

Susan Carlisle Bell

Am I a painter who teaches or a teacher who paints? For over 30 years, I have had a wonderful time doing both. Some of my paintings are done as a response to the design problems I give my students. Others are visual records of my travels. My workshops with contemporary masters and studies as an art historian challenge me to continue to grow and learn as an artist. Michelangelo's epitaph was "I am still learning" I love that! Exploring different techniques and media (watercolor, acrylic, pastel) are a way for me to re-visit familiar motifs with new eyes. Collage is a life parable for me: the parts (light and dark, pretty and plain, trash and treasure) enrich the whole and add another layer of meaning to the work.

Landscapes and florals are metaphors for family and belonging for me. My grandmother's flowers filled our home and garden, my mother's college drawings of trees amazed me as a child. And my father's Virginia farm is an inexhaustible subject, connecting the love of a place with the love of the father. Places and faces, the character of the land and the individual are exciting to explore.

I have two master degrees, one in Christian Education and one in Art Education as well as many studio hours of post-graduate work as well as intensive museum studies in the US and 10 foreign countries. I am an art professor who has taught studio, art history and education classes for Gardner-Webb University since 1985.

Laurie Bestvater

Laurie has been inspired and captivated by Charlotte Mason's philosophy since the early nineties when friends introduced, *For the Children's Sake*. A long-time fan of Francis and Edith Schaeffer, it was a natural progression to relying on Mason's methods in the home school and classroom as well as in tutorial and adult ESL venues. Laurie is mother to Sarah, working and seeking a law degree in Ontario, Sam, at Covenant College, GA, both home taught, and Caleb who is still in the nest doing high school work. Before moving with husband Bryan to New York in 2006, Laurie co-led a small group studying Mason's ideas in Southwestern Ontario and continues to affirm the person-to-person spread of Mason's philosophy leading a small group in New York. Laurie is working on the ChildlightUSA curriculum project and taught first year Composition as an adjunct this year.

Janet Pressley-Barr

Janet is a singer-songwriter from Cincinnati, Ohio who manages to transcend the folk, blues, and rock genres without leaving them behind. She weaves these traditions into a musical tapestry on her two discs, *Late Last Night* and *A Deeper State of Blue*. The albums are rich with haunting imagery, warm and velvety vocals, and refreshingly beautiful lyrics. The guarantees in Janet's music are elegant musicianship and soul-bearing lyricism.

Janet founded the Blue Jordan Coffeehouse, which later became Blue Jordan Records, the label on which she records. Her latest release is called *Parlor Hymns* and is a mix of traditional versions and her own arrangements of favorite hymns.

Parlor Hymns will be available at the time of the conference for download. Janet is excited to attend this year's conference with a group of 10 other Charlotte Mason fans from the Cincinnati area.

Bonnie Buckingham

Bonnie Buckingham, wife to Ken, has homeschooled for 20 years. They have 4 sons, a daughter-in-law, and a daughter, ranging from 27 to 13, and graduated the 4 sons. Bonnie teaches a high school literature and Aesthetics class in Charlotte, NC and is co-leader in the CMeLearn Support Group. The first book Bonnie read when she started home schooling in 1991 was *For the Children Sake* by Susan Schaeffer Macaulay. It ignited a passion for living books, nature study, art, poetry and

Charlotte Mason. Susan's father, Francis Schaeffer, helped form "the way I see: weltanschauung." The past few years have brought a love for learning with Wendell Berry, Luci Shaw, Tim Keller, "The Four Gospels" artist Makoto Fujimura and poet: Li-Young Lee. I thank Charlotte Mason and all of YOU in this educational movement for the reforming work "For the Children's Sake.:" "Just remember, the mind feeds on ideas and therefore children should have a generous curriculum." Vol. 6. pg. 111

Lisa Cadora

Lisa Cadora has studied Mason since providentially hearing of her from Ranald and Susan Macaulay at a Rochester, MN L'Abri Conference in the summer of 1982, while an undergraduate education major at Covenant College. She found a few of Mason's volumes in the college library upon returning to school that fall, and was entirely swept up in what she recognized as a much needed antidote to the decidedly mechanistic approach to teaching prevalent in most teacher education programs and even Christian education practice in those days. She was blessed to find a school some years later (Intown Community School) that employed Mason's methods and has enjoyed a career of teaching, learning and sharing Mason's ideas and practice with those who endeavor to bring a "sane" education to children and families in diverse settings. Lisa lives in Cincinnati, OH with her husband Matt who is a PCA pastor and two dachshunds who preside over home security. She currently teaches basic writing and college-level reading at Cincinnati State Technical and Community College and is a catechist in The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd children's spiritual formation program at Faith Presbyterian Church.

