

Keystone

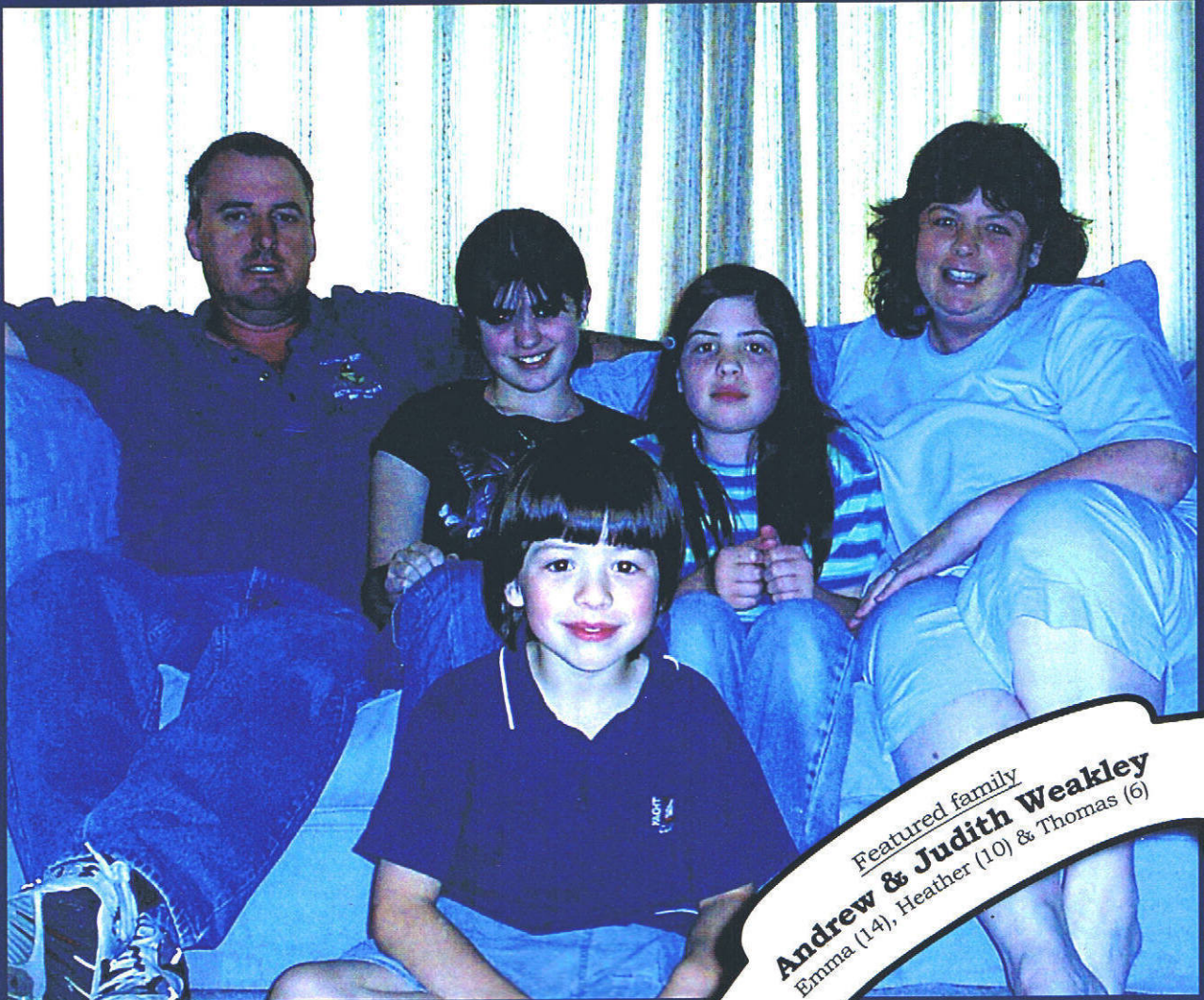
A Bi-Monthly Journal for Christian

Home Educators

Vol. XI No. 1

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Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who delights greatly in His commandments. His descendants will be mighty on earth. — Psalm 112:1-2



Featured family
Andrew & Judith Weakley
Emma (14), Heather (10) & Thomas (6)

Editorial



There is quite a variety of articles this time and one or two in unusual formats. The Bluedorn brothers and John Piper both address hot topics of the day, one in regards to media attacks on home educators in the USA and one in relation to the tsunami disaster in the Indian Ocean. Isaac Botkin's piece is also hot off the press from his very recent visit to the film expos.

But I really want to comment on the Home Education Research article. It describes what is really going on, a trend that is apparently growing in the USA, for the state school system to woo home educators back into the classroom. You will notice the only note of caution sounded in the whole article is by the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), the Christian lawyer group who have worked tirelessly to see that parents can home educate their children with the absolute minimum of state interference. It concerns them that many of today's newer home educating parents are now happily embracing those things which an earlier generation of home educating parents steadfastly refused to be saddled with, some to the point of going to jail. (Although not mentioned in the article, HSLDA will not come to the aid of any home educating family who has held its hand out to receive state funds.)

Becoming chummy with state schools seems to have advantages: access to chemistry and physics labs and instruction; participation in sports and drama; tutoring and use of wood shop and metal shop tools; etc. The schools certainly like it: with the home educator's enrolment, the school pulls down the full state subsidy of say \$4,500 per student. It passes on perhaps \$2,500 in the form of a computer, internet access and lab time to the student and then pockets the remaining \$2,000. Sweet. Note how the article mentions more than once how schools are clearly motivated by the money.

Home educators reckon they get a free computer and other benefits. But note what the San Lorenzo Charter School required: separation of church and state, which in the USA of today means the parents cannot buy any Christian material with the money they get. And the Kent, Washington, group was just plain deceitful: they promised to respect religious beliefs while teaching evolution!! Evolution is of necessity and by definition disrespectful of Bible-believing Christianity, so there is no way it can be taught while respecting religious beliefs, unless it was taught as the anti-Christian philosophy of error that it is.

Patricia Line's Trojan Horse analogy is most unfortunate, as it assumes the two players, state schools and private homes, are equal. This issue New Zealand home educators also need to see clearly: state agents entering private homes can wield the nearly unlimited economic and legal powers of the state against your family. Your family, on the other hand, has very little such resources to wield against the mighty state school system. Always keep them at arm's length.

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**But one thing I do: forgetting
what lies behind and straining
forward to what lies ahead, I
press on toward the goal for the
prize of the upward call of God in
Christ Jesus.
— Philipians 3:12-13**

TEACH Bulletin (Thorough Education Achieved in a Caring Home) is a monthly newsletter of the Home Education Foundation. Articles deal with political developments which may affect New Zealand home educators, statist and professional trends, correspondence with politicians and educationalists and other items of general interest to home educators. Published since January 1997, **TEACH Bulletin** has been used to sound legislative alerts, rallying home educators to write submissions to their MPs and Parliamentary Select Committees when legislation unfavourable to home educators was introduced into Parliament. The six-page newsletter comes out 11 times a year (none in December) for an annual subscription of NZ\$16 or two years for NZ\$30.

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Andrew and Judith Weakley

of Taupo, North Island, New Zealand

Andrew and I were both born in England, and our parents immigrated to South Africa (SA) when we were children. We met at school, and our first date was my senior ball (awww!!). Andrew is a Surveyor. His work has taken him all around Southern Africa with elephants, lions, snakes and riots being some of the most memorable events.

I worked at British Airways in Cape Town for five years after leaving school and have been at home since my pregnancy with Emma in 1990. My journey to Christ had plenty of encounters with God. Praise God, He never gave up on me, and I finally came home to Christ in 1993. I give the Lord all the glory for the changes He has made in my life and that He is always working with us (Psalm 138:8). I see God as a huge lap onto which we can climb when things get rough. Life has been rough at times; I have suffered with depression, and my family has had to go through this with me. I always knew God was there, even when no one else could see it.

Andrew came to faith in Jesus seven years after I did. Our move to Taupo (more on this later) saw Andrew's dreams fulfilled but left him empty. I asked him to attend an Alpha course with me, and he gave his life to Christ. Four and a half years later Andrew leads the Alpha ministry at our church with passion. When Andrew became a Christian it really changed my life (and his!). I can offer hope to wives praying for their husbands: God's timing is always perfect.

Our homeschooling journey probably started when Emma was a baby. I was very involved with La Leche League and first heard of homeschooling then. At that time homeschooling was illegal in SA. So it was simply a dream. In 1994 we went to live in the mountains of Lesotho where Andrew was working on the construction of a dam. A woman was homeschooling her daughter, and this was the first time I saw homeschooling for real.

By 1997 we were back in SA with another baby, and it was time for Emma to start school. We enrolled her in a tiny ACE school (27 children) knowing that there was always the possibility of another move, and ACE could be used at home. By this time homeschooling was just starting in SA, and ACE provided acceptance by the authorities. After one term at school we moved to a small town where the schools were horribly over crowded due to the influx of construction workers for the steel mill (like us!). So began our homeschooling experience.

We started with ACE, and even though Emma learnt to read and write just fine, she was very unhappy with the workbook approach; it was not creative enough for her. Sometimes it would take her all day to finish her work. I found it very hard to motivate her, but before we had a chance to work things out, we had another baby and were off to New Zealand.

I brought the ACE books with me, but nothing had changed. In fact now the poor child was crying holes in the pages of her books! Frustrated, I marched Emma down to Birkenhead Primary School (North Shore, Auckland) and enrolled her for the beginning of 1999.

In the meantime I had attended a Shore Home Educators meeting and made some good friends. I was fascinated to learn about different styles of homeschooling and read plenty of books over that summer. By late January I had read enough books, and we began our homeschooling experience Kiwi-style. Heather was now five, and so I had two children to teach and a busy toddler to watch. I found it interesting that my little girl did not know any nursery rhymes but could tell you about the lifecycle of a wasp. They sure do learn when you are not watching!

One year later and we were on the move again, this time to Taupo. A month after we moved, I fell into a heap on the floor; it was just all too much. The children were taking the brunt of my burnout, and one night I clearly heard God say, "This is not about you anymore." I contacted Lake Taupo Christian School (LTCS) the next day and sobbed down the phone. Emma (9) and Heather (6) started school a month later.

I wish I could tell you they were miserable, but they were not. The Principal of LTCS runs a very happy, family-friendly, well-disciplined school, and for three years my girls and I had a very positive school experience. The girls brought home certificates and cups at prize giving, and I enjoyed parent help.

Fast forward two-and-a-half years...lots of Christian therapy, personal growth and rest for me showed that homeschooling was only "the straw that broke the camel's back". It was not the reason I had burnt out. I was listening to Craig and Barbara talking about home education on Radio Rhema one morning, and to my surprise there was the voice of God: "It is time for you to have the children home again." SHOCK!! This was the last thing on my mind. Hadn't I failed miserably at homeschooling? Worse still, hadn't my children had a hard time while I was not coping? God had gone ahead of me, and He changed my heart.

Andrew was understandably cautious and gave me a term to prove that I could cope. I began 2003 by getting Thomas ready for reading. As the first term ended, Andrew was happy to give his blessing to us homeschooling again. Heather (8) was happy but Emma (12) was not convinced and wanted a term's

trial... fair enough, I thought.

It took ages for any confidence to return, even though the children were enjoying being home again. Planning for the week took a whole day, and I could hardly believe it when the end of 2003 arrived. 2004 was much easier until the third term: I changed Emma's curriculum and reduced my anti-depressant medication without consulting God (never a good idea!). It took about six weeks for me to return to my normal energy levels, and I could sense Emma thinking "Oh, no! Not again!"