Susan Crist

Susan Crist is the Lower Elementary Principal at Perimeter School in the Atlanta area. She and her husband, Stephen, found their "home" in the writings and philosophies of Charlotte Mason in 1991. They have endeavored to raise their 2 daughters—Caitlin and Hannah, and now their grandson--Alexander-- to treasure the delights of nature, living books, great art, music, travel, and the value of persons as image-bearers of Christ. Susan has been blessed to have been able to live out these precious principles in her professional life, as well, most importantly as Principal in Charlotte Mason schools for 9 years. Her first love is the young child, and she feels fortunate to be able to specialize in this area of Kindergarten through Second graders in the covenant school context.

Deborah Dobbins

Deborah Dobbins teaches at Perimeter School in Duluth, GA. She currently specializes in teaching Enrichment Day Nature Study classes to 1st and 2nd grade students. She has a Master's in Education from the University of South Carolina. Outside the classroom, she enjoys hiking, working in her flower garden, and touring USA capital cities with her family.

Kerri Forney

Just like so many others, Kerri was introduced to the life-giving principles of Charlotte Mason through the reading of *For the Children's Sake*. She and her husband, Scott, along with their five homeschooled children ages 4 to almost 14 are growing in their ability to live out these principles on their direct-to-consumer farm in Franklin County, NC. Kerri helps lead a CM study group for moms in North Raleigh, and periodically she and the kids enjoy rescuing used living books from potential trash heaps around the state.

Jennifer Gagnon

For the Children's Sake was the pivotal book that gave direction to Jennifer's foray into homeschooling and ideas about education. In the beginning she thought that as long as a child could read, the whole world was open to them. Now she knows that it also takes a wide and generous curriculum to entice the student to be inspired to want to learn about anything. A Charlotte Mason education is more than theory and book lists. It becomes a life that carries a child, a family, a class to where there is no end to what can be explored, discovered, discussed and pondered.

Jennifer and her husband have three children, two away at post secondary schools and one still at home to complete high school. She leads a monthly CM Education meeting from her home and tutors science and math. She is still collecting beautifully written books that decorate and insulate her home in Ontario, Canada.

Tammy Glaser

Tammy Glaser, a graduate of the United States Naval Academy and Navy Postgraduate School, resigned from the Navy to homeschool her children in 1995. She started transitioning to Charlotte Mason's ideas in 1999. Her insights on homeschooling and autism are published online and in magazines, books, and newspapers. She and her husband Steve live with their children Pamela and David in Manning, South Carolina.

Rebekah Brown Heirholzer

Rebekah Brown Hierholzer was consistently recommended for gifted and talented testing in elementary school (though she never succeeded in actually being gifted and talented apparently, since she was placed back in the regular classroom after every evaluation). She did however make top grades throughout her schooling as she is an exceptional memorizer. Rebekah loved everything about school and becoming a teacher was a natural career choice. In her early years of teaching middle school in both the private and public sectors, she noticed that often the most captivating, most profound, truest moments of learning with her students did not look like her own years in school as a child. And so began a search for finding a way to teach which was in Parker Palmer's words, "a live encounter between the knower and the known." After finding Charlotte Mason's ideas, Rebekah, along with a community of educators, became involved in learning about and practicing C. Mason's method in the classroom, in starting new schools and pursuing further understanding in C. Mason study groups. Currently Rebekah and her husband Mark, who is a composer, are having a blast with their six month old daughter Genevieve Rose.

Mary Hubbard

Mary Hubbard, a Christian school educator since the early 1980's, has been involved in the Charlotte Mason practices and methodologies for almost 11 years finding them practical, inspiring, and naturally integrative with Christian education. Mary has an undergraduate education degree for grades K-8, has a M.Ed. in Educational Leadership, and has served as Perimeter Christian School middle school principal for the past 11 years. Mary helped establish a Christian School in Jackson, Tennessee, in the early 1980's from which three of her four children graduated high school. She has led various seminars on middle school education, including "Education is a Discipline." Mary is active in training both teachers and parents for the middle school experience because of her heart and passion for the middle school age child. Through incorporating the practices of Charlotte Mason, she is convinced that this is the best training "for the children's sake." Mary has four married children and 10 grandchildren.

Nicolle Hutchinson

Nicolle Hutchinson has a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and earned a M.S. Ed in Educational Leadership from the University of Pennsylvania. Nicolle has been an educator for 19 years, and the last 10 of those years have been focused on relational education based on Mason's framework. She both lead and taught in public, private and home schools; started 3 Mason schools; facilitated workshops nationwide; published curriculum; and spoke at Florida's homeschool convention in 2004. Her TCI First Grade program, *Social Studies Alive! My School and Family*, was adopted by the state of California. She is most excited about her current work...the creation of a relational public charter school based solely on Mason's ideas! Gillingham Charter School is expected to offer a relational education in the fall of 2011 in Pottsville, PA. The school will adopt the curriculum currently being developed by a team of educators associated with Childlight USA of which she is a member. This past year, Nicolle also homeschooled her 13 year old son and helped her husband, Storm (pastor of UMC-Pottsville), implement Mason's ideas in both children and adult Christian education. Her family loves sports, games, books and the mountains of PA, and Nicolle can be found yardsale-ing happily every Saturday morning.

Nancy Kelly

Nancy was introduced to Charlotte Mason's philosophy when she heard Susan Schaeffer Macaulay at a L'abri conference many, many years ago. Since then, she has implemented Mason's teachings in educating her six children, as well as herself! She has been married to Kent for 24 years and they have six children. Her oldest son, Forrest, is a senior at Hillsdale College. Next is Jack, a junior at the University of Minnesota. She is currently homeschooling Katie - 13, Liam - 12, Lizzie - 9 and Lauren - 7. She organizes the Living Education Retreat, an annual conference that brings educators from the Upper Midwest together in an intimate setting to discuss CM. She believes that relationships are key to successfully implementing CM's methods and enjoys encouraging, supporting and mentoring others through leading monthly support groups, blogging (Sage Parnassus), social networking (Charlotte Mason on the Prairie), and speaking engagements. Currently, she is working on the Citizenship portion of the CLUSA curriculum. If you are ever in her neck of the woods, please stop by for a latte or a cup of tea at her home in Minnesota amidst her honey pot collection, perennial garden and bookshelves.

Kent Kelly

Kent Kelly and his wife Nancy have used Mason's philosophy to home educate their six children over the past 17 years. Kent has had many opportunities to implement Mason's views of the child while coaching in a variety of venues. He has been in law enforcement for 20 years, is a certified computer forensics examiner and is a member of the Internet Crimes

Against Children task force (ICAC). Kent is on the CLUSA board and is currently writing the Physical Education portion of the CLUSA curriculum. He enjoys learning, reading, hunting, fishing and an occasional game of pickup basketball.

Art Middlekauff

Art Middlekauff and his wife Barbara have been home educating their three children for seven years. Over this time, Art has been studying Charlotte Mason's writings and attempting to apply her living ideas to his family's homeschool. Art is a member of the leadership team of a growing Anglican church plant. In his spare time, Art leads product development for one division of a Chicago-based software company.