This time I was determined to handle things differently. I sought prayer and wise counsel to help with the negative thoughts that plagued me. I fought the depression with...REST! I know it sounds weird, but I took delight in knowing that I was fighting back by resting and going easy on myself. It conquered the guilt somehow and gave me more time with God (Galatians 6:9... found in another homeschooler's story in *Keystone!*). I reduced the amount of work Thomas and Heather were doing so that they could keep making small, consistent steps, rather than my previous (failed) method of all or nothing! Heather and Thomas did continue to make progress through my crisis, and with me out of their way their creativity flourished (funny that!).

Emma and I eventually got the hang of TRISMS and ended the year on a high note. Emma has found pleasure in doing research. I chose TRISMS for this very reason, and the struggle taught me a lesson: it is so important for us to keep the "big picture" and end result in mind when we are struggling through the details. Galatians 6:9 again.

Looking back, I know God cared for my family during the school years, and He will continue to care for us in the future. We were blessed with our school experience; LTCS is unlike any school I have ever known. Having said that, it was frustrating that the best part of my girls' day was with other people, and I had them when they were tired, grumpy and doing homework.

The major influence on our home education philosophy is the Bible. The Hebrew model of life says it all: relationship with God and relationship with those around us. I would heartily recommend the book: *Assumptions That Affect Our Lives* by Christian Overman. This book contrasts the Greek influence on society with the Hebrew model as laid out in the Bible...Deuteronomy 6:4-9. I am blessed with the support and encouragement of good friends, and I particularly enjoy Diana Waring's books on homeschooling. I gain great pleasure spending time with my favourite people, even when we are going through tough times. If another person tells me, after discovering I teach my children at home, "You must have so much patience," I shall scream. Why do people assume we are saints because we want to spend time with our children?

As for details of what resources we use:

Thomas is six, and so we are concentrating on the "three R's". He does copywork, and I favour the Charlotte Mason Approach; we all enjoy a good book. Tho-



mas plays cricket in summer, because his mum is mad about it! His other hobbies include playing the piano, making huts, digging holes in the garden and climbing anything!

Heather (10) is my workbook child.

She loves the security of knowing what is coming next. She is often at the table before breakfast "getting her work done." Heather loves to snuggle up and have someone read to her. I have let Heather read along with the audio book of *The Lord of the Rings*, noticing a real improvement in her reading. Heather is a born teacher; she can help Thomas with his work long after my patience has worn thin. She loves to cross-stitch and listen to stories or audio dramas; the *Left Behind* series is a real favourite (after *The Lord of the Rings* of course!).



Emma (14) is an artist; everything else is peripheral! God has blessed Emma with an incredible gift and answered our prayers by providing an art teacher for her. I remember hearing that our children need great adults in their lives. Emma's art teacher has become one such person. She is not only Emma's teacher but also her mentor, her friend and her champion. Emma tutors at

a children's art club and leads a small group at Sunday school. When Emma is not drawing, she uses TRISMS for school, and we shall be taking up human and animal anatomy as Science next year to help with her drawing.

I would like to finish by sharing a homeschool success we have had, I hope that it will encourage you...

Last year, after reading Diana Waring's book *Reaping the Harvest*, I wrote to a creative design company requesting an interview to talk over career options for Emma. Not only was she given the interview but they looked at her work for the year and asked her to spend the rest of the day with them. She had the privilege of exploring their studios and getting a feel for the industry. Emma was thrilled. She came home bursting with enthusiasm as she was now able to envisage a world where her artistic nature could flourish.

God is able to help us help our children realise what it is that He has for their lives: all we have to do is stay close to Him and guide our children to be close to Him. Emma is now working hard using the advice given to her to prepare for a career doing something she loves. I am glad we can share in the excitement this experience has caused.

The Faith of Us Fathers

Knights of Christendom

By Richard LaPierre



As of late I've given a considerable amount of thought to the subject of men and the Church.

Satan has twisted God's ideal of manhood into two extremes: that men believe they must be crude and violent or that men believe they must be timid and weak. God created both male and female in His image. We Christian men must rediscover what it means to be men created in God's image.

[I have been drawn] to the concept of knighthood [for a long time]. The romantic days of knighthood have long since passed, and yet there is something so compelling about them. Something in our souls stirs when we hear about chivalry and valor. I believe our modern souls are starving for the ideals of knighthood. I believe we are starving to be godly men!

Modern-day knights may not wear suits of armor or joust in tournaments, but we should be wearing the armor of God and using the sword of the Spirit. We should be crusading as champions of the Church in every arena. Like the knights of old, we should mentor squires into manhood. This is of paramount importance! Our families need us to be their champions. Our wives need us to be courtly lovers. They urgently need us to be godly husbands and godly fathers. And we men need each other. We need to be Knights of the Round Table rather than isolated Lone Rangers.

[Men, let us harken back and draw on the days of King Arthur and his knights or the men of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The White Company*. As knights of Christendom, as Christian men, husbands and home educating fathers what shall our purposes be here and now in 2005? Consider the following seven points:]

1. The Church – especially in contemporary America – has adopted commercial tactics. It treats people as if they were customers and tries to give them a better product: better music, better programs and even a “better” message (one with no mention of guilt or sin). The purpose of the Church is not to serve its members. The purpose is for its members to serve Jesus Christ together.

[We] knights of Christendom are dedicated to...that ethic of service.

2. Divorce among Christians is almost as rampant as divorce among non-Christians.

Knightly love is one of the ideals of the knight. Knights will...treat their wives...with chivalry, romance and godly love. We are to be champions and knights in shining “amour” to ladies.

3. Men have become feminized in Western society and have brought feminization into the Church. It is not politically correct for men to be manly. Modern man is expected to emphasize feminine qualities while suppressing masculine qualities. Men are expected to be junior partners, not leaders. Men are taught that women are smarter, more savvy and more intuitive than men. When men take initiative, we are told, they will mess things up.

God, however, calls men to be godly fathers and leaders. The Church loses when men aren't being the men God created them to be. Boys are growing up without good, masculine role models. Generation after generation suffers from a dearth of godly masculinity.

[We] knights of Christendom will train up godly leaders from an early age. [We will train our own boys and seek to mentor other young men.]

4. Discipline is despised even within the Church. We are stiff-necked when it comes to submitting to authority. A Christian is more apt to quit a congregation and go to another before he submits to discipline. Compounding this problem is a history of spiritual abuse by the Church.

Knights [understand the importance of] godly authority and discipline. Knights must practice submission to godly authority.

5. Individualism has also crept into the Church. Americans idealize the “Lone Ranger”– the rugged individual who goes it alone. We have taken this ideal to the point of destroying community. We live in neighborhoods, but we don't know our neighbors. Too many marriages are nothing more than two individuals living together. We go to Church, but we don't get involved. As long as we remain divided, we are useless.

Rather than the Lone Ranger model, Knights of Christendom...model the Knights of the Round Table. [We] are...devoted to [our] King and working [with the Body of Saints] for the good of [the Kingdom of God].

6. Inactivity plagues the Church. Too many Christians don't know how to make a difference, so we do nothing.

[We Knights seek to] help the widows and the fatherless, become leaders in the community and create ways to reach out to a dying world.

7. Selfishness has grown rampant in the Church. Our highest priority is too often to accumulate possessions for ourselves. Just like our unchurched neighbors, Christians want more and more and bigger and better.

Largesse is one of the ideals of the knight. Knights

[seek] to simplify their lives in order to give more of their time and treasure.

The [Knight's] Code of Chivalry

- Live to serve King and Kingdom.
- Defend the Church.
- Believe all that Holy Scripture teaches and observe all its directions.
- Wage spiritual war against the Lord's enemies without cessation and without mercy.
- Live to defend Crown and Country and all it holds dear.
- Fight for the ideals of king, country and chivalry.
- Love the country in which thou wast born.
- Administer justice.
- Defend the weak and innocent.
- Show respect to authority.
- Fight with honor.
- Never recoil before thine enemy.
- Respect life and freedom.
- Everywhere and always be the champion of the Right and the Good against Injustice and Evil.
- Protect the innocent and constitute thyself the defender of the weak.
- Live for freedom, justice and all that is good.
- Destroy evil in all of its monstrous forms.
- Crush the monsters that steal our land and rob our people.
- Live one's life so that it is worthy of respect and honor.
- Always maintain one's principles.
- Exhibit self control.
- Respect women.
- Always keep one's word of honor.
- Avoid cheating, deception and lying to your fellow man.
- Remain faithful to thy pledged word.
- Never betray a confidence or comrade.
- Never abandon a friend, ally or noble cause.
- Loyalty to one's friends and those who lay their trust in thee.
- Exhibit Courage in word and deed.
- Be generous and give largess to everyone.
- Exhibit good manners.
- Be polite and attentive.
- Be respectful of host, women and honor.
- Die with valor and honor.

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. 2 Timothy 2:3-4

[As modern day knights, as good soldier's of Jesus Christ, let us press on to] restore godly masculinity among Christian men who will hold each other to high accountability and mentor subsequent generations

of godly men. [Let us] break the curse by which men have been complacent and passive toward their wives and families.

Knighthood [can be a great] model. For a thousand years knighthood has been an ideal of godly servant-leadership. It...was established by the Church to function as a bulwark in defense of Christianity. Just as knights of old mentored pages and squires, we contemporary knights will mentor the young. We will affirm them and guide them into godly manhood. We will train them to be bold leaders for the Kingdom of God.

[So men, like the knights of old, let us put on the armour of God and ride out to do battle in our homes, in our Churches and in our society for the glory of God!]

Rich LaPierre wanted to be a cartoonist from the time he was a boy. [One of his cartoons features on page 11—Ed.] He was blessed to study and be trained by some of the most noted cartoonists in the field. Fulfilling his dream, Rich has been a cartoonist with Hallmark Cards in Kansas City for twenty years. Also passionate about raising up Godly men to leadership, Rich has been working for several years on a concept called The Knights of Christendom, a group dedicated to challenging men to be all that God created them to be. He and his lovely bride, Julie, have a delightful three-year-old son named John Israel. The LaPierres make their home in Kansas. You may email Rich at knightsofchrist@sbcglobal.net. His website is <http://knightsofchristendom.blogspot.com/>.

(Used with permission, this article is composed from articles on Rich's blog. Comments in [] were added by the editor.)



Home Educators Did It!



believe home schooling promotes good citizenship, while only 37 percent in the East agree. (Nov. 16 article.)

...92 percent of [Americans] said home schoolers should take the same tests required of public school students. (Nov. 15)

They Debunked Bad Newspaper Reporting!

(And explain simply how you can too!)

Response to the Akron Beacon Journal Attack on Homeschooling

by Nathaniel Bluedorn and Hans Bluedorn

Have you ever read something you knew was wrong and just felt frustrated about it? It didn't make sense, but you couldn't explain why?

[In November 2004] an Ohio newspaper, the *Akron Beacon Journal*, printed a series of articles attacking homeschooling. They claim that little is known about homeschoolers and suggest the government should tightly monitor and regulate the movement. They quote school officials and focus groups who say that homeschooling can hide child abuse and failing students.

This is nothing new. We didn't pay much attention until a friend told us that the first article mentions our logic book *The Fallacy Detective*. Ironically, we discovered that the two reporters who wrote these articles, Doug Oplinger and Dennis J. Willard, showcase several brazen errors in reasoning.

We'd like to give you a few tools for explaining to your friends, neighbors and elected officials why using bad logic isn't a good idea when attacking homeschoolers.

Our purpose isn't to point out *all* the fallacies in these articles. We want to equip you to do this yourself. (Parents, finding fallacies in these articles might make a good school assignment.) Here is a crash-course in debunking bad newspaper reporting.

Fallacy 1: Appeal to the People

Claiming that something is true just because many people believe it is the *fallacy of the appeal to the people*. The *Akron Beacon Journal* articles use this fallacy frequently.

Nationally, according to the most recent polls on the topic, the country is divided on the socialization issue.

A 2001 Phi Delta Kappa poll found that the public, by just a slightly larger percentage (49 to 46), believes home schooling does not promote good citizenship. More than half – 53 percent – of the people who live in the Western United States

We may not like to admit it, but we all become uneasy when many people disagree with us. However, public opinion is not a good gauge for what is true or false. Just because a large percentage of the population thinks homeschooling fails to produce good citizens does not make this true. Asserting this would be an *appeal to the people*.

Fallacy 2: Faulty Appeal to Authority

Another fallacy used in the *Beacon Journal* articles is *faulty appeal to authority*.

David Swarbrick estimates that “60 percent [of homeschoolers] are on par with the public schools, 20 percent are above and 20 percent are below.” (Nov. 15)

When we read a quote like this, we might worry that it indicates that homeschoolers don't excel at academics the way we thought.

However, before we accept what Swarbrick says, we need to look at his credentials. Is he an authority on comparing the academic accomplishments of homeschool students to government school students? We read that Swarbrick is a math tutor for 225 homeschool students in Texas. Based on what these articles say, he only has contact with students who need tutoring in math – probably not a good cross section of homeschoolers. To appeal to his expert knowledge would be a *faulty appeal to authority*. (Note: David Swarbrick has said that he was dreadfully misquoted by Oplinger and Willard.)

...there are huge, untested segments of the home-school population that may be failing, according to many researchers. (Nov. 15)

An ambitious reporter can find someone willing to say anything he wants. It means nothing when a reporter writes, “many researchers say. . . .” We can find “many researchers” willing to say there are space aliens living among us. A reporter needs to name the researchers he is quoting and explain their credentials. Otherwise, he is using a *faulty appeal to authority*.

Fallacy 3: Proof by Lack of Evidence

...[T]he nation [collects] an unprecedented volume of statistics on public school students. . . . [But] it . . . knows almost nothing about children who are educated at home. (Nov. 15)

Lack of evidence is only evidence that there is a lack of evidence. There is no evidence of widespread

cannibalism among Akron, Ohio, residents; should the government fund a massive study to learn why there is no evidence? No, the government should channel its money to study problems for which we have evidence.

This line of reasoning tempts us to lose perspective. We imagine all the horrible possibilities of what homeschoolers could be doing behind closed doors, but we forget that we have absolutely no evidence for this – we only have a lack of evidence. Paranoia is an irrational fear of the unknown.



(© 2004 Richard LaPierre. Used with permission.)

A reporter commits the fallacy of *proof by lack of evidence* when he suggests that something is true simply because there was no evidence to the contrary. A lack of evidence cannot be used to support or refute anything. The reporter has the *burden of proof* to supply positive evidence to support his claim.

School superintendents and other child professionals say an unknown number of children receive an inadequate education at home. . . . (Nov. 15)

An unknown number may be a million or zero. We don't know. We could say an unknown number of newspaper reporters were smoking an unknown substance when they wrote this article.

Throughout these articles, Oplinger and Willard weave together the proof by lack of evidence fallacy with another manipulative technique called *innuendo*.

Fallacy 4: Innuendo

In Texas, a librarian told the Beacon Journal that some home-schooling parents objected to the book selection on the shelves. They lobbied the library to bring back older editions – books that depicted the United States in the 1950s, prior to the landmark 1964 civil rights legislation...

That idea is espoused on a number of racist Internet sites... (Nov. 16)

Notice how Oplinger and Willard never explicitly claim that these homeschoolers are racist. They would need evidence to support this accusation. They only insinuate. *Innuendo* is a propaganda technique that uses subtle and misleading language to manipulate our minds.

Racist and extremist home schoolers are almost invisible until an event thrusts them into the public's consciousness... In 1994, Gordon Winrod, an avowed anti-Semite and racist, kidnapped his eight grandchildren from their home in North Dakota and took them to a remote area in Missouri for six years and home-schooled them... (Nov. 16)

To conclude that Winrod homeschooled these children simply because he did not send them to school clearly is a misrepresentation of homeschooling. Winrod kidnapped these children. Do all

kidnappers homeschool their victims? By referring to kidnapping in an article about homeschooling, Oplinger and Willard suggest that this kind of behavior might characterize homeschoolers.

A tour of the Patrick Henry campus [a college connected with Home School Legal Defense Assn.] offers an impression of little or no racial diversity. . . .

On the college's apparent lack of racial diversity, [a representative of the college] said that's not important to the organization. . . .

The only African-American visible on a busy day early in the 2003-04 school year was a kitchen worker. (Nov. 17)

Oplinger and Willard never directly say that Patrick Henry College is racist, but they imply this with their strategically truncated quotes and observations.

Warning to Reporters

This attack on homeschoolers has provided us with an exhilarating supply of material to teach logic. It made our day.

Oplinger and Willard may have mentioned our book to hint that homeschoolers don't use logic. But as we read

(Continued on page 28: **Fallacy**)

Teaching Tips

Keeping Records

By Kay Christensen



I have three main ways of recording what we do.

The first is a daily record where I jot down what each child is doing in an ordinary exercise book (each child has his own), which I call their “homework guide.” This book serves to record what I have done with them as well as the work I am setting for them as “homework” or independent work afterwards. The children tick each line off as they finish.

It’s very simple and basic. I record the date each day at the top and then underneath make nothing more than a line entry of book, page number and a word for the topic, if necessary, for each subject. For example,

Maths — Saxon #43, fractions.

I record the work in each of their books as I sit alongside each child doing the one-to-one stuff. In this way, for me, it takes no more time to record in the book than the time it takes waiting for them to finish the sum they are working on. As I’m sitting there, I also catch up on anything we might have done the day before that occurred spontaneously but was not written down — such as watching a video, a trip to the library or a discussion or activity. This way I capture the non-school stuff as best I can. It’s just enough to jog my memory — e.g., “video — ‘The Big Trail’, John Wayne — wagon train, settlers, western migration.”

I find it takes about five minutes all up, and I can easily do it there on the spot while my child is preoccupied momentarily with the next sum or question. I certainly don’t try to find extra time at the end of the day to record anything, and I’ve given up using fancy record books or ruling up a special record document.

The only problem I have is that with three children and three books, it sometimes means tripling up on the family things they do together (such as videos or trips). So what I will sometimes do is record family things in child #1’s book and use this as my main record and note who took part.

The second record occurs at the end of the year. Here I collate everything each child has done by going through these homework guides, the calendar, the books they used and read and our collective memories (even photographs of activities and family events). I summarize the total, then write it so that it corresponds with my original exemption application. I also record the resources I used, what worked and what didn’t and what plans or changes I will make for next year. This takes me about half a day per child to complete, and I absolutely hate doing this chore. But it is probably the best thing I ever invented for myself because it gives

me a sense of accomplishment and completion, so I can move on with confidence.

I began doing this a few years back when my son had learning problems, and I was afraid I could not justify what we had done during the year, it seemed so little. But the exercise proved to be extremely valuable because in recording what we had done in some detail (and quite a lot of frustrated desperation), it made me realize that while *his* progress had been slow at the time (he learnt only six letter-sounds that year), *my* work with him had been nonetheless quite extensive and intense. I broke down what he had covered into portions and got as much mileage as I could out of seeming thin air. For example, under language I wrote that he had learnt amongst other things: “elements of a story — structure of a book — (title, author, contents, page numbers, index, illustrations).” I could record this because we had read story books, and naturally during the course of reading them, I would point out things from time to time. Hardly rocket science, but learnt and taught nonetheless, and so it was all good stuff to be recorded. By the time I had finished, I found I had written a whole page on (very little) things that he had accomplished in language alone. It was a great morale boost personally and meant I could look the ERO in the face if they came calling (which they didn’t).

The third way I keep records is to have a folder for each child. In it I keep the exemption application, the exemption certificate, the daily “homework guides” and the yearly summaries. I also have a separate photo book of “homeschooling” or family activities we have done. Keeping it in order and keeping the end of year summary in this way helps to keep the clutter down. I keep all the children’s work for the previous year as “evidence” of having committed them to regular work. But once that year is up, I toss their written work and exercise books (except for items that are personal favourites) and rely instead on these summaries and the “homework guides” as providing me with my official record of what we have done.

I believe we should keep records but only for practical and personal reasons. Firstly because at the end of the day, we might need to rely on such records to provide a legal basis for our home schooling. Our ability to homeschool is not in our own hands but in that of the MOE, and a record of what has been done may one day be important.

Secondly I found having such records to be a great help to me when I was reviewed about two years ago (my only time in 10 years). Having the information available gave me confidence. (However, as far as the records themselves go, the ERO did not even glance at them. As long as we have the gift of the gab and “look” organized, I think we must pass muster.)

Finally, and to me this is the most important reason, I keep these records to satisfy my own needs. It keeps me on track, my head stays uncluttered, helps me find things and gives me confidence. And I think that is why this works so well for me, because I’ve adapted it primarily for me, and any pandering to the ERO and

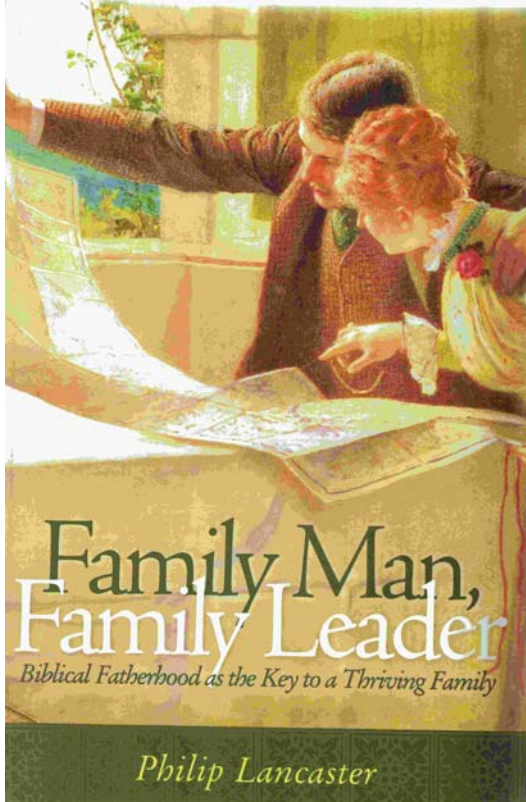
(Continued on page 28: Records)

The

Home Education Foundation presents...

its 2004 feature title:

Family Man, Family Leader

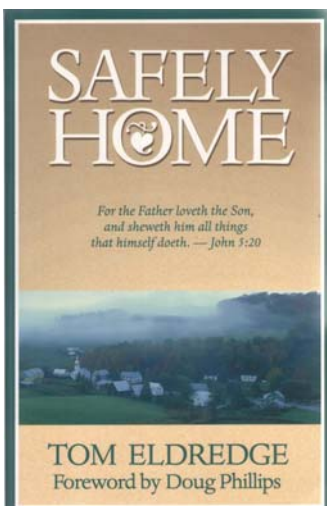


What this country needs is a few good men — husbands and fathers who are willing to love and lead their households with manly resolve and godly vision. Frankly, the Church needs these men every bit as much as the rest of the country. We are experiencing a national crisis of manhood of epidemic proportions. Absent a revival of fatherhood, we can expect to see an ever-increasing rise in the number of effeminate boys and masculine women, as well as the breakdown of the Christian family as it is defined in Holy Scripture. What we desperately need today are men who will be family men and family leaders. But how? Now, in simple, easy-to-understand concepts, the Biblical foundation necessary for men to turn their hearts to home and change the world are presented in a book entitled *Family Man, Family Leader*. This remarkable work first presents the vision of Biblical household leadership and then addresses the many practical issues necessary for achieving victory as a man, from learning and acting upon God's priorities, to decision-making as a father, to growing in oneness with your wife, to personal accountability before the Lord and victory over secret sins. Whether you are a veteran visionary father or a dad just beginning the journey of patriarchy, we hope you find *Family Man, Family Leader* to be a source of inspiration and practical help. By Philip Lancaster. Paperback. Approx. 320 pgs

Building Christian Husbands, Fathers & Leaders

Check out our other key titles:

Safely Home



After years of broken marriages, rebellious children and misplaced priorities within the Church, parents' cries to God have been answered by a Holy Spirit-driven desire by fathers to turn their hearts to their children, by parent-directed Hebrew education and with the re-discovery of Biblical roles for men and women.