Marlene Power

For the past 19 years, Marlene has worked as Public Services Librarian at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario, Canada. A few years ago, she was approached by Deani Van Pelt to see if she might be willing to help out with the Charlotte Mason project, which led to creating a database of digital images -- the Charlotte Mason Digital Collection (CMDC). This has involved visiting the Armit Museum and Library in the lovely Lake District of England in order to examine the Charlotte Mason Collection. She also spent some time taking pictures of the archival documents and setting up procedures for others who came over to work on the project. Back home in Canada, much time has been devoted to developing a database, making the images globally accessible to students, teachers, parents, home educators and scholars who are interested in the ideas and accomplishments of Charlotte Mason. Marlene and her husband, Tom, along with their two teenage children, enjoy reading, hiking, basketball, art galleries, the violin, traveling and historical research.

Sandy Rusby Bell

Sandy Rusby Bell loves everything about books: how they smell, how they look on shelves, how they look stacked on tables, the feel of them, how children look hidden behind them and of course the worlds found within them. So it is not surprising that she met Charlotte Mason while snooping through a basket of books at a friend's cottage. While her very understanding husband David took their children hiking through the dunes Sandy devoured every word about nature study and living books and knew she had come home. She has now been educating her four children (16, 14, 11 and 9) using Charlotte Mason's methods haltingly, stumblingly, imperfectly but passionately for over a decade. She has co-lead a Charlotte Mason study group in Ontario, Canada with Deani Van Pelt, Jennifer Talsma and Laurel Aldridge. Every month for over ten years Mason's writings were actively explored by dozens of vibrant women applying her ideas in home education settings.

J. Carroll Smith

Carroll Smith was introduced to Charlotte Mason many years ago through Mason's book *An Essay Towards A Philosophy of Education*. From there the seeds of ideas given by Mason in her various books have slowly taken hold and have grown year by year as Carroll worked as a middle school teacher, a principal and a college professor. He founded the educational non-profit, ChildlightUSA, to promote the educational philosophy of Charlotte Mason and cherishes the relationships that have grown over the years through a collective camaraderie with people interested in seeing education from a very different paradigm. He enjoys reading, gardening, and discussing ideas with friends. He is hoping to find more time to write during his summers. Carroll and his wife, Andra enjoy living, working and playing in NC.

Cheri Struble

Cheri Struble, wife to Mark, has been homeschooling for 14 years and has eight children - five boys and three girls, from the ages of one to 18. Early in that first year of schooling she read a description of the Charlotte Mason philosophy, and it was like coming home. Since that experience she's never looked back, every year moving deeper, delighting in learning along side her children. Mason's philosophy on nature study and history are of special interest to her. Cheri lives in Lawndale, NC, and in addition to teaching, enjoys being a midwife, honing her naturalist skills and reenacting American Colonial and Revolutionary history with her family.

Jeannette Tulis

Jeannette was introduced to the ideas of Charlotte Mason when her husband, David (then her fiance), gave her a copy of "For the Children's Sake" and said, "This is how I want us to educate our children!" In God's providence, David and Jeannette were blessed with four children. In their home education adventure, Charlotte Mason's philosophy is a constant source of inspiration and challenge. Although Jeannette holds a degree from Auburn University with a major in nutrition, her real education has been acquired as she learns alongside her children. Abigail, 18, is about to graduate and has been accepted at a classical figure sculpting academy/atelier in Manhattan; David, 16, a self directed student in several tutorials;

Josiah, 14, doing a variation of a Ambleside years 7 and 8, and Jacob, 6 reveling in the richness of Ambleside year one. Jeannette also helps to lead a Charlotte Mason support group in the Chattanooga area and writes editorials for the area homeschool newsletter, some of which appear at csthea.org. Her passions are wildflowers, art history, British period drama, and an out of control collection of mostly out-of-print children's books.

Ivey Young

Recently, one of Ivey's two children sadly remarked, "I don't know what I want to be when I grow up." Ivey replied, "Me neither." She has many interests and has worn many hats since her college days-waitress, pastry chef, amateur farmer and beekeeper, cooking instructor, teacher to her children. She taught nature study and handicrafts for a year at Red Mountain Community School in Birmingham, Alabama where she now teaches kindergarten and hosts outdoor classroom. As she has become part of a community that is seeking to educate themselves as well as their children, she has realized she desires to live the ideas of Charlotte Mason and continually be in conversation about what it means to be well educated and what "education is a life" looks like in day to day living.