Many Church shepherds now see that, despite a smorgasbord of programs, most children of believers will reject the Faith and blend into an increasingly pagan society. They grieve at the destruction of the family within their flocks, but they are at a loss for what to do.

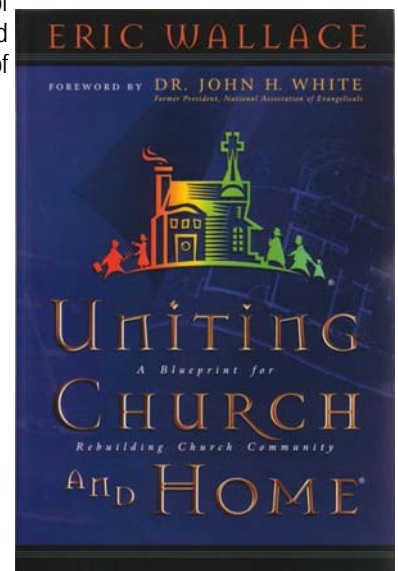
Here are Biblical solutions. Paperback, 110 pages.

Uniting Church and Home

Every Pastor, every parent, every Church library needs a copy of *Uniting Church and Home*!

Increasingly, pastors and families agree: many well-intentioned Church programs do more to pull families apart than build them up. But Pastors and families are rediscovering a simple, Biblically based model for ministry that strengthens the family unit and restores the Church's life as a family of families. This book is the prescription for how you and your church can work together to become family integrated.

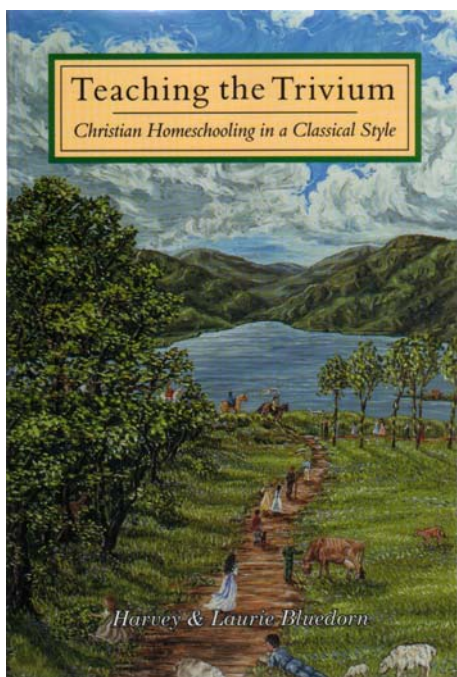
Includes a FREE bookmark with a list of the Top Ten ways your family can be a blessing to your Pastor and Church leaders. Paperback, 284 pages.





Books by the Bluedorns

Books by the Bluedorns



Teaching the Trivium

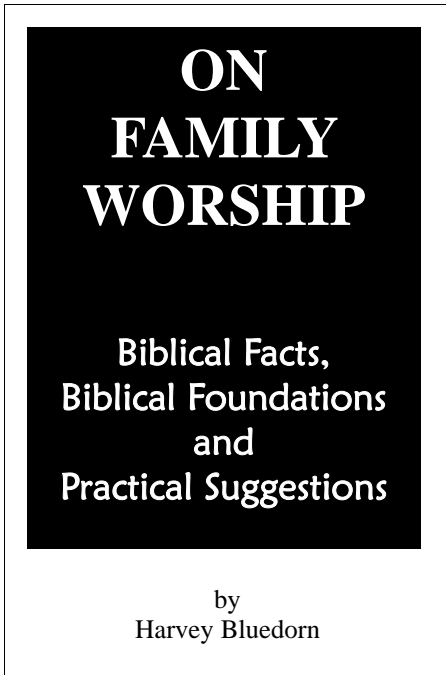
How can you give your children the tools they need to teach themselves? Long ago students were first taught how to learn. Today, students are taught an encyclopaedia of subjects – trivia – but they are not taught the basic skills of learning: to discover, to reason and to apply. They are not taught the **Trivium**.

Placing classical education within a homeschool context, the Bluedorns offer a workable plan for every age and subject based on the study of grammar, logic and rhetoric. Their curriculum suggestions, teaching tips and advice on topics such as character building will help you provide your children with a solid education.

Paperback, 637 pages.

On Family Worship

Is a call to fathers in particular to review *why* they lead and if necessary to reform *how* they lead their families in the worship of our God. This fantastic wee tool is 35 A5 pages.



A Christian's Guide to ...with all your getting get understanding. Proverbs 4:7

Learning Logic at Home

- Reasons to Study Logic
- Self-Teaching Logic Books
- Suggested Course of Study
- Suggestions for Children & Adults
- Frequently Asked Questions

Learning Logic at Home

Logic is the study of how to take statements you know are true and put them together to come up with a conclusion you also know is true.

Nathaniel Bluedorn writes to convince readers that they need to learn logic. He gives an overview of logic and reviews many of the books available on logic and reasoning. One chapter is dedicated to outlining a suggested course of study for students interested in learning logic.

35 pages, A5.

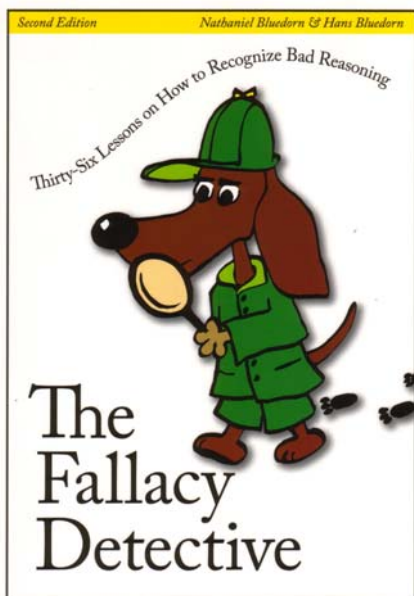
The Fallacy Detective

After reading an article I wrote, someone suggested I read *The Fallacy Detective*. "You committed several logical fallacies in your article. I think you could learn a lot from *The Fallacy Detective*." [ouch!] So I borrowed my parents' copy and sat down and started reading. Firstly, it gave an introduction to bad reasoning and fallacies – errors in logic. Just as the book launches into the lessons it issues a challenge: "Remember, most people never study good thinking skills. So people who take on this quest of learning logic are breaking out of the mold, and this takes courage. It also takes humility. But most of all, it takes self-discipline." I sure was glad of that challenge as I read through the book and completed the exercises. I learned about ways people (including myself) will avoid the question using red herrings, ad hominens and straw men, etc., and how we make assumptions, commit statistical fallacies and use manipulative propaganda. What an eye-opener the book was! I am more aware now when someone is not being logical; however, the real eye-opener was in myself. All the ways I thought I was being logical because of the connections I could make between concepts or whatever, I was in fact committing logical fallacies! Whew! I was glad they warned me about the need for humility at the beginning of the book!

Now that I have finished, I am very glad for the opportunity to have read it. You know, reading it is like reading a comedy. I was laughing all the way through. The Bluedorn brothers, Nathaniel and Hans, the authors of *The Fallacy Detective* are really very funny. What was it that Mary Poppins used to sing? "A little bit of humour helps the humility to go down."

Logically set out (we would hope so!), the book works on the principles of moving from the known to the unknown and from the simple to the complex. It is easy to progress through it, and there are plenty of reviews and interesting exercises to help us retain the concepts. Geared for ages 13 plus, it is designed so that groups can go through it together, and Mums and Dads can sit on the couch with Johnny and Jane as they read the chapters and complete the questions. Comes complete with a comprehensive answer key and the promise of a fun "fallacy detective game" which can be played once the concepts have been learned.

I highly recommend it. Softcover, 227 pages. Now with comics!



More Books...

The Heart of Homeschooling

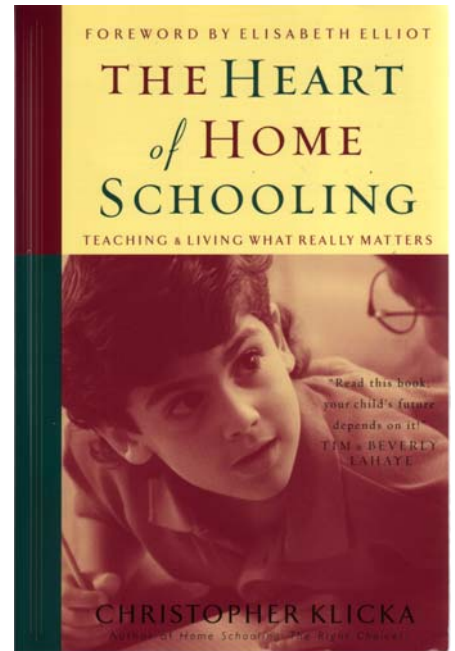
Raising children is hard work. Raising children *and homeschooling* is really hard work!

The author of this book understands what really matters in the training of our children. Directing his comments primarily to fathers, he covers the important matters at the heart of homeschooling such as fathers turning their hearts to their children, the importance God places on fathers educating their children, the nurturing of our own souls as heads of the family, loving our wives and more.

This book is not intended to be read only by fathers, however! The author also intends wives to read this book, and his wife has written a special chapter directly to them. And then another chapter has been directed specifically towards the homeschooled teenager.

The author and his family have lived through some incredible times of suffering. They share their experiences with you and from their hearts write about the Heart of Homeschooling.

Softcover. 218 pages.



A New Zealand Home Educator's Guidebook

Preparing for an ERO Review

Craig S. Smith

Preparing for an ERO Review

Expecting an ERO review? This booklet answers all the major questions such as: "What are the Review Officers looking for?" "What if we aren't doing what we originally said we'd be doing in our exemption application?" "What kind of 'school work' do we need to show the Review Officer?" "What questions are we legally required to answer?" "Do we have to allow the Review Officer access to our children?" "What if we receive a negative report after the review?" and more...!

Be prepared for your review! Read this booklet!

20 pages, A5 size.

Training Children and Youth to be

Pure

- * *Start Young*
- * *Set the Example*
- * *Never Compromise*
- * *Be Constantly Vigilant*

Prepared by Barbara Smith
(70+ A4 pages)

Training Our Children and Youth to be Pure

We want our children to be holy, righteous and pure. We want to teach them wisdom and purity in relationships. We want to teach them to be self-disciplined and to seek after what is right and good and not give in to fleshly desires. This book is a compilation of writings by some veteran homeschoolers from New Zealand and overseas on these matters. It also contains a great list of books and resources available to parents/children and youth to help them along on this path of purity.

72 pages. A4 size.

TRAINING OUR CHILDREN

by
Craig & Barbara Smith

Reading Aloud.....	Page 1
The Art of Buying Used Books.....	Page 3
Learning to Read & Reading to Learn.....	Page 6
Home Discipleship.....	Page 9
Training Our Children's Minds.....	Page 12
Training Our Children to Worship.....	Page 17
Keep Going When the Going Gets Tough..	Page 22

Training Our Children

Craig and Barbara Smith, two of New Zealand's pioneer home educators, share some of their best advice, borrowed and original, re-worked and developed, over 24 years of training their own seven children (two adopted) and fostering many others.

Topics covered include reading aloud, the art of buying used books, home discipleship, training our children's minds, training our children to worship ... and more!

35 pages. A4 size.

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Graduates Speak

Two Very Different Film Festivals

By Isaac Botkin



Isaac Botkin, 23, used his freedom as a home-educated American to study filmmaking in his father's production business. Isaac began his professional career at age 14, working with his father. His credits as producer, editor and animator include documentaries, broadcast entertainment and television news. He is the author of Outside Hollywood, a book about the declining influence of Hollywood in the 21st century and what will likely replace it.

Isaac currently lives North of Auckland and will be speaking on the media at the Code Blue Christian Worldview Conference at Willow Park in January.

On November 6th, 2004, I attended a scriptwriters' expo in Los Angeles organized by *Creative Screenwriter* magazine. Attending that convention were several thousand filmmakers who wanted to be part of the Hollywood of tomorrow. Apart from a few of the more experienced speakers there, nearly all of them had a tiny, twisted vision of what their movies should be achieving. Most of them merely wanted to become rich celebrities, seeing film success as the quickest way to fame and fortune. Others wanted to write raw, shocking stories, but their idea of originality was simply to copy the depravity of some other "edgy" yet successful scripts.

However, nearly all of them believed that film, being a modern art form, should somehow be used to attack traditional culture and anything that might resemble traditional religious values. This is a common view in the media. All forms of media are understood to be cultural weapons to realign the culture in revolutionary ways. Of course, media is culturally powerful, and film is the most potent of all art forms, especially when teaching lessons about morality. These lessons can be highly destructive if the lessons are wrong and contrary to God's Word. But if a film is created within a Biblical worldview, the lessons are encouraging and constructive.

This is why I like movies. Good films with good messages can annihilate dangerous ideas that have injured entire cultures. Ever since I was a child, my father has taught me this. As Christians, it is our duty to take captive every rival thought to the glory of God (2 Corinthians 10:5), and this means that we must use

the weapons of media wisely, whether we are watching films or making films. We live in a culture that has been saturated by the secular media, and unfortunately there seems to be a prevailing idea in many churches that Christianity should somehow be culturally irrelevant; a kind of spiritual hobby.

This means that few Christians are working anywhere in the area of media, and few aspire to be filmmakers. Fortunately, this is changing. As soon as the convention in LA was over, I flew to Texas for the first annual San Antonio Christian Independent Film Festival (SACIFF). Here were gathered about seven hundred young homeschoolers, most of them with their families, eager to learn more about the craft of making movies and the theological reasons of why and how they should do so.

I think the entire festival was a great encouragement to all who came. The speakers were excellent, the participants were attentive and all of the short films submitted to the contest showed great potential. It was a nice contrast to the bitter, burnt-out hippies and clueless, neo-marxist college students at the California expo. And the attendees of this event had a different goal; rather than trying to assimilate themselves into the corrupt Hollywood industry, they are working to build a network of independent resources outside the studio system.

**Bitter, burnt-out
hippies and clueless,
neo-marxist college
students**

And it makes sense. Who better to create an independent film industry than homeschoolers? They're already used to

doing things outside the system. They're already experienced in doing the research and setting up alternative ways to get better results than a set formula can offer. Also, home education frees students from the world's normalised perspective. They are free to have creative new ideas for telling original stories. They have an understanding of true history, great literature and honest Biblical business principles.

They are the ideal candidates to save the art of film from Hollywood. As I write this, Hollywood is concerned about the large number of "runaway" productions that are being filmed outside of California and outside of the United States. They are also wary of the public's growing interest in films that are being created outside of the studio system. Furthermore, advances in equipment, such as digital cameras and computers, are making the film industry easier to get into. Hollywood has a right to be worried, and young Christian filmmakers, particularly homeschoolers, have a golden opportunity to step up and contribute truth to our culture.

Attendees of the first SACIFF found new friends who share their interests and met other talented technicians whose gifts and abilities complement their own. Tapes and CDs of the event are available at www.visionforum.com. You can find out more about the SACIFF at www.independentchristianfilms.com.

Tough Questions People Ask



Why Aren't Your Children in Sunday School?

Children in the Meeting of the Ephesian Church
By Scott T Brown

Ephesians 6:1-4 is the flagship New Testament passage on child rearing and fatherhood. It is an extremely simple and steady message in light of the dizzying array of advice the world gives to parents. We find four major ideas arising from the text. First, the setting: the meeting of the Church. Second, there are two simple commands for children: obey and honor (Ephesians 6:1-2). Third, there are two understandable results for children: good life and long life (Ephesians 6:3). Fourth, there are two dangerous pitfalls for fathers: provoking and neglecting (Ephesians 6:4).

This article is focused on the first point — the setting of the meeting of the Church.

In the first two verses Paul is clearly speaking to children. These are the children who are in the meeting of the Ephesian church and are hearing the letter read. Paul uses a Greek grammatical form called the vocative case, the “vocative of direct address.” He is directly addressing the children in the meeting of the church. This makes it an obvious fact that children were present in the meetings of the early churches.

In his commentary on Ephesians, William Hendricksen explains it this way:

The apostle assumes that among those who will be listening when this letter is read to the various congregations the children will not be lacking. They are included in God's Covenant..., and Jesus loves them.... Were Paul to be present with us today, he would be shocked at the spectacle of children attending the Sunday School and then going home just before the regular worship service. He has a word addressed directly and specifically to the children. (William Hendricksen, *Galatians and Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979) pg. 258)

The meetings included young boys like Eutychus (probably between 7 and 14 years old), who left the meeting after midnight by falling out a window. He was overcome with sleepiness during a long Pauline preaching session, nodded out and rolled off the window's ledge (Acts 20:7-12).

We need to understand that the meetings in the early

church included babies who were cutting teeth, eight-year-old boys who were wired for movement and budding teenagers being tempted by the worldliness of the world. The children were not in age-graded Sunday schools but were in the midst of the meeting and were taught side by side with everyone else. The meetings of the early church were conducted with a full complement of relationships.

There is no indication from Scripture that children were ever removed from the meetings designed for preaching, Scripture reading, prayer and worship. But in our culture it is automatic and comprehensive. Contrast the normal meetings of our churches with the normal practices of the meetings recorded in the Bible:

- The Time of Moses: Deuteronomy 31:12-13;
- The Time of Nehemiah: Nehemiah 8:1-3, Ezra 10:1;
- The Time of Jesus: Matthew 18:1-5, 19:13-15; and
- The Time of Paul: Ephesians 6:1-4, Colossians 3:20.

Jeremy Walker sums it up:

The constant presumption of Scripture is that children were present in the worship of the people of God. In Nehemiah's time, men and women and all those who could hear with understanding gathered to hear Ezra the scribe read the Law (Nehemiah 8.1-3; Ezra 10.1). Moses certainly anticipated the literal “children” of Israel to be present when the Law was read (Deuteronomy 31.12-13). Paul's letters, intended to be read to the churches, assume the intelligent presence of children (Ephesians 6.1-4; Colossians 3.20), and children were present when the Lord Jesus taught (Matthew 18.1-5; 19.13-15). (Quoted in *Banner of Truth* magazine, November 7, 2002, “Attendance of Children in Public Worship”)

For further study, see the following passages where it is mentioned that children were present in meetings of God's people.

In Joshua 8:35, Joshua built an altar to the Lord in Mount Ebal of whole stones over which no man had ever laid an iron tool. He read “all the words of the law.”

There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones and the strangers who were living among them. (Joshua 8:35)

Joel 2:15-16 describes a time of repentance of the people where all were to gather — even the bride and bridegroom on their wedding day.

Blow the trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly; Gather the people, Sanctify the

congregation, Assemble the elders, Gather the children and nursing babes; Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber and the bride from her dressing room. (Joel 2:15-16)

I would like to pose five questions to help us to reflect more deeply on this subject and, hopefully, help us understand how important it is that we experience the worship of God and the fellowship of the saints alongside our children.

I. Which way is more Biblical?

Should children be in the meeting of the church alongside their parents? If you only had the Bible, what would you conclude about what to do about childcare? Is there any evidence of childcare services to support the worship and instruction of God's people? Do the apostles ever allude to a nursery or Sunday school? Are there any commands relating to the subject? Are there any examples to follow in Scripture for this area?

II. What effect does worship singing have on a child?

This question gets to the point of the power of music on all human beings. We may say, "Our children don't get anything out of the services," but we can't really believe it. We get goose bumps when we sing to children while they are in the womb. We believe that the sounds and even the attitudes surrounding them are affecting their development process. Some people play classical music to their children in the womb while others contend that just hearing it makes their kids smarter outside the womb.

Let me suggest that it is truly wonderful to immerse children in the rich songs of the faith from the time they are babies in arms. So what is the optimal time for bringing your children into the meeting of the church? I counsel families to bring their babies on the first Sunday after their birth and continue weekly throughout their lives.

First of all it must be said that children get something out of everything they experience. So we should abandon the idea that "my child gets nothing out of 'big' church." This is subterfuge and misinformation. Plus, nobody gets everything out of anything, particularly a sermon. We take them to the library, and they do not get everything out of what is there. They listen to all of our conversation, but don't think for a minute that everything goes over their heads.

There is great value for a very young child experiencing the deep and authentic worship of the church. Something is being transferred as they watch their fathers give of the family resources during the offering. As they grow up, their understanding will increase. Something is being transferred as they watch the adults "worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23).

They don't get everything, but they can get something from observing the fervency and genuineness of the church's expression of love for God, dependence upon Him and joy in Him. This is the value of having children in church.

Children progressively understand what a parent and the wider church members love and appreciate. Year after year their understanding builds. Year after year the well is filling up. The cumulative effect of deep and significant thinking and activities is what we are looking for.

III. What effect does the teaching of the Word have on a child?

By joining in the main services, children will be experiencing the teaching of God's Word and beginning to understand the importance of preaching. This is a perfect opportunity for a father to share with his children how the preaching of the Word is affecting him and how he plans to bring his family in line with it.

- Only God knows what a child gets from hearing father pray.
- Only God knows what a child gets out of hearing God's people worship.
- Only God knows what a child gets out of seeing men standing up and speaking of the things of God.
- Only God knows what a child gets out of experiencing Christian community.

It is really much simpler than you might think. The attitude should be: the church is family time. Our family and the family of God.

We enjoy eating out together as a family. We enjoy going to the beach together as a family. Then why do we not enjoy worship and instruction and fellowship as a family with our spiritual family of brothers and sisters?

IV. Which way is more wonderful?

This question helps us to think clearly about what is truly superior. All options are not created equal. Recently, after our worship service, I passed by a mother who was carrying her baby girl. She took a deep breath through her nostrils as if to take in the aroma of her baby. She said:

I can always tell who held my daughter during worship because of the perfume. For instance, I can tell that your wife Deborah was holding my daughter during worship.

Where would you rather have your child? In the arms of one of our mothers or fathers or teenagers or in a soundproof room playing with saliva-encrusted toys? Is it better for a child to be held by his mother while she sings the words of precious hymns or to be in the back room with a childcare worker and who knows how many children?

Would it be more wonderful if we rose up and involved our children in the meetings of the church? And if we used these meetings as opportunities to serve as their personal coaches to grow their love for the Body of Christ; to increase their appreciation (and appetite) for prayer; and to cultivate their affection for

the preaching of the Bible? In doing so, we would be resisting the child-neglecting, child-rejecting and child-depreciating practices that are at work in our churches. It *is* more wonderful!

V. Why have children in the meetings of the church?

The question would be a strange one for people in the year 1800 since they always had their children with them during worship. It was normal. The question would not have come up because people were used to keeping their children with them.

The question would also have been an unusual one for people in the early church. The early church met in homes with all present, and Jesus made it clear to His disciples that children were always welcome.

The question would be a strange one for people in Israel. We have many Old Testament references that record children present during major events where God's Word was being communicated to groups of people. The Old Testament writers make mention of this without interpretation.

It is obvious that the normative practice for Israel and the early church was to integrate children into the normal practices of the gatherings of the people. Nowhere do we find a trace of teaching or example of our modern age-graded approach to the church.

Let's bring our children back into the meetings of the church. I sincerely believe that if the Lord Jesus Christ were here in the twenty-first century, He would be the first to invite them back.

Scott T. Brown is the director of the NCFIC (The National Center for Family-Integrated Churches), a pastor, business man, church leader and elder at Trinity Baptist Church in Wake Forest, North Carolina. He graduated from California State University in Fullerton in History and received a M. Div from Talbot School of Theology. He gives most of his time to church reformation, church planting, building up the Body of Christ and strengthening the family through his local church along with other business activities. He has been married to Deborah for twenty-two years, and they have four children ages nineteen, seventeen, twelve and nine.

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(To study this and other related issues for home, family and Church life further, refer to the book advertised on page 13 entitled *Uniting Church and Home* by Eric Wallace.)

(This article first appeared on the Vision Forum Ministries website: www.visionforumministries.org. Used with permission. Folks who have already read *Uniting Church and Home* may be interested in the *Uniting Church and Family Conference Album*. This tape set helps flesh out the book by Eric Wallace and is available at www.visionforum.com.)

Learning Disabilities



Down Syndrome e-group - VerasKidsNZ

by Jill Hanna of Christchurch

Hi! I have been home educating for ten years, and our latest addition to the family, James (now 2 1/2), has Down syndrome (DS). Recently a group of home educators here in Christchurch with DS children have been getting together, and through purchasing Numicon, I have been in contact with an Auckland home educating mum of a DS child. I suggested starting an email group for those of us home educating DS children and met with enough positive encouragement to give it a go. So, then, here it is:

Group home page: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/VerasKidsNZ>

Group email address: VerasKidsNZ@yahoo.com

The group is open to all NZ home educators with DS children. If you are wondering why I called it Veras Kids, the term comes from Glen Doman's Institutes for the Achievement of Human Potential (IAHP.com) website.

The founder and director of The Institutes for the Achievement of Human Potential of Brazil, Raymundo Veras, was the first to treat large numbers of children who were labeled as "Down syndrome". Over the last forty years it has become the tradition at The Institutes to refer to these children informally as "Veras children" in honor of Dr. Veras. I liked the term (and the work of IAHP) and decided to use it for the e-group. I am not advocating a nation-wide name change for the name Down syndrome, just an informal tag for the group!

If you are home educating a DS child and would like a friendly, informal forum to ask all those questions that the therapists don't seem to want to answer, share information that can help others and generally encourage each other, please join us, especially if you have an older DS child and can provide some of the answers! My wee man is only 2 1/2, so I don't pretend to know much and am hoping to get many of my questions answered by those of you who have already been there.

John and Jill Hanna, Josh 18, Rebecca 17, Megan 8 and James 2 1/2 have been home schooling for 10 years. Josh is now a 3rd year Joinery Apprentice and Becca has been working part-time and has just come back from 6 weeks overseas with Teen Missions. We are members of Canterbury Home Educators Inc. Jill has been on the committee, serving variously as Newsletter Editor, Playgroup Co-ordinator, and President, as well as being on several sub-committees.

Over a Cuppa

Quiet Time

With Kendra Fletcher



Walking Alongside Homeschooling Mums

So where in all the busyness is there time to nurture a relationship with the Saviour? Does rolling out of bed in the morning and begging God for help as I stumble into the shower count as quality time spent with Him? What more can be required of me before I collapse and simply say, "I can't do one more thing, Lord! I'm on overload!" Do you ever feel that way?

And yet, if we are to believe God's Word, then we must take ownership of the fact that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. And before we jump into Scripture here to see what taking root in our faith looks like, let me first suggest that if you're feeling that God has burdened you or placed a yoke upon you that is not easy or light, then it's time to take a hard look at what it is you're considering essential. Christ says His yoke is easy and His burden is light. It's most often the world's expectations or our need for perfection in one area or another that causes us to throw our hands up in despair and say, "I can't do this! I can't do what God has called me to do!" Really? Is that true? Because not only does He tell us that His yoke is easy and His burden is light, He also promises to supply all our needs, according to His riches in glory. What I'm getting at here is that we need to be faithful in what God has given us to do, and if we are feeling over-taxed, then it's time to set some peripheral things aside. It's time to prioritize.

Pull out your Bible and take a look at Mark 1:21-35. Here's what we learn:

Jesus was in Capernaum. While there, He:

- Entered the synagogue and taught;
- Cast out demons;
- Entered Simon's house, learned of Simon's mother-in-law's illness and healed her;
- In the evening, the whole city (it is not certain how large a population Capernaum had, but it is thought to have been under 2,000) gathered at Simon's door; Jesus healed the sick and demon-possessed.

Verse 35: He rose early for time alone with God.

Jesus had His priorities right. He never fit time with His Father around His day; instead He fit His day around His time with the Father. He knew that His time with God was a need, and if Jesus needed to be alone gleaning wisdom and gaining strength from God, how

much more do we! If we make the time for God, God will give us the time to do everything else He requires of us.

The truth is, we really don't have any valid excuses for not spending time in God's Word or His presence. We may say now in this season of motherhood that we simply don't have the time or that we are too tired or too distracted or even that we aren't very good at it. But if we don't get into the habit now, what will our excuses be in the next season of life?

Need some practical ideas? How about...

- A Prayer binder. Mine has sections for each day. On Mondays I pray for my husband and each child. Tuesdays for my family (parents, brothers and sisters, etc.) Wednesday it's church and ministries. Thursdays I pray for my community and government. On Fridays I pray for specific needs or concerns.
- Prayer cards. This is a great way to save your Christmas cards. File each family photo under the letter of their last name and then pray through the box. My children love this, and it gives them a heart for the families we pray for.
- Email accountability with a friend.
- Email Bible Study (www.achristianhome.com).
- BSF, Community Bible Study or other very meaty studies that cut to the chase and don't allow time for us to be busybodies or gossips (see I Timothy 5:13).
- Family worship. If Dad doesn't lead this, how can you without usurping his authority or taking over what is his responsibility? Scripturally it is our husbands' responsibility to bring our families to the throne of God everyday. However, it is not our responsibility to make sure that they do. Did you catch that? Stop opening the Bible to a particular passage and sliding it over to him at dinner. Quit buying devotional books and putting them by his bedside!

My father never understood his responsibility in this area. My parents both love the Lord and the Word, but my dad just never taught it to us through a family worship or devotional time. However, I never once saw my mom emasculate him by making comments about his lack of spiritual leadership in front of us children. As far as we knew, he was a strong and devoted leader in our home because that's what my mother communicated to us. I can count on one hand the number of times my father led a sort of church service for us in a hotel room when we were vacationing, and you know, to this day those few times have a positive impression on me. Again, though it may be his responsibility to lead your family in worship, it is not your responsibility to make sure he does.

So, what kind of worship time can you develop with your children during the day?

- Copywork: challenge your children and

(Continued on page 28: Quiet Time)

Parenting Tips

An Interview on Emotional Purity

With Mark Misch



On 10 January 2005 *Keystone* had the opportunity to ask the tough questions when we interviewed Mark Misch. He wrote the forward for Heather Paulsen's book, *Emotional Purity* and works as the Head Cross Country and Track Coach at the Southwest Baptist University in Missouri. The statements attributed to Mark are paraphrases taken from the recording of the interview.

Tell us a bit about yourself.

Misch: My name is Mark Misch. I grew up in Coffeyville, Kansas, a small town of about 10,000 people. I have a younger sister who is a schoolteacher in the United States. She is 27 and I'm 32. My folks have been married about 34 years. I was a real average kid, did average stuff and loved sports. When I was about 17, I asked Jesus into my life as my Saviour. It was through the influence of a coach that I had at the time who really impacted me. At this same time in my life I was beginning to realize that running was a sport that I really enjoyed a lot. The Lord used the sport as an avenue for me to be impacted by some great Christian men. I started to get the vision for running as a gift that God had given me. I know I'm not a rocket scientist. But I know I like to run. I figure God can use that.

Can you give us your testimony?

Misch: In America you have what is called the Christian culture. You can grow up and go to Church every Sunday and hear the sermons and do the right things. The thing is that there are a lot of Churches that are not very spiritually filled. There are a lot of Churches that are full of nice people, and the pastor will give a nice little soft message to make you feel good about yourself, and then you go home and eat your fried chicken for lunch or whatever. It becomes more of an event; a Sunday event as opposed to being spiritually fed. I grew up in a great family, and my mom and dad are great Christians. But Church is not where I found Christ. I was positively influenced by many, many people there. I probably sat through 500 sermons in my life before I became a Christian. I knew right from wrong. But I had to know why right was right. And I was also hungry to know why I was here and what was important. I had a coach which God placed in my school. He was coaching the women's track team at the time. After running I would stop by the weight room just to say hi and see what was going on. Coach Schwab took an interest in me and challenged me on a couple of issues. He would ask me stuff like, "What is important to you? What do you want to do? What are your goals in life? Why is that? Have you prayed about

those things?" One time, knowing that I went to Church, he asked me straight out if I had personally asked Jesus to be my Saviour. That really made the wheels start turning. God was really working on my heart. Later on I heard a testimony by Steve Pelluer, who was a quarterback for Kansas City Chiefs. His testimony got me excited. I realized that I could have a passion for sports and serve God. It was something no one had ever shared with me before. When I went back to school, Coach Schwab and I started up a chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes organization. That was the first time I was put in a position of leadership as a Christian. And obviously whenever you are in a position like that, you are forced to grow.

I had a real passion for running, and I like people. And shortly after I just knew in my heart that I wanted to be a coach one day. Going through college I was radically impacted by some great men. Then I had some opportunities to do some summer camps and get my foot in the door coaching a little bit while I was still a college athlete. At this point I said to myself, "This is it. This is what I've got a passion for. I understand the sport. I understand people. I can talk to people about God and impact some lives."

That is how things got started. And that is how I ended up in Denver, Colorado, where I met Heather Paulsen.

Where did you first hear about the concept of emotional purity?

Misch: Heather Paulsen was it. She was the first person to put together some thoughts on the subject, to put a word to the concept. Before meeting her, I didn't understand how emotional things, which are not on paper and are not physical, can affect your relationship not only with your future spouse but with others too.

So Heather and I were both in Denver. I had become good friends with a girl (who I'm still friends with to this day). I met Heather through her. She and I began building this great friendship. When things ended I remember just thinking, "Man, I'm shattered. What happened here?" I didn't mess around with dating. I did things right. There was no physical intimacy. No lines were crossed. In terms of building the friendship and relationship those things that should be focused on were. But I found that on the emotional level something wasn't right. At the same time, Heather herself went through a similar experience...I'm sure you know a little bit about her story.

Looking back, you know that hindsight is 20/20. God in His foresight knows what will happen in our lives, and He is able to take situations and use them for good. Heather Paulsen was able to write her book. And now there are people reading her book who, through it, will be able to have better perception for understanding what is going on in their own lives and will know what not to allow and will be able to guard their hearts a bit more than either Heather or I did in our separate experiences.

Define emotional purity for us.

Misch: As Christians most of us have a pretty solid

concept of what physical purity is all about because it is pretty black and white. Obviously there will still be some debatable issues about some minor things, but mainly it is just pretty cut and dry. Emotional purity is a little more difficult to grasp because we are dealing with an intangible element. But that is why you need to be praying that the Lord would guard your heart and keep you from situations which could be tempting. We even need protection from situations which we don't know that we are participating in until after the fact. Right now I could name several single Christian women I know and say, "Yeah, that person is a friend of mine." But I have learned that you have to be very careful in those situations because you do not want to stir something in somebody that you do not mean to stir. Stirring something without meaning to can be as easy as answering a question in a certain way or responding in a certain way. I might do or say something and mean it in a completely different way than it is read by a girl. Here is a scenario: So and so is standing there on the sidewalk, and you are walking somewhere, and you stop there and talk to her for 30 seconds. "How's it going. How's your family." Then away you go. Next thing you know someone is saying to you, "Hey, I saw you talking with so and so. And she's been talking with her friend..." And you're like, "Woah, woah! What? Take the ring off that finger. We're not going down that road!" These are little things that we need to be aware of. It's ok. It is the way God wired us.

But to define emotional purity. It is something that starts in the heart. Emotional purity is one of those things where you have to be in touch with the Lord and your relationship with the Lord and ask him to help you to guard your heart and keep you from temptation and situations. Just make wise decisions about who you are spending time with, who you are around, what are the settings, who are the people there and so forth.

Here is one for married people: I'm not married, and I'm not engaged, and I'm not in a relationship right now. But I do know that everyone has bad days, and if you go to work, and you are only around someone for a certain period of time, you may only see all the great qualities about that person, the things which you enjoy. "I like being around Joey. He is a funny guy." Or, "I like being around Jill. She always has a sense of humour. She laughs at my jokes." Or whatever it is. But you don't live with that person. You don't see everything in them. So maybe you are married, and your wife is a regular person just like you and has good days and bad days, and you think, "Man why doesn't she understand me like so and so does." That seems to be only a minor thing, but the minute something like that would even enter your mind, that is when you have to have God shutting that door and saying, "No, you can't even think about those things."

In churches in American when it comes to relationships, it is almost like it is a trial by error thing, which is horrible. American Churches have the same divorce rate as non-Christians. Where does that start? It starts

with education on everything. How do you have a relationship? How do you have a healthy relationship? What's it about? Where does it start? It starts even before you know the person with whom you are going to have a relationship. When someone reads *Emotional Purity*, they are at a certain point in their lives. You can't erase your baggage, but from that point on you can try to start to make some decisions which will help you move in a direction which will help to make your life better.

What attracted you to the concept of emotional purity? What made you say, "This is it!"?

Misch: Just exactly what I went through personally. It was as clear as a bell. Heather's book explained exactly what had happened to me.

What did you particularly like about the book, *Emotional Purity*?

Misch: I felt like she was spot on. She used examples which were very credible. There were things which I think most people can relate to on some level. They could understand that this isn't some far off concept. On reading her book, people will think: "This is what is happening in my life or has happened." Or "I didn't understand that this is what happened but this is what happened." Putting a word or a phrase to a feeling is what I think Heather did best in *Emotional Purity*.

"Guard your heart. Guard it!"

How did you come to write the forward?

Misch: I had lived through this negative emotional experience, and Heather had too. We had gone through these experiences separately but at the same time. To me what she had written was just so true. I think she felt like she needed to have a guy write the forward, not to make it credible, but just to

say that this is not just some woman's 'touchy feely here you go' book, but this is the real deal. This is life. This is what happened. It happens both sides of the plate. It is a book for guys as well as girls. I have a ton of Christian male friends who have just eaten this book up.

People have a tendency to talk about *Emotional Purity* in reference to girls and the female heart. How much of emotional purity was accurate in detailing what is going on in a man's heart?

Misch: I felt like it was pretty accurate.

God wired men to be passionate. Men are basically designed with a driving force within them to be leaders. There are a lot of reasons why guys aren't leaders. Society doesn't help us. But deep down inside we have a desire to lead, to fight the battle, to believe in something, to be steadfast and full on. The problem is that a lot of our guys today are confused because society doesn't model that.

Men are passionate people. They get passionate about what they do. Men are very emotional. They might not show many emotions, but then you aren't around them all the time. They have highs and lows. When you commit part of yourself to something you are investing in it. That is something that you have to have. For something to be good or meaningful, you have to invest yourself into it. It is just like you may invest yourself into a friend. Maybe you have mentored one or two young people, and they have struggled with a lot of problems. Maybe they are still struggling and you are pouring yourself into them but still some days you are going, "Oh, why are they doing that?" or "Why are they making that decision?" And it hurts you because you care about the person and what is going on. You are passionate about it.

I think that emotional purity is a two way street. For men I think it comes out a little bit differently. I don't think we understand our emotions. I don't think we understand how we are thinking about a woman until something happens. And then it hits you. Like if Fred is getting to know a girl. He likes her, and then the next thing you know, Joe asks this girl out. So now Fred is thinking, "Oh no. I should've asked her out." But it wasn't until after Joe made the first move that Fred realized what he was feeling.

Will you home educate one day.

Misch: That is a great question! Not being married, I still don't have any kids. I'll tell you this, though: in terms of my own kids I believe that the Lord provides financially if you honour Him and if you desire to raise your family to do things the ways that He wants. And I would love for my wife to be able to stay at home and be with the children. That would be my desire. The job of a mother is beyond description. And as you can tell, in America we are in an era where women have left the home and gone into the corporate world, and you see the breakdown of the family as a result.

Again, I'm not married and don't have a family, so I'm probably not in a position to make a credible comment on it, but I do feel as though now more than ever the value of homeschooling is extremely high simply because there is a lot of places that you would not want to send your kids or situations that you would want to expose them to. I think even more so at a young age it is important to establish your kids like it says in Deuteronomy about raising up a family in the ways that you should. I think that if you do those things when they are young, then they will be able to go out on their own two feet later on and fight the fight. But children are so very impressionable in their early years, and it is important to protect and prepare them for the future.

Are you excited about the prospect of teaching your own children about emotional purity one day?

Misch: Sure. If God gives me a family, I had better use this knowledge I have acquired to raise my kids and protect them. Physical purity is very easy to teach. But again, emotional purity is unfortunately something you learn a lot more about once you have gone through

something, and so obviously my desire would be to protect my children from going through things that they don't need to go through.

What advice would you give to parents about how they can start to introduce the concepts of emotional purity?

Misch: Acknowledging that this is at the discretion of the parents and their situation and between them and their spouse and what not, here goes: If I had boys, I'd be like, "Look fellas: everywhere you look you are going to be tempted by lust, unless you are blind. You are living in the world where there are billboards, televisions and radios. If you go into the grocery store to buy an apple and stand in the grocery line there will be fourteen zillion magazines with provocative pictures of women." The thing is knowing that you can't protect those kids from everything. Your home you protect. You run what is going on in your house. But no matter how much you protect your kid, you can't stop everything...you take your sons to the rugby game and then all of a sudden they are exposed to something, and you can't stop it. The world is sinful; it is a fallen place. However, you have to talk to them about that right then. "These are the things you are going to have to deal with your whole life. These are the things you are going to be tempted with. It is not bad. We want you to be interested in women. But this is where you have to guard your heart." These things are never addressed. From the gun you have to be aware of this: this is what your child is going to face. You have to talk to them about these things and communicate with them all the time. Unfortunately I think there is a lot of poor communication between fathers and kids a lot of times. Mom and dad both have responsibilities in the family, but they have to work together on this. Emotional purity is something just like everything else: if you are raising your children and teaching this to them, it just becomes a part of their life. It becomes like a habit, an understanding that this is what is important. It is something that needs to be constantly reinforced during the early stages of their lives, during their moldable years.

I sure hope the Lord grants me a family and children, and if that happens, I won't be waiting around to address certain issues with my children. It says in the Bible to guard your heart because it is the wellspring of life. And it is. Guard your heart. You've got to. It will take every single day. Put on the armour. Guard your heart.

Raising children is the most important job God grants you because you are furthering the kingdom. Those are His children. He has just blessed you by having them in your possession for a period of time.

Who should read *Emotional Purity*?

Misch: Emotional Purity would be good for young people who are just beginning to be attracted to the opposite sex. The book could really apply to anybody depending on where they are at in life. Probably the majority of people it would directly apply to would be

(Continued on page 27: Misch)

Home Education Research



The New Face of Homeschooling

By Peggy J. Farber

As their ranks increase, homeschoolers are tapping public schools for curriculum, part-time classes, extra-curricular services, and online learning

Adam Schieber's school day straddles two worlds. After eating breakfast with his family, the 15-year-old pads over to an iMac in his bedroom at 8 a.m. and logs on to the Virtual Charter School, an online compendium of Internet links, teacher webpages, lessons and assignments created for homeschooled children by the teachers of Basehor-Linwood (Kansas) public school district where Adam lives. At 10:30 he showers and goes to the local public high school, where his older brother is a full-time senior. Adam takes two classes, chemistry and French. Between classes he joins his brother and pals at lunch in the school cafeteria, and at 1:30 he returns home to finish off any schoolwork left over from the morning.

This is the new face of homeschooling. Where once, not so long ago, homeschooling families were entirely on their own to find curricula, provide opportunities for socializing and monitor academic growth, today an increasing number of school districts are offering homeschooling parents a rich array of benefits. In Kansas, California, Colorado, Washington and other states, school districts that once grudgingly granted permission for homeschooled children to participate in after-school activities now openly court them with virtual curriculum packages, school-based enrichment centers, in-service training sessions and even, in at least one case, a full-time school designed to satisfy the demands of homeschool families. "It's an incredible safety net," says Adam's mother, Melanie Dearing, of the curriculum, textbooks and professional support she gets from the school district to homeschool Adam and two younger children, Nicole, 7, and Brandon, 5.

Survival Mechanism

Conversations with education officials at the

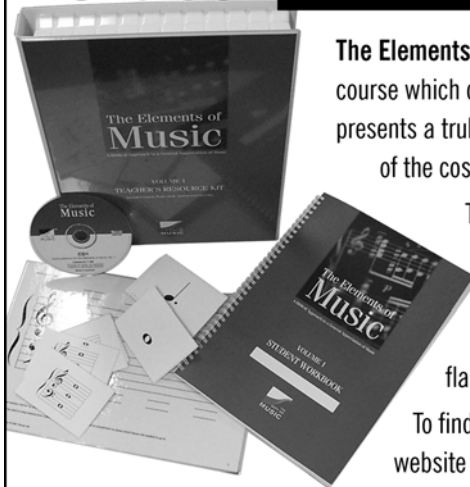
state and local levels around the country turn up a broad spectrum of collaborative practices. These new configurations challenge traditional definitions of public schooling—and in some places they introduce new sources of school revenue. "In the last four or five years, school districts across [Colorado] have been finding ways to attract homeschoolers to school programs," says Art Ellis, Colorado's assistant commissioner of education. "It's a survival mechanism. In some districts they've lost so many kids to homeschooling, they're losing revenue."

Some schools pick up a bit of state funding by offering once-a-week enrichment classes to homeschoolers. Others operate as charter schools, helping parents supervise their children's learning at home in exchange for full per-pupil payments from their states. When the California Board of Education polled 317 charter schools last March, nearly one in five identified themselves as homeschool charter schools. An additional 20 percent identified themselves as non-site-based charter schools.

Distance-learning models like Basehor-Linwood's are catching on elsewhere. A second Kansas-based online charter, the Wichita e-School, opened last September with the slogan: "Educating your child at home just got easier." Ninety elementary students were enrolled. At the same time, a privately managed, publicly funded electronic charter school for homeschool and at-risk students called e-Cot opened in Ohio. Initial enrollment: 2,600 elementary and secondary school students from around the state. Meanwhile, former education secretary William J. Bennett recently announced that he will serve as chairman of a new cyberschool, named K12, targeted especially at homeschoolers. The for-profit venture will launch in the fall with a complete curriculum for K-2 and plans to eventually expand its services to include students in K-12.

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Although Basehor-Linwood, near Kansas City, started its virtual school in 1998 without a clear idea of who would use it, the project quickly attracted hundreds of homeschool families from around the state. The charter school draws \$5,000 in per-pupil state reimbursements for each enrolled child, money that goes into the district's general fund. From that, the district provides each family with an iMac computer, Internet connection and the services of its teachers.

Public Obligation?

Some administrators say their collaboration with homeschoolers is motivated by a simple sense of obligation to all students, whether enrolled in regular classrooms or not. "We did research four years ago and found that kids were homeschooled for an average of two years," says Linda Kondris, an administrator in Colorado Springs who established a program of enrichment classes for homeschool families. In her district of 32,000 children, 950 children are educated at home each year. "Typically, kids go in and out of the system," Kondris said. "We wanted to try and maintain a good connection with their families so they could come back into the system easily."

The most common accommodation schools make is dual enrollment, a policy that allows home-educated children, especially secondary school students, to take particular classes at local public schools. Ruth Dunnavan's two children are dual enrolled at the local elementary school in the small coastal village of Moultonborough, New Hampshire. Beatrice, 9, and Lee, 8, take art, music and gym classes once a week, and Lee goes every day for lunch and recess. "My son's life revolves around recess," says Dunnavan. The children also go on field trips, have desks reserved for them in classrooms in their respective grades and bring cookies to school when there's a birthday party. "They get to see what's going in school, and I do, too, and I can compare their progress [to their classmates'], something that's hard to do in homeschooling," she says.

It took considerable negotiation and patience for Dunnavan and principal Michele Miller to come up with this plan, largely because the elementary school schedule is relatively freeform. Last year, when art, music and gym were scattered through the school week, Dunnavan and the children wasted several hours every day, either waiting at school for long stretches between classes or driving back and forth. Miller says only a few families homeschool in Moulton borough, so it hasn't been too hard to arrange the schedule to accommodate the Dunnavans this year. Miller even arranged for the children of one 4th-grade class to have art, music and gym before lunch and chorus on Mondays so that Beatrice could attend enrichment classes without interruption. "But what if there were 10 families like theirs?" Miller wonders.

Classroom Exodus

San Lorenzo Valley district in California is one that was beginning to feel the loss of revenue from children leaving the classroom. "We had a homeschool population that was leaving the district," says Eric Schoffstall, a principal at an alternative school in the 4,100-student

district that sits in a redwood forest near Santa Cruz. Sixty-five families had pulled out by 1991, when Schoffstall and his school obtained one of California's first charters. The resulting conversion school, the San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District Charter School, draws in 250 homeschool children — and full per-pupil reimbursement from the state, roughly \$4,500 per student. "We wanted to give people who were inspired to create programs for their kids, for whatever reason, a vehicle to do it," says Schoffstall. "We call it homeschooling, but really they are non-classroom-based programs."

The school has three basic components: multi-age classrooms that children attend two days a week; contracts with local artisans and experts — such as a neighborhood theater company, a ceramist, a naturalist — for community-based workshops; and a lending library with curricula, manipulatives, computers, audio and video tapes. The school also purchases curricula on behalf of families. "We care what curriculum they use, but they can choose whatever they want as long as they don't cross church and state boundaries," says Schoffstall. "And it varies. Some parents say all of life is a lesson, and others go right to one of the teachers and say, 'Can you give us what the regular first-grade class is doing?'"

This kind of collaboration is becoming a significant feature of California's public education system. As many as 30,000 children enrolled in California charter schools are homeschoolers, says Sue Bregato, executive director of a statewide association of charter schools, the California Network of Educational Charters.

Online Outreach

Teachers who work in both regular classrooms and in partnership programs with homeschool families say they find themselves making major changes in their classrooms after they start collaborating with homeschoolers. Josh Anderson teaches 11th-grade English both at Basehor-Linwood High School and for the district's Virtual Charter School, which accommodates 372 homeschooled students. In fact, all of the online school's teachers also teach in regular district classrooms. Comparing his classroom practice to his online teaching, Anderson says: "I'm pretty passionate about what I teach. So I'm going to approach the content the same regardless of which environment I'm using. But teaching online has turned everything I used to do around. I've organized my classroom completely differently."

Teachers for the virtual school put their lesson plans, assignments, ideas for activities and tests from their regular classrooms on websites and then guide parents via email to help children master the curriculum. Teachers post the curriculum in its entirety early in the year, so that homeschoolers can move at their own pace. For instance, Adam Schieber, the part-time homeschooler, finished his coursework for the first semester of 10th-grade English in mid-October.

Anderson says he's been able to introduce a new level

of flexibility to his regular classroom and to his interaction with parents. Just like homeschoolers, students in traditional schools can log on to the virtual school, see what lies ahead and modulate their pace of learning, zooming ahead through some units and going back to others. Their parents can also log on to see exactly what their kids are doing. "The website is really worth it for my classroom students, but I would never have put as much time and energy into it if it were just for the students in my classroom," says Anderson.

One example of comprehensive collaboration between a public school district and homeschooling parents is the Kent Learning Center in Kent, Washington, which serves 200 children in grades 3-12. Academic subjects are taught at the center on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and electives on Tuesday and Thursday. Parents can elect to enroll children in the academic courses, the electives or both. Ninety-five percent of the parents eventually enroll their children full time; almost all are reentering the school system, having earlier opted out.

Tense Negotiations

The delineation between home and school is permeable. Parents asked for — and got — co-status with classroom teachers when the school was established four years ago. On any given day there are five to seven parents in the classroom assisting the teacher. Almost all elective courses are taught by parents. Course content is subject to long and sometimes tense negotiations between parents and the headmistress, Dian Colasurdo. For example, when the matter of teaching evolution came up, some parents resisted. Colasurdo took pains to assure them that she and the school would respect their religious beliefs even while teaching evolution. "They just want a voice. They want to be part of the process and not feel we are [attacking] them and their beliefs," she says.

Patricia M. Lines, a former researcher at the National Center for Education Statistics, says homeschooling parents have been creating institutions like these outside school systems since the 1980s: "Homeschool families often work cooperatively, sharing teaching responsibilities and classes. If you think about what a school is, once they start doing that, they've already got a school. Years ago I said I thought homeschoolers were going to be reinventing schools on their own terms. I had expected it to happen on a small scale. I hadn't expected public schools to step in and help them reinvent it."

Ironically, the stiffest objection to these new public school-homeschool partnerships comes not from defenders of public education but from its harshest critics, members of conservative homeschool groups. The largest national organization, the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), has consistently opposed all regulation of homeschools, including state requirements of any teacher qualifications and student participation in school testing programs. Currently, only nine states require homeschool parents to have even a high school diploma, and only 10 states require students to participate in standardized testing programs. Skirmishes between state legislatures and

HSLDA over these issues have largely been settled since the mid-1990s — in the defense association's favor. Now the association is taking up the battle against programs for homeschoolers offered by school districts. HSLDA president Michael Smith explains: "It concerns us that if a lot of homeschoolers start accepting benefits from schools, ultimately we'll all end up being challenged by legislators to do the same thing. We think that would be a step backward, and it concerns us a lot. That's the reason we oppose it."

Jim Farthing, who edits a newsletter for the Christian Home Educators Confederation of Kansas, says many homeschool parents like the idea of being able to get free curricula and computers from their local schools, but he says others are very wary: "I've heard, 'Hey, I pay my taxes, and I don't get anything in return. Here's a way for me to get my tax money back.' But the great bulk of homeschoolers think the more we get entangled, the more likely it is that we are going to be regulated. This is proving to be very divisive within the homeschool community. All of a sudden we're at odds with each other."

Because this phenomenon is relatively new, research on partnerships between public schools and homeschool families is skimpy. Patricia Lines published a preliminary examination of several Washington State programs in September 2000 and found that over time partnership programs tended to lead to full-time enrollment. She said the motive for school districts appeared to be fiscal — not philosophical. "This was not, in my opinion, a case of a public school Trojan horse," Lines wrote, referring to homeschool advocates' concern that school authorities would try to gain control of homeschool practices. If anything, she wrote, reviewing accommodations schools are making to homeschoolers' needs, "it looks as if the Trojan horse is sneaking into public school turf."

Lines's study is the first scholarly treatment of public school-homeschool collaborations. But it's a subject that's bound to get more attention as schools and homeschoolers continue to work together.

Peggy J. Farber is an education reporter based in New York City. She wrote about efforts to help violent girls in the January/February 2000 issue of the Harvard Education Letter.

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(Continued from page 24: Misch)

young people from teens to thirties. There is a twenty-year span there where most of your relationships are formed or found or established.

Thank you very much for your time Mark, for coming and being such a great interviewee.

Misch: It is great to be here. Thanks.

To get the book *Emotional Purity* see the flyer inserted with *Keystone* or email genevieve@hef.org.nz.

(Continued from page 11: **Fallacy**)

their articles, we found that these reporters demonstrated a remarkable ignorance of logic. They should have read our book. It might have saved them the time it took to write those articles. But we're happy for the opportunity to teach some logic.

Biographical Information

Nathaniel and Hans have been homeschooled all of their life and live near New Boston, Illinois. They are currently writing a sequel to their book *The Fallacy Detective*, a book on logic for children and adults. You can pester them with questions on logic at www.christianlogic.com.

(This article can be found at http://www.christianlogic.com/articles/akron_beacon_journal_attack_on_homeschooling.htm, where you can also find a list of the *Akron Beacon Journal* articles. © 2004. All rights reserved. Used with permission.)

(Continued from page 12: **Records**)

officialdom is a secondary motive.

I hope that has been of some help. It's taken me a few years to find the balance that works for me, and it is such a personal thing. I think the secret is to concentrate on whatever is needed and whatever works for your own personal organization and sanity, then adapt what you are already doing so that it may double up in usefulness as some sort of official record for the ERO. For some people that might be nothing more than a calendar entry. For others it might be screeds of notes and planning and impressive recordkeeping. Me? I just want to know what day of the week it is!

Kay Christensen is wife to Robert, mother to three children and has been homeschooling for ten years. She has a particular interest in helping new homeschoolers so that she can pass on much of the help that was given to her in the early years.

(Continued from page 21: **Quiet Time**)

yourself to copy parts of Scripture or even the entire Bible by the time they leave your home

- Keep a Bible or devotional in the bathroom
- Begin an afternoon quiet hour. As they grow, they will know to respect your time in the Word.
- Sing Psalms all day: mark Psalms you can sing in your Bible for easy reference.
- Devote Sunday afternoon to spiritual reading or Bible reading.
- Record verses you want to memorize on a tape or CD and play it while you clean the kitchen after meals. You'll be amazed at how quickly your children will memorize them.
- Designate the moments before getting out of bed to prayer and teach your children not to disturb you.

If you're not too overwhelmed at this point (I hope you're encouraged!), here's a re-cap:

Make a list and pray over it. Determine from God's leading and Scripture what God wants you to keep or toss. Ladies, if an afternoon soap opera is on the list, I believe it's safe to say that God's Word warns us to think on whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is good, whatever is desirable and to take every thought captive. Get the idea?

Ask your husband what he wants you to maintain as a priority and what he wants you to lose. He might see some thing or things on your list that are draining you of your time and energy. God has placed that man over you to serve as your protection, so heed his words and remember that God does not require us to honor our husbands because they never make mistakes...He requires us to honor them because God never makes mistakes.

Now move forward into your day knowing that subtracting and adding things to our lives takes adjustment. Don't throw in the towel if after a week things don't seem to be working out. Keep faithfully at it and see what blessings God brings because of your obedience to Him.

Simply stop making excuses. Read the Mark passage over and over until it has made an impression in your heart, realizing that Jesus did not make excuses. In our home we are teaching our boys to say, "No excuses, ma'am!" when they've failed to follow through on a task; train yourself to say, "No excuses, Sir!" to God.

Lastly, find what works best for *you*. There is no right or wrong in this. God wants to spend time teaching and ministering to us, and we need to get into the habit of letting Him. If you want to know how to begin, here's the best advice I can give you: Do it. Simply start today and do it. Think of it the way author Elizabeth George does, "I call this time with God *the great exchange*. Away from the world and hidden from public view, I exchange my weariness for His strength, my weakness for His power, my darkness for His light, my problems for His solutions, my burdens for His freedom, my frustration for His peace, my turmoil for His calm, my hopes for His promises, my afflictions for His balm of comfort, my questions for His answers, my confusion for His knowledge, my doubt for His assurance, my nothingness for His awesomeness, the temporal for the eternal and the impossible for the possible!"

(Kendra Fletcher is a homeschooling mother of six children. She lives with her husband, children and in-laws in the middle of California's Central Valley. Despite her conservatory degree in music, she finds herself often chasing chickens into the coop and scolding a sandal-eating golden retriever.)

